

# A Commentary On the Writings of Augustine of Hippo

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## Introduction

Augustine of Hippo has been called the greatest theologian of the Church, because he was so pivotal in the development of the Church. So it is good to get to know him through his writing. What we want to do here is look at how his writing compares with the Biblical truth in the word of God.

To do this, we will show the Scriptures he refers to in his writing in the version that is closest to his quote. This may at times be the **Latin Vulgate**, which will be the **Douay Rheims** translation into English. It could also be the **Septuagint**, but in most cases I will use the **King James Version**, and I will add the **King James Version**, or the **New American Standard**, or the **English Standard Version**, if there is a difference in the translations. These versions are closer to the Greek and Hebrew originals.

My method is to show a block of his writing, and then comment on that block. This may seem tedious at times, but I have found that as I reread his writing, and break it up into thoughts, it is easier to understand him.

Our goal in reading Augustine is to attain the full assurance of understanding as we read in context in **Colossians 2 (KJV)**: 1 For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; 2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

The word “understanding” is a translation of the Greek word **σύνεσις** (pronounced sü'n-esēs, soon'-es-is); from G4920; a mental putting together, i.e. intelligence or (concretely) the intellect:—knowledge, understanding. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4907.**

We want to understand, or “put together” his words so that we can compare them with the Biblical truth in the word of God, so that our faith is not in the wisdom of men but in the word of God. Now also the words “full assurance” are a translation of the Greek word **πληροφορία** (pronounced plērophoria, play-rof-or-ee'-ah); from G4135; entire confidence:—(full) assurance. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4136.**

Augustine's writings can be difficult to understand at times. Our goal is not to understand him completely, but to understand his writing in the context of Biblical truth.

So why should we study Augustine? We study Augustine in order to see the misperceptions of the early Church. The early Church had already been through many persecutions in which many of the leaders had been martyred. Much of the Biblical truth in the Scriptures had been lost, and traditions had taken the place of sound teaching. A loyalty had been built up in order to keep the unity of the faith. But it was not a loyalty to sound teaching, but a loyalty to what amounted to tradition, and the teaching of some who had gone before.

Now in our day, we have the resources to formulate sound teaching. But we still have this loyalty to the way we have always done things. If we are to grow up in Him in all things, we must be willing to let go of the misperceptions of the early Church, and of the Church today so that we can walk in the light and in the Biblical truth of the word of God.

So let us focus today on the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, but also on the Biblical truth in the word of God so that we may truly be His disciples, and so that we will know the truth which will set us free.

Now, as I read the writings of Augustine, certain things stood out to me, and I have at times highlighted these in red. The different blocks of his writing are mostly paragraphs which could contain more than one topic of discussion. There will be several recurring themes such as baptismal regeneration, alms giving, grace, Catholic, soul, and others. There were certain things that the Catholic Church in Augustine's time held to be, without question, as handed down by the apostles. Many of these will be found under the heading, Dogmas of the Early Church.

Also, I will quote a block of his writing, and then comment on the block. Usually I comment on the whole block, making comments on a line, or group of lines in his writing. Less frequently, I will quote the block, and then just summarize, starting with, "In summary" in the Commentary. At the end of a topic, or a chapter, I will often do a **Summary**.

Now it is important to see Augustine's conversion. He was a real believer. Let us begin as we get to know Augustine.

## Getting to Know Augustine

Augustine of Hippo was a Christian theologian whose writings greatly influenced the progression of Christianity even up to the present time. He was born on November 13, 354 AD, and died on August 28, 430 AD. He was a Roman African. Among his most important works are *The City of God*, *On Christian Doctrine*, and *Confessions*.

All of the quotes in this book, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the **Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers**, edited by Philip Schaff, D.D., LL.D., in 14 volumes. The first 8 volumes of the **Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers** are the writings of Augustine.

In his youth he was drawn to Manichaeism and later to Neo-Platonism. After his conversion to Christianity and baptism in 386, Augustine developed his own approach to philosophy and theology, accommodating a variety of methods and perspectives. Now here is a short sketch of his life in **Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, page 3-6**.

### Prolegomena.

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#### St. Augustin's Life and Work

From Schaff's Church History, Revised Edition.

New York 1884. Vol. III. 988-1028.

Revised and enlarged with additions to literature till 1886.

#### CHAPTER II.—*A Sketch of the Life of St. Augustin.*

It is a venturesome and delicate undertaking to write one's own life, even though that life be a masterpiece of nature and the grace of God, and therefore most worthy to be described. Of all autobiographies none has so happily avoided the reef of vanity and self-praise, and none has won so much esteem and love through its honesty and humility as that of St. Augustin.

The "Confessions," which he wrote in the forty-fourth year of his life, still burning in the ardor of his first love, are full of the fire and unction of the Holy Spirit. They are a sublime composition, in which Augustin, like David in the fifty-first Psalm, confesses to God, in view of his own and of succeeding generations, without reserve the sins of his youth; and they are at the same time a hymn of praise to the grace of God, which led him out of darkness into light, and called him to service in the kingdom of Christ. Here we see the great church teacher of all times "prostrate in the dust, conversing with God, basking in his love; his readers hovering before him only as a shadow." He puts away from himself all honor, all greatness, all merit, and lays them gratefully at the feet of the All-merciful. The reader feels on every hand that Christianity is no dream nor illusion, but truth and life, and he is carried along in adoration of the wonderful grace of God.

Aurelius Augustinus, born on the 13th of November, 354, at Tagaste, an unimportant village of the fertile province of Numidia in North Africa, not far from Hippo Regius, inherited from his heathen father, Patricius, a passionate sensibility, from his Christian mother, Monnica (one of the noblest women in the history of Christianity, of a highly intellectual and spiritual cast, of fervent piety, most tender affection, and all-conquering love), the deep yearning towards God so grandly expressed in his sentence: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is

restless till it rests in Thee.” This yearning, and his reverence for the sweet and holy name of Jesus, though crowded into the background, attended him in his studies at the schools of Madaura and Carthage, on his journeys to Rome and Milan, and on his tedious wanderings through the labyrinth of carnal pleasures, Manichæan mock-wisdom, Academic skepticism, and Platonic idealism; till at last the prayers of his mother, the sermons of Ambrose, the biography of St. Anthony, and above all, the Epistles of Paul, as so many instruments in the hand of the Holy Spirit, wrought in the man of three and thirty years that wonderful change which made him an incalculable blessing to the whole Christian world, and brought even the sins and errors of his youth into the service of the truth.

A son of so many prayers and tears could not be lost, and the faithful mother who travailed with him in spirit with greater pain than her body had in bringing him into the world, was permitted, for the encouragement of future mothers, to receive shortly before her death an answer to her prayers and expectations, and was able to leave this world with joy without revisiting her earthly home. For Monnica died on a homeward journey, in Ostia at the mouth of the Tiber, in her fifty-sixth year, in the arms of her son, after enjoying with him a glorious conversation that soared above the confines of space and time, and was a foretaste of the eternal Sabbath-rest of the saints. If those moments, he says, could be prolonged for ever, they would more than suffice for his happiness in heaven. She regretted not to die in a foreign land, because she was not far from God, who would raise her up at the last day. “Bury my body anywhere, “was her last request, “and trouble not yourselves for it; only this one thing I ask, that you remember me at the altar of my God, wherever you may be.” Augustin, in his *Confessions*, has erected to Monnica a noble monument that can never perish.

If ever there was a thorough and fruitful conversion, next to that of Paul on the way to Damascus, it was that of Augustin, when, in a garden of the Villa Cassiciacum, not far from Milan, in September of the year 386, amidst the most violent struggles of mind and heart—the birth throes of the new life—he heard that divine voice of a child: “Take, read!” and he “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. xiii. 14). It is a touching lamentation of his: “I have loved Thee late, Thou Beauty, so old and so new; I have loved Thee late! And lo! Thou wast within, but I was without, and was seeking Thee there. And into Thy fair creation I plunged myself in my ugliness; for Thou was with me, and I was not with Thee! Those things kept me away from Thee, which had not been, except they had been in Thee! Thou didst call, and didst cry aloud, and break through my deafness. Thou didst glimmer, Thou didst shine, and didst drive away my blindness. Thou didst breathe, and I drew breath, and breathed in Thee. I tasted Thee, and I hunger and thirst. Thou didst touch me, and I burn for Thy peace. If I, with all that is within me, may once live in Thee, then shall pain and trouble forsake me; entirely filled with Thee, all shall be life to me.”

He received baptism from Ambrose in Milan on Easter Sunday, 387, in company with his friend and fellow convert Alypius, and his natural son Adeodatus (*given by God*). It impressed the divine seal upon the inward transformation. He broke radically with the world; abandoned the brilliant and lucrative vocation of a teacher of rhetoric, which he had followed in Rome and Milan; sold his goods for the benefit of the poor; and thenceforth devoted his rare gifts exclusively to the service of Christ, and to that service he continued faithful to his latest breath. After the death of his mother, whom he revered and loved with the most tender affection, he went a second time to Rome for several months, and wrote books in defense of true Christianity

against false philosophy and against the Manichæan heresy. Returning to Africa, he spent three years, with his friends Alypius and Evodius, on an estate in his native Tagaste, in contemplative and literary retirement.

Then, in 391, he was chosen presbyter against his will, by the voice of the people, which, as in the similar cases of Cyprian and Ambrose, proved to be the voice of God, in the Numidian maritime city of Hippo Regius (now Bona); and in 395 he was elected bishop in the same city. For eight and thirty years, until his death, he labored in this place, and made it the intellectual center of Western Christendom.

His outward mode of life was extremely simple, and mildly ascetic. He lived with his clergy in one house in an apostolic community of goods, and made this house a seminary of theology, out of which ten bishops and many lower clergy went forth. Females, even his sister, were excluded from his house, and could see him only in the presence of others. But he founded religious societies of women; and over one of these his sister, a saintly widow, presided. He once said in a sermon, that he had nowhere found better men, and he had nowhere found worse, than in monasteries. Combining, as he did, the clerical life with the monastic, he became unwittingly the founder of the Augustinian order, which gave the reformer Luther to the world. He wore the black dress of the Easter cœnobites, with a cowl and a leathern girdle. He lived almost entirely on vegetables, and seasoned the common meal with reading or free conversation, in which it was a rule that the character of an absent person should never be touched. He had this couplet engraved on the table:

“Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam,  
Hanc mensam vetitam noverit esse sibi.”

He often preached five days in succession, sometimes twice a day, and set it as the object of his preaching, that all might live with him, and he with all, in Christ. Wherever he went in Africa, he was begged to preach the word of salvation. He faithfully administered the external affairs connected with his office, though he found his chief delight in contemplation. He was specially devoted to the poor, and, like Ambrose, upon exigency, caused the church vessels to be melted down to redeem prisoners. But he refused legacies by which injustice was done to natural heirs, and commended the bishop Aurelius of Carthage for giving back unasked some property which a man has bequeathed to the church, when his wife unexpectedly bore him children.

Augustin's labors extended far beyond his little diocese. He was the intellectual head of the North African and the entire Western church of his time. He took active interest in all theological and ecclesiastical questions. He was the champion of the orthodox doctrine against Manichæan, Donatist, and Pelagian. In him was concentrated the whole polemic power of the Catholic church of the time against heresy and schism; and in him it won the victory over them.

In his last years he took a critical review of his literary productions, and gave them a thorough sifting in his *Retractations*. His latest controversial works, against the Semi-Pelagians, written in a gentle spirit, date from the same period. He bore the duties of his office alone till his seventy-second year, when his people unanimously elected his friend Heraclius to be his assistant.

The evening of his life was troubled by increasing infirmities of body and by the

unspeakable wretchedness which the barbarian Vandals spread over his country in their victorious invasion, destroying cities, villages, and churches, without mercy, and even besieging the fortified city of Hippo. Yet he faithfully persevered in his work. The last ten days of his life he spent in close retirement, in prayers and tears and repeated reading of the penitential Psalms, which he caused to be written on the wall over his bed, that he might have them always before his eyes. Thus with an act of penitence he closed his life. In the midst of the terrors of the siege and the despair of his people he could not suspect what abundant seed he had sown for the future.

In the third month of the siege of Hippo, on the 28th of August, 430, in the seventy-sixth year of his age, in full possession of his faculties, and in the presence of many friends and pupils, he passed gently and peacefully into that eternity to which he had so long aspired. "O how wonderful," wrote he in his *Meditations*, "how beautiful and lovely are the dwellings of Thy house, Almighty God! I burn with longing to behold Thy beauty in Thy bridal-chamber....O Jerusalem, holy city of God, dear bride of Christ, my heart loves thee, my soul has already long sighed for thy beauty!...The King of kings Himself is in the midst of thee, and His children are within thy walls. There are the hymning choirs of angels, the fellowship of heavenly citizens. There is the wedding feast of all who from this sad earthly pilgrimage have reached thy joys. There is the far seeing choir of the prophets; there the company of the twelve apostles; there the triumphant army of innumerable martyrs and holy confessors. Full and perfect love there reigns, for God is all in all. They love and praise, they praise and love Him evermore....Blessed, perfectly and forever blessed, shall I too be, if, when my poor body shall be dissolved,... I may stand before my King and God, and see Him in His glory, as He Himself hath deigned to promise: 'Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which I had with Thee before the world was.'" This aspiration after the heavenly Jerusalem found grand expression in the hymn *De gloria et gaudiis Paradisi*:

"Ad perennis vitæ fontem mens sativit arida."

It is incorporated in the *Meditations* of Augustin, and the ideas originated in part with him, but were not brought into poetical form till long afterwards by Peter Damiani.

He left no will, for in his voluntary poverty he had no earthly property to dispose of, except his library; this he bequeathed to the church, and it was fortunately preserved from the depredations of the Arian barbarians.

Soon after his death Hippo was taken and destroyed by the Vandals. Africa was lost to the Romans. A few decades later the whole West-Roman empire fell in ruins. The culmination of the African church was the beginning of its decline. But the work of Augustin could not perish. His ideas fell like living seed into the soil of Europe, and produced abundant fruits in nations and countries of which he had never heard.

**Commentary:** His first quote in Latin above was, "Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam, Hanc mensam vetitam noverit esse sibi." It means "Whoever loves to gnaw away at the life that is absent, knows that this table is forbidden to him."

His second quote in Latin above was, "Ad perennis vitæ fontem mens sativit arida." It means, "The parched mind is satisfied at the fountain of eternal life."

The following schedule of events is taken from **Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, page 25.**

**Chief Events in the Life of St. Augustine  
(as Given, Nearly, in the Benedictine Edition)**

354. Augustin born at Tagaste, Nov. 13; his parents, Patricius and Monnica; shortly afterwards enrolled among the Catechumens.
370. Returns home from studying Rhetoric at Madaura, after an idle childhood, and from idleness falls into dissipation and sin.
371. Patricius dies; Augustin supported at Carthage by his mother, and his friend Romanianus; forms an illicit connection.
372. Birth of his son Adeodatus.
373. Cicero's *Hortensius* awakens in him a strong desire for true wisdom.
374. He falls into the Manichæan heresy, and seduces several of his acquaintances into it. His mother's earnest prayers for him; she is assured of his recovery.
376. Teaches Grammar at Tagaste; but soon returns to Carthage to teach Rhetoric—gains a prize.
379. Is recovered from study of Astrology—writes his books *De pulchro et apto*.
382. Discovers the Manichæans to be in error, but falls into scepticism. Goes to Rome to teach Rhetoric.
385. Removes to Milan; his errors gradually removed through the teaching of Ambrose, but he is held back by the flesh; becomes again a Catechumen.
386. Studies St. Paul; converted through a voice from heaven; gives up his profession; writes against the Academics; prepares for Baptism.
387. Is baptized by Bishop Ambrose, with his son Adeodatus. Death of his mother, Monnica, in her fifty-sixth year, at Ostia.
388. Augustine revisits Rome, and then returns to Africa. Adeodatus, full of promise, dies.
389. Augustine against his will ordained Presbyter at Hippo by Valerius, its Bishop.

392. Writes against the Manichæans.
394. Writes against the Donatists.
395. Ordained Assistant Bishop to Valerius, toward the end of the year.
396. Death of Bishop Valerius. Augustin elected his successor.
397. Augustine writes the *Confessions*, and the *De Tinitate* against the Arians.
394. Is present at the fourth Council of Carthage.
402. Refutes the Epistle of Petilianus, a Donatist.
404. Applies to Cæcilianus for protection against the savageness of the Donatists.
408. Writes *De urbis Romæ obsidione*.
411. Takes a prominent part in a conference between the Catholic Bishops and the Donatists.
413. Begins the composition of his great work *De Civitate Dei*, completed in 426.
417. Writes *De gestis Palæstinæ synodi circa Pelagium*.
420. Writes against the Priscillianists.
424. Writes against the Semipelagians.
426. Appoints Heraclius his successor.
428. Writes the *Retractations*.
429. Answers the Epistles of Prosper and Hilary.
430. Dies August 28, in the third month of the siege of Hippo by the Vandals.

## **A Letter from Jerome**

The following is a letter from Jerome, a contemporary of Augustine, that tells us of the esteem of Augustine in his time:



**Letter CXCIV. (a.d. 418.) To His Holy Lord and Most Blessed Father, Augustin, Jerome Sends Greeting.**

At all times I have esteemed your Blessedness with becoming reverence and honor, and have loved the Lord and Savior dwelling in you. But now we add, if possible, something to that which has already reached a climax, and we heap up what was already full, so that we do not suffer a single hour to pass without the mention of your name, because you have, with the ardor of unshaken faith, stood your ground against opposing storms, and preferred, so far as this was in your power, to be delivered from Sodom, though you should come forth alone, rather than linger behind with those who are doomed to perish. Your wisdom apprehends what I mean to say. Go on and prosper! You are renowned throughout the whole world; Catholics revere and look up to you as the restorer of the ancient faith, and—which is a token of yet more illustrious glory—all heretics abhor you. They persecute me also with equal hatred, seeking by imprecation to take away the life which they cannot reach with the sword. May the mercy of Christ the Lord preserve you in safety and mindful of me, my venerable lord and most blessed father. **Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, page 556.**

## **His Goal**

As we study the writings of Augustine, we must remember that his goal was to constantly strive for truth. Listen to what he wrote in the following treatise which he wrote in either 428 or 429 AD, a year or two before he died in 430 AD:

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapter 55, page 548**

Chapter 55.—Testimony of His Previous Writings and Letters.

“...Whence they may gather that the same sort of things were already said and written several years ago against the Pelagian heresy, and that it is to be wondered at that these should now displease them; although I should wish that no one would so embrace all my views as to follow me, except in those things in which he should see me not to have erred. For I am now writing treatises in which I have undertaken to retract my smaller works, for the purpose of demonstrating that even I myself have not in all things followed myself; but I think that, with God’s mercy, I have written progressively, and not begun from perfection; since, indeed, I speak more arrogantly than truly, if even now I say that I have at length in this age of mine arrived at perfection, without any error in what I write. But the difference is in the extent and the subject of an error, and in the facility with which any one corrects it, or the pertinacity with which one endeavors to defend his error. Certainly there is good hope of that man whom the last day of this life shall find so progressing that whatever was wanting to his progress may be added to him, and that he should be adjudged rather to need perfecting than punishment.”

**Commentary:** Augustine was still striving for the truth, even near the end of his life. He relied on the Scriptures as we shall see. But he was willing to be corrected if it could be shown

from the Scriptures that he was in error.

Now there were two things which seem to have greatly influenced his writings.

First, his life before his conversion had an influence on his perception of some things, like marriage. He grew up in the church as a result of his mother being a Christian, but he did not stay in the church. He did not come back to the church until he was 31, the age of his conversion and salvation.

Second, the accepted dogma and teaching of the Church in his time definitely influenced his writing as we shall see. We read next of his object.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

#### **The Harmony of the Gospels, Book IV, Chapter 10, Paragraph 19, page 234**

“...For our object is to help those who are lovers of the Word of God and students of holy truth to understand that, in his Gospel, John was indeed an announcer and preacher of the same Christ, the true and truthful One of whom the other three who have composed Gospels also testified, and to whom the rest of the apostles likewise bore witness, who, although they did not take in hand the construction of written narratives, did at least discharge the kindred service in officially preaching of Him: but that, at the same time, he was borne to far loftier heights in the doctrine of Christ from the very beginning of his book, and that it was but on rare occasions that he kept to the level pursued by the others...”

## **His Conversion**

Augustine, in his *Confessions*, tells how he was converted. First of all, let us read of his retractions in the following section.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions**

#### **The Opinion of St. Augustin Concerning His Confessions, as Embodied in His *Retractations*, II. 6**

1. “The Thirteen Books of my *Confessions* whether they refer to my evil or good, praise the just and good God, and stimulate the heart and mind of man to approach unto Him. And, as far as pertaineth unto me, they wrought this in me when they were written, and this they work when they are read. What some think of them they may have seen, but that they have given much pleasure, and do give pleasure, to many brethren I know. From the First to the Tenth they have been written of myself; in the remaining three, of the Sacred Scriptures, from the text, ‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,’ even to the rest of the Sabbath (Gen. i. 1, ii. 2).”

2. “In the Fourth Book, when I acknowledged the distress of my mind at the death of a friend, saying, that our soul, though one, had been in some manner made out of two; and therefore, I say, perchance was I afraid to die lest he should die wholly whom I had so much loved (chap. vi.);—this seems to me as if it were a light declamation rather than a grave confession, although this folly may in some sort be tempered by that ‘perchance’ which follows.

And in the Thirteenth Book (chap. xxxii.) what I said, viz.: that the ‘firmament was made between the spiritual upper waters, and the corporeal lower waters,’ was said without due consideration; but the thing is very obscure.”

[In *Ep. ad Darium*, *Ep. ccxxxi. c. 6*, written a.d. 429, Augustin says: “Accept, my son, the books containing my *Confessions* which you desired to have. In these behold me that you may not praise me more than I deserve; there believe what is said of me, not by others, but by myself; there mark me, and see what I have been in myself, by myself; and if anything in me please you, join me in praising Him to whom, and not to myself, I desired praise to be given. For ‘He hath made us, and not we ourselves’ (Ps. 1. 3). Indeed, we had destroyed ourselves, but He who made us has made us anew (*qui fecit, refecit*). When, however, you find me in these books, pray for me that I may not fail, but be perfected (*ne deficiam, sed perficiar*). Pray, my son, pray. I feel what I say; I know what I ask.”—Philip Schaff.]

[*De Dono Perseverantiæ*, c. 20 (53): “Which of my smaller works could be more widely known or give greater pleasure than my *Confessions*? And although I published them before the Pelagian heresy had come into existence, certainly in them I said to my God, and said it frequently, ‘Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt’ (Conf. x. 29, 31, 37). Which words of mine, Pelagius at Rome, when they were mentioned in his presence by a certain brother and fellow-bishop of mine, could not bear....Moreover in those same books...I showed that I was granted to the faithful and daily tears of my mother, that I should not perish. There certainly I declared that God by His grace converted the will of men to the true faith, not only when they had been turned away from it, but even when they were opposed to it.”—Philip Schaff]

**Commentary:** We are getting to know Augustine. We now begin reading in Book I, Chapter X.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions Book I, Chapter X-XI, paragraphs 16-17, page 50**

**Book I.** Commencing with the invocation of God, Augustin relates in detail the beginning of his life, his infancy and boyhood, up to his fifteenth year; at which age he acknowledges that he was more inclined to all youthful pleasures and vices than to the study of letters.

#### **Chapter X.—Through a Love of Ball-Playing and Shows, He Neglects His Studies and the Injunctions of His Parents.**

16. And yet I erred, O Lord God, the Creator and Disposer of all things in Nature,—but of sin the Disposer only,—I erred, O Lord my God, in doing contrary to the wishes of my parents and of those masters; for this learning which they (no matter for what motive) wished me to acquire, I might have put to good account afterwards. For I disobeyed them not because I had chosen a better way, but from a fondness for play, loving the honour of victory in the matches, and to have my ears tickled with lying fables, in order that they might itch the more furiously—the same curiosity beaming more and more in my eyes for the shows and sports of my elders. Yet those who give these entertainments are held in such high repute, that almost all

desire the same for their children, whom they are still willing should be beaten, if so be these same games keep them from the studies by which they desire them to arrive at being the givers of them. Look down upon these things, O Lord, with compassion, and deliver us who now call upon Thee; deliver those also who do not call upon Thee, that they may call upon Thee, and that Thou mayest deliver them.

### **Chapter XI.—Seized by Disease, His Mother Being Troubled, He Earnestly Demands Baptism, Which on Recovery is Postponed—His Father Not as Yet Believing in Christ.**

17. Even as a boy I had heard of eternal life promised to us through the humility of the Lord our God condescending to our pride, and **I was signed with the sign of the cross**, and was seasoned with His salt even from the womb of my mother, who greatly trusted in Thee. **Thou sawest, O Lord, how at one time, while yet a boy, being suddenly seized with pains in the stomach, and being at the point of death—Thou sawest, O my God, for even then Thou wast my keeper, with what emotion of mind and with what faith I solicited from the piety of my mother, and of Thy Church, the mother of us all, the baptism of Thy Christ, my Lord and my God. On which, the mother of my flesh being much troubled,—since she, with a heart pure in Thy faith, travailed in birth (Galatians 4:19) more lovingly for my eternal salvation,—would, had I not quickly recovered, have without delay provided for my initiation and washing by Thy lifegiving sacraments, confessing Thee, O Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins. So my cleansing was deferred, as if I must needs, should I live, be further polluted; because, indeed, the guilt contracted by sin would, after baptism, be greater and more perilous. Thus I at that time believed with my mother and the whole house, except my father; yet he did not overcome the influence of my mother’s piety in me so as to prevent my believing in Christ, as he had not yet believed in Him. For she was desirous that Thou, O my God, shouldst be my Father rather than he; and in this Thou didst aid her to overcome her husband, to whom, though the better of the two, she yielded obedience, because in this she yielded obedience to Thee, who dost so command.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Even as a boy I had heard of eternal life promised to us through the humility of the Lord our God condescending to our pride, and **I was signed with the sign of the cross**, and was seasoned with His salt even from the womb of my mother, who greatly trusted in Thee.”

In a note on **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions, Book I, Chapter X-XI, paragraph 16-17, page 50**, it says that being “signed with the sign of the cross” was “A rite in the Western churches, on admission as a catechumen, previous to baptism, denoting the purity and uncorruptedness and discretion required of Christians.”

Augustine continues as he then says, **“Thou sawest, O Lord, how at one time, while yet a boy, being suddenly seized with pains in the stomach, and being at the point of death—Thou sawest, O my God, for even then Thou wast my keeper, with what emotion of mind and with what faith I solicited from the piety of my mother, and of Thy Church, the mother of us all, the baptism of Thy Christ, my Lord and my God.”**

Note that the Church is never referred to as “**the mother of us all**” in the Scriptures. The expression is found, however, referring to the heavenly Jerusalem, in **Galatians 4 (KJV):26** But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

But this expression is never used to refer to the Church. Augustine then continues as he says, “**On which, the mother of my flesh being much troubled,—since she, with a heart pure in Thy faith, travailed in birth (Galatians 4:19) more lovingly for my eternal salvation,—would, had I not quickly recovered, have without delay provided for my initiation and washing by Thy lifegiving sacraments, confessing Thee, O Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins.**”

The “**washing by Thy lifegiving sacraments**” he refers to here is water baptism, in which one was “**confessing Thee, O Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins.**”

The scripture he refers to is **Galatians 4 (KJV):19** My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.

Augustine then continues, “**So my cleansing was deferred, as if I must needs, should I live, be further polluted; because, indeed, the guilt contracted by sin would, after baptism, be greater and more perilous. Thus I at that time believed with my mother and the whole house, except my father;**”

There was a belief of the Catholic Church in his time that one could lose their salvation after baptism, if one committed deadly, or mortal, sins.

He continues, “yet he did not overcome the influence of my mother’s piety in me so as to prevent my believing in Christ, as he had not yet believed in Him. For she was desirous that Thou, O my God, shouldst be my Father rather than he; and in this Thou didst aid her to overcome her husband, to whom, though the better of the two, she yielded obedience, because in this she yielded obedience to Thee, who dost so command.”

He credits his mother’s piety for his eventual baptism. We now continue to read of his conversion.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions Book V, Chapter XIV, paragraphs 24-25, page 88**

**Book V.** He describes the twenty-ninth year of his age, in which, having discovered the fallacies of the Manichæans, he professed rhetoric at Rome and Milan. Having heard Ambrose, he begins to come to himself.

### **Chapter XIV.—Having Heard the Bishop, He Perceives the Force of the Catholic Faith, Yet Doubts, After the Manner of the Modern Academics.**

24. For although I took no trouble to learn what he spake, but only to hear how he spake (for that empty care alone remained to me, despairing of a way accessible for man to Thee), yet, together with the words which I prized, there came into my mind also the things about which I was careless; for I could not separate them. **And whilst I opened my heart to admit “how skillfully he spake,” there also entered with it, but gradually, “and how truly he spake!”** For first, these things also had begun to appear to me to be defensible; and the Catholic faith, for which I had fancied nothing could be said against the attacks of the Manichæans, I now conceived might be maintained without presumption; especially after I had heard one or two

parts of the Old Testament explained, and often allegorically—which when I accepted literally, I was “killed” spiritually. (Romans 7:9, 2 Corinthians 3:6) Many places, then, of those books having been expounded to me, I now blamed my despair in having believed that no reply could be made to those who hated and derided the Law and the Prophets. Yet I did not then see that for that reason the Catholic way was to be held because it had its learned advocates, who could at length, and not irrationally, answer objections; nor that what I held ought therefore to be condemned because both sides were equally defensible. For that way did not appear to me to be vanquished; nor yet did it seem to me to be victorious.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “For although I took no trouble to learn what he spake, but only to hear how he spake (for that empty care alone remained to me, despairing of a way accessible for man to Thee), yet, together with the words which I prized, there came into my mind also the things about which I was careless; for I could not separate them. And whilst I opened my heart to admit “how skillfully he spake,” there also entered with it, but gradually, “and how truly he spake!”

Augustine here admits of having begun to seek for truth. He then says, “For first, these things also had begun to appear to me to be defensible; and the Catholic faith, for which I had fancied nothing could be said against the attacks of the Manichæans, I now conceived might be maintained without presumption; especially after I had heard one or two parts of the Old Testament explained, and often allegorically—which when I accepted literally, I was “killed” spiritually. (Romans 7:9, 2 Corinthians 3:6)”

He now realized that the literal interpretation of the Old Testament had the weight of argument, and that when he “accepted” it “literally”, he “was “killed” spiritually”. He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):9** For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. 10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

And to **2 Corinthians 3 (KJV):6** Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

He continues, “Many places, then, of those books having been expounded to me, I now blamed my despair in having believed that no reply could be made to those who hated and derided the Law and the Prophets. Yet I did not then see that for that reason the Catholic way was to be held because it had its learned advocates, who could at length, and not irrationally, answer objections; nor that what I held ought therefore to be condemned because both sides were equally defensible. For that way did not appear to me to be vanquished; nor yet did it seem to me to be victorious.”

He is in process. We continue to read in the next paragraph.

25. Hereupon did I earnestly bend my mind to see if in any way I could possibly prove the Manichæans guilty of falsehood. Could I have realized a spiritual substance, all their strongholds would have been beaten down, and cast utterly out of my mind; but I could not. But yet, concerning the body of this world, and the whole of nature, which the senses of the flesh can attain unto, I, now more and more considering and comparing things, judged that the greater part of the philosophers held much the more probable opinions. So, then, after the manner of the Academics (as they are supposed), doubting of everything and fluctuating between all, I decided

that the Manichæans were to be abandoned; judging that, even while in that period of doubt, I could not remain in a sect to which I preferred some of the philosophers; to which philosophers, however, because they were without the saving name of Christ, I utterly refused to commit the cure of my fainting soul. I resolved, therefore, to be a catechumen in the Catholic Church, which my parents had commended to me, until something settled should manifest itself to me whither I might steer my course.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he then says, “Hereupon did I earnestly bend my mind to see if in any way I could possibly prove the Manichæans guilty of falsehood. Could I have realized a spiritual substance, all their strongholds would have been beaten down, and cast utterly out of my mind; but I could not. But yet, concerning the body of this world, and the whole of nature, which the senses of the flesh can attain unto, I, now more and more considering and comparing things, judged that the greater part of the philosophers held much the more probable opinions.”

Although he could not cast the strongholds of the Manichaeans out of his mind yet, he saw that even the philosophers actually made more sense than the Manichaeans, so he decided to abandon the Manichaeans, as he continues, “So, then, after the manner of the Academics (as they are supposed), doubting of everything and fluctuating between all, I decided that the Manichæans were to be abandoned; judging that, even while in that period of doubt, I could not remain in a sect to which I preferred some of the philosophers; to which philosophers, however, because they were without the saving name of Christ, I utterly refused to commit the cure of my fainting soul.”

He now realized the value of “the saving name of Christ”.

He then concludes, “I resolved, therefore, to be a catechumen in the Catholic Church, which my parents had commended to me, until something settled should manifest itself to me whither I might steer my course.”

We now continue to read of his conversion.

**Book VII.** He recalls the beginning of his youth, i.e. the thirty-first year of his age, in which very grave errors as to the nature of God and the origin of evil being distinguished, and the Sacred Books more accurately known, he at length arrives at a clear knowledge of God, not yet rightly apprehending Jesus Christ.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions  
Book VII, Chapter XVIII, paragraph 24, page 112**

**Chapter XVIII.**—Jesus Christ, the Mediator, is the Only Way of Safety.

24. And I sought a way of acquiring strength sufficient to enjoy Thee; but I found it not until I embraced that “Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus,” (1 Timothy 2:5) “who is over all, God blessed for ever,” (Romans 9:5) calling unto me, and saying, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” (John 14:6) and mingling that food which I was unable to receive with our flesh. For “the Word was made flesh,” (John 1:14) that Thy wisdom, by which Thou createdst all things, might provide milk for our infancy. For I did not grasp my Lord Jesus,—I,



though humbled, grasped not the humble One; nor did I know what lesson that infirmity of His would teach us. For Thy Word, the Eternal Truth, pre-eminent above the higher parts of Thy creation, raises up those that are subject unto Itself; but in this lower world built for Itself a humble habitation of our clay, whereby He intended to abase from themselves such as would be subjected and bring them over unto Himself, allaying their swelling, and fostering their love; to the end that they might go on no further in self-confidence, but rather should become weak, seeing before their feet the Divinity weak by taking our “coats of skins;” (Genesis 3:21) and wearied, might cast themselves down upon It, and It rising, might lift them up.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “And I sought a way of acquiring strength sufficient to enjoy Thee; but I found it not until I embraced that “Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus,” (1 Timothy 2:5) “who is over all, God blessed for ever,” (Romans 9:5) calling unto me, and saying, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” (John 14:6) and mingling that food which I was unable to receive with our flesh. For “the Word was made flesh,” (John 1:14) that Thy wisdom, by which Thou createdst all things, might provide milk for our infancy.

Augustine refers to **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

Ant then to **Romans 9 (KJV):5** Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

And then to **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

And then to **John 1 (KJV):14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

We see that his mind is being enlightened by the word of God.

Augustine then continues as he says, “For I did not grasp my Lord Jesus,—I, though humbled, grasped not the humble One; nor did I know what lesson that infirmity of His would teach us. For Thy Word, the Eternal Truth, preeminent above the higher parts of Thy creation, raises up those that are subject unto Itself; but in this lower world built for Itself a humble habitation of our clay, whereby He intended to abase from themselves such as would be subjected and bring them over unto Himself, allaying their swelling, and fostering their love; to the end that they might go on no further in self-confidence, but rather should become weak, seeing before their feet the Divinity weak by taking our “coats of skins;” (Genesis 3:21) and wearied, might cast themselves down upon It, and It rising, might lift them up.”

He refers to **Genesis 3 (KJV):21** Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

Augustine is beginning to understand who Jesus is. As he was reading the word of God, he was gaining faith, as the Scripture says in **Romans 10 (KJV):17** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

We continue to read of his conversion.

**Book VIII.** He finally describes the thirty-second year of his age, the most memorable of his whole life, in which, being instructed by Simplicianus concerning the conversion of others, and the manner of acting, he is, after a severe struggle, renewed in his whole mind, and is converted



unto God.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions  
Book VIII, Chapter II, paragraphs 3-5 , page 117-119**

**Chapter II.**—The Pious Old Man Rejoices that He Read Plato and the Scriptures, and Tells Him of the Rhetorician Victorinus Having Been Converted to the Faith Through the Reading of the Sacred Books.

3. To Simplicianus then I went,—the father of Ambrose (at that time a bishop) in receiving Thy grace, and whom he truly loved as a father. To him I narrated the windings of my error. But when I mentioned to him that I had read certain books of the Platonists, which Victorinus, sometime Professor of Rhetoric at Rome (who died a Christian, as I had been told), had translated into Latin, he congratulated me that I had not fallen upon the writings of other philosophers, which were full of fallacies and deceit, “**after the rudiments of the world,**” (Colossians 2:8) whereas they, in many ways, led to the belief in God and His word. **Then, to exhort me to the humility of Christ, hidden from the wise, and revealed to little ones, (Matthew 11:25)** he spoke of Victorinus himself, whom, whilst he was at Rome, he had known very intimately; and of him he related that about which I will not be silent. For it contains great praise of Thy grace, which ought to be confessed unto Thee, how that most learned old man, highly skilled in all the liberal sciences, who had read, criticized, and explained so many works of the philosophers; the teacher of so many noble senators; who also, as a mark of his excellent discharge of his duties, had (which men of this world esteem a great honor) both merited and obtained a statue in the Roman Forum, he,—even to that age a worshipper of idols, and a participator in the sacrilegious rites to which almost all the nobility of Rome were wedded, and had inspired the people with the love of “The dog Anubis, and a medley crew Of monster gods [who] ’gainst Neptune stand in arms, ’Gainst Venus and Minerva, steel-clad Mars,” whom Rome once conquered, now worshipped, **all which old Victorinus had with thundering eloquence defended so many years,—he now blushed not to be the child of Thy Christ, and an infant at Thy fountain, submitting his neck to the yoke of humility, and subduing his forehead to the reproach of the Cross.**

**Commentary:** Augustine refers to **Colossians 2 (KJV):8** Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

And to **Matthew 11 (KJV):25** At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

In summary, Victorinus seems to trigger Augustine’s understanding about grace, as he sees a man who was “a worshipper of idols, and a participator in the sacrilegious rites to which almost all the nobility of Rome were wedded, and had inspired the people with the love of “The dog Anubis, and a medley crew Of monster gods [who] ’gainst Neptune stand in arms, ’Gainst Venus and Minerva, steel-clad Mars,” whom Rome once conquered, now worshipped”, but “**now blushed not to be the child of Thy Christ, and an infant at Thy fountain,**

submitting his neck to the yoke of humility, and subduing his forehead to the reproach of the Cross.”

We continue to read in paragraph 4.

4. O Lord, Lord, who hast bowed the heavens and come down, touched the mountains and they did smoke, (Psalm 144:5) by what means didst Thou convey Thyself into that bosom? He used to read, as Simplicianus said, the Holy Scripture, most studiously sought after and searched into all the Christian writings, and said to Simplicianus,—not openly, but secretly, and as a friend,—“Know thou that I am a Christian.” To which he replied, “I will not believe it, nor will I rank you among the Christians unless I see you in the Church of Christ.” Whereupon he replied derisively, “Is it then the walls that make Christians?” And this he often said, that he already was a Christian; and Simplicianus making the same answer, the conceit of the “walls” was by the other as often renewed. For he was fearful of offending his friends, proud demon worshippers, from the height of whose Babylonian dignity, as from cedars of Lebanon which had not yet been broken by the Lord, (Psalm 29:5) he thought a storm of enmity would descend upon him. But after that, from reading and inquiry, he had derived strength, and feared lest he should be denied by Christ before the holy angels if he now was afraid to confess Him before men, (Luke 9:26) and appeared to himself guilty of a great fault in being ashamed of the sacraments of the humility of Thy word, and not being ashamed of the sacrilegious rites of those proud demons, whose pride he had imitated and their rites adopted, he became boldfaced against vanity, and shamefaced toward the truth, and suddenly and unexpectedly said to Simplicianus,—as he himself informed me,—“Let us go to the church; I wish to be made a Christian.” But he, not containing himself for joy, accompanied him. And having been admitted to the first sacraments of instruction, he not long after gave in his name, that he might be regenerated by baptism,—Rome marveling, and the Church rejoicing. The proud saw, and were enraged; they gnashed with their teeth, and melted away! (Psalm 112:10) But the Lord God was the hope of Thy servant, and He regarded not vanities and lying madness. (Psalm 31:6,14,18)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “O Lord, Lord, who hast bowed the heavens and come down, touched the mountains and they did smoke, (Psalm 144:5) by what means didst Thou convey Thyself into that bosom?”

Augustine refers to **Psalm 144 (KJV):5** Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.

He continues, speaking of Victorinus, “He used to read, as Simplicianus said, the Holy Scripture, most studiously sought after and searched into all the Christian writings, and said to Simplicianus,—not openly, but secretly, and as a friend,—“Know thou that I am a Christian.” To which he replied, “I will not believe it, nor will I rank you among the Christians unless I see you in the Church of Christ.” Whereupon he replied derisively, “Is it then the walls that make Christians?” And this he often said, that he already was a Christian; and Simplicianus making the same answer, the conceit of the “walls” was by the other as often renewed.”

And we know that it is not “the walls that make Christians”, but our simple faith in Jesus Christ, for this is according to the Scripture in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Augustine continues his narrative, “For he was fearful of offending his friends, proud demon worshippers, from the height of whose Babylonian dignity, as from cedars of Lebanon which had not yet been broken by the Lord, (Psalm 29:5) he thought a storm of enmity would descend upon him.”

He refers to **Psalm 29 (KJV):5** The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.

He continues, “But after that, from reading and inquiry, he had derived strength, and feared lest he should be denied by Christ before the holy angels if he now was afraid to confess Him before men, (Luke 9:26) and appeared to himself guilty of a great fault in being ashamed of the sacraments of the humility of Thy word, and not being ashamed of the sacrilegious rites of those proud demons, whose pride he had imitated and their rites adopted, he became boldfaced against vanity, and shamefaced toward the truth, and suddenly and unexpectedly said to Simplicianus,—as he himself informed me,—“Let us go to the church; I wish to be made a Christian.””

He refers to **Luke 9 (KJV):26** For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

One was not thought to be a Christian in the time of Augustine if you had not been baptized. He continues, “But he, not containing himself for joy, accompanied him. And having been admitted to the first sacraments of instruction, he not long after gave in his name, that he might be regenerated by baptism,—Rome marveling, and the Church rejoicing. The proud saw, and were enraged; they gnashed with their teeth, and melted away! (Psalm 112:10) But the Lord God was the hope of Thy servant, and He regarded not vanities and lying madness. (Psalm 31:6,14,18)

Augustine believed, as the Catholic Church did in his time, in regeneration by baptism. That is, one is born again when they are baptized. We will discuss this belief later.

He refers to **Psalm 112 (KJV):10** The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.

And to **Psalm 31 (KJV):6** I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the Lord.

And to **Psalm 31 (KJV):14** But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God.

And to **Psalm 31 (KJV):18** Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

Augustine was gaining faith by his study of the word of God. His quotations here are correct and in context.

But Augustine was a firm believer in the Catholic Church, and its doctrine, as we read near the end of paragraph 4, “And having been admitted to the first sacraments of instruction, he not long after gave in his name, that he might be regenerated by baptism...”

We continue to read in paragraph 5.

5. Finally, when the hour arrived for him to make profession of his faith (which at Rome

they who are about to approach Thy grace are wont to deliver from an elevated place, in view of the faithful people, in a set form of words learnt by heart), the presbyters, he said, offered Victorinus to make his profession more privately, as the custom was to do to those who were likely, through bashfulness, to be afraid; but he chose rather to profess his salvation in the presence of the holy assembly. For it was not salvation that he taught in rhetoric, and yet he had publicly professed that. How much less, therefore, ought he, when pronouncing Thy word, to dread Thy meek flock, who, in the delivery of his own words, had not feared the mad multitudes! So, then, when he ascended to make his profession, all, as they recognized him, whispered his name one to the other, with a voice of congratulation. And who was there amongst them that did not know him? And there ran a low murmur through the mouths of all the rejoicing multitude, “Victorinus! Victorinus!” Sudden was the burst of exultation at the sight of him; and suddenly were they hushed, that they might hear him. He pronounced the true faith with an excellent boldness, and all desired to take him to their very heart—yea, by their love and joy they took him thither; such were the hands with which they took him.

**Commentary:** Augustine respected Victorinus as a learned philosopher, and now saw God’s grace at work in the life of Victorinus. He must have been impressed by his repentance. This paved the way for his own repentance.

We now skip to **Book VIII, Chapter V, and paragraphs 10 through 12**, to continue his story of conversion.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions**

#### **Book VIII, Chapter V, paragraphs 10-12, Augustine speaking of his time before Christ, page 120-121**

#### **Chapter V.—Of the Causes Which Alienate Us from God.**

10. But when that man of Thine, Simplicianus, related this to me about Victorinus, I burned to imitate him; and it was for this end he had related it. But when he had added this also, that in the time of the Emperor Julian, there was a law made by which Christians were forbidden to teach grammar and oratory, and he, in obedience to this law, chose rather to abandon the wordy school than Thy word, by which Thou makest eloquent the tongues of the dumb (Wisdom 10:21),—**he appeared to me not more brave than happy, in having thus discovered an opportunity of waiting on Thee only, which thing I was sighing for, thus bound, not with the irons of another, but my own iron will. My will was the enemy master of, and thence had made a chain for me and bound me. Because of a perverse will was lust made; and lust indulged in became custom; and custom not resisted became necessity. By which links, as it were, joined together (whence I term it a “chain”), did a hard bondage hold me enthralled. But that new will which had begun to develop in me, freely to worship Thee, and to wish to enjoy Thee, O God, the only sure enjoyment, was not able as yet to overcome my former willfulness, made strong by long indulgence. Thus did my two wills, one old and the other new, one carnal, the other spiritual, contend within me; and by their discord they unstrung my soul.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But when that man of Thine, Simplicianus, related this to me about Victorinus, I burned to imitate him; and it was for this end he had related it. But when he had added this also, that in the time of the Emperor Julian, there was a law made by which Christians were forbidden to teach grammar and oratory, and he, in obedience to this law, chose rather to abandon the wordy school than Thy word, by which Thou makest eloquent the tongues of the dumb (Wisdom 10:21),”

He refers to **Wisdom 10 (Septuagint):21** For wisdom opened the mouth of the dumb, and made the tongues of them that cannot speak eloquent.

He continues, “ — he appeared to me not more brave than happy, in having thus discovered an opportunity of waiting on Thee only, which thing I was sighing for, thus bound, not with the irons of another, but my own iron will. My will was the enemy master of, and thence had made a chain for me and bound me. Because of a perverse will was lust made; and lust indulged in became custom; and custom not resisted became necessity. By which links, as it were, joined together (whence I term it a “chain”), did a hard bondage hold me enthralled.”

Augustine was desiring to wait only on the Lord, but he felt in himself to be bound by a chain of lust. But he begins to notice a new will as we continue to read his writing, “But that new will which had begun to develop in me, freely to worship Thee, and to wish to enjoy Thee, O God, the only sure enjoyment, was not able as yet to overcome my former willfulness, made strong by long indulgence. Thus did my two wills, one old and the other new, one carnal, the other spiritual, contend within me; and by their discord they unstrung my soul.”

Augustine recognized a new will in himself which was spiritual. He was possibly already born again at this time.

11. Thus came I to understand, from my own experience, what I had read, how that “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” (Galatians 5:17) I verily lusted both ways; yet more in that which I approved in myself, than in that which I disapproved in myself. For in this last it was now rather not “I,” (Romans 7:20) because in much I rather suffered against my will than did it willingly. And yet it was through me that custom became more combative against me, because I had come willingly whither I willed not. And who, then, can with any justice speak against it, when just punishment follows the sinner? Nor had I now any longer my wonted excuse, that as yet I hesitated to be above the world and serve Thee, because my perception of the truth was uncertain; for now it was certain. But I, still bound to the earth, refused to be Thy soldier; and was as much afraid of being freed from all embarrassments, as we ought to fear to be embarrassed.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Thus came I to understand, from my own experience, what I had read, how that “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.” (Galatians 5:17)”

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):17** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

He continues, “I verily lusted both ways; yet more in that which I approved in myself, than in that which I disapproved in myself. For in this last it was now rather not “I,” (Romans 7:20) because in much I rather suffered against my will than did it willingly.”



He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):20** Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

He continues, “And yet it was through me that custom became more combative against me, because I had come willingly whither I willed not. And who, then, can with any justice speak against it, when just punishment follows the sinner? Nor had I now any longer my wonted excuse, that as yet I hesitated to be above the world and serve Thee, because my perception of the truth was uncertain; for now it was certain. But I, still bound to the earth, refused to be Thy soldier; and was as much afraid of being freed from all embarrassments, as we ought to fear to be embarrassed.”

What we are noticing here is that there began to be an awareness of the spiritual realm in Augustine. He is in the throes of repentance. But as he refers to Romans 7:20 above, it seems likely that he is already born again, for Romans 7 is about believers for we read in context in **Romans 7 (KJV):20** Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

This is the battle of every believer, as it was for Paul. Now, as believers, we do not have to yield to the sin in our members, our flesh. Augustine was learning this.

12. Thus with the baggage of the world was I sweetly burdened, as when in slumber; and the thoughts wherein I meditated upon Thee were like unto the efforts of those desiring to awake, who, still overpowered with a heavy drowsiness, are again steeped therein. And as no one desires to sleep always, and in the sober judgment of all waking is better, yet does a man generally defer to shake off drowsiness, when there is a heavy lethargy in all his limbs, and, though displeased, yet even after it is time to rise with pleasure yields to it, so was I assured that it were much better for me to give up myself to Thy charity, than to yield myself to my own cupidity; but the former course satisfied and vanquished me, the latter pleased me and fettered me. Nor had I aught to answer Thee calling to me, “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” (Ephesians 5:14) And to Thee showing me on every side, that what Thou saidst was true, I, convicted by the truth, had nothing at all to reply, but the drawling and drowsy words: “Presently, lo, presently,” “Leave me a little while.” But “presently, presently,” had no present; and my “leave me a little while” went on for a long while. In vain did I “delight in Thy law after the inner man,” when “another law in my members warred against the law of my mind, and brought me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” For the law of sin is the violence of custom, whereby the mind is drawn and held, even against its will; deserving to be so held in that it so willingly falls into it. “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death,” but Thy grace only, through Jesus Christ our Lord? (Romans 7:22-24)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he says, “Thus with the baggage of the world was I sweetly burdened, as when in slumber; and the thoughts wherein I meditated upon Thee were

like unto the efforts of those desiring to awake, who, still overpowered with a heavy drowsiness, are again steeped therein. And as no one desires to sleep always, and in the sober judgment of all waking is better, yet does a man generally defer to shake off drowsiness, when there is a heavy lethargy in all his limbs, and, though displeased, yet even after it is time to rise with pleasure yields to it, so was I assured that it were much better for me to give up myself to Thy charity, than to yield myself to my own cupidity; but the former course satisfied and vanquished me, the latter pleased me and fettered me. Nor had I aught to answer Thee calling to me, “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” (Ephesians 5:14)”

He refers to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):14** Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

He continues, “And to Thee showing me on every side, that what Thou saidst was true, I, convicted by the truth, had nothing at all to reply, but the drawling and drowsy words: “Presently, lo, presently;” “Leave me a little while.” But “presently, presently,” had no present; and my “leave me a little while” went on for a long while. In vain did I “delight in Thy law after the inner man,” when “another law in my members warred against the law of my mind, and brought me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” For the law of sin is the violence of custom, whereby the mind is drawn and held, even against its will; deserving to be so held in that it so willingly falls into it. “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death,” but Thy grace only, through Jesus Christ our Lord? (Romans 7:22-24)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

What he doesn't realize is that Paul has already been born again. In Romans, chapter 7, Paul explains what happens when we are born again, as he begins in **Romans 7 (KJV):1** Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

Paul addresses the Romans as brethren who know the law in verse 1, which states that one who is married is free to be married to another if her husband has died.

Paul continues in **Romans 7 (KJV):4** Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. 5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Paul again addresses them as brethren, but this time it is clear that he means brethren in Christ, for he says in verse 4, “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by

the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”

Now he includes himself as well in verse 6, as he says, “But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”

We continue to read, as he then explains in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. 8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. 9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. 10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

What Paul is saying is that when he finally realized his sinful condition, the commandment mandated his death. That is, he realized that he was dead to all of his old ways. The life he lead as a sinner was now past.

We continue to read, as he explains further in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. 13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

He now understood that the law only brought his sin to light by the commandment. The law is holy, just, and good. He now understood that sin worked death in him, and so sin, by the commandment, became “exceeding sinful” because it separates us from God’s fellowship. Paul then explains further in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

In his narrative, Paul now realizes that he has actually been born again. He himself, though he did what he did not want to do, consented “unto the law that it is good”. That is, there was a part of him that agreed with the law.

He then continues in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

In his narrative, Paul now recognizes, that his inward man delights in the law of God. He has been born again, and he now has two natures, one sinful, and the other in which he delights “in the law of God after the inward man”, as in verse 22 above. But he also recognizes that he has been set free from this old man, or nature, which is in his flesh, which he describes as this “law of sin which is in my members”, as in verse 23 above.



So Paul is speaking of the Christian here. And the way Augustine describes his experience, he has already been born again.

We now skip to **Book VIII, Chapter XI to XII**, and paragraphs 25 through 30, to see his struggle, and continue his story of conversion.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions  
Book VIII, Chapter XI, paragraph 25-27, page 126-127**

Chapter XI.—In What Manner the Spirit Struggled with the Flesh, that It Might Be Freed from the Bondage of Vanity.

25. Thus was I sick and tormented, accusing myself far more severely than was my wont, tossing and turning me in my chain till that was utterly broken, whereby I now was but slightly, but still was held. And Thou, O Lord, pressedst upon me in my inward parts by a severe mercy, redoubling the lashes of fear and shame, lest I should again give way, and that same slender remaining tie not being broken off, it should recover strength, and enchain me the faster. For I said mentally, “Lo, let it be done now, let it be done now.” And as I spoke, I all but came to a resolve. I all but did it, yet I did it not. Yet fell I not back to my old condition, but took up my position hard by, and drew breath. And I tried again, and wanted but very little of reaching it, and somewhat less, and then all but touched and grasped it; and yet came not at it, nor touched, nor grasped it, hesitating to die unto death, and to live unto life; and the worse, whereto I had been habituated, prevailed more with me than the better, which I had not tried. And the very moment in which I was to become another man, the nearer it approached me, the greater horror did it strike into me; but it did not strike me back, nor turn me aside, but kept me in suspense.

26. The very toys of toys, and vanities of vanities, my old mistresses, still enthralled me; they shook my fleshly garment, and whispered softly, “Dost thou part with us? And from that moment shall we no more be with thee for ever? And from that moment shall not this or that be lawful for thee for ever?” And what did they suggest to me in the words “this or that?” What is it that they suggested, O my God? Let Thy mercy avert it from the soul of Thy servant. What impurities did they suggest! What shame! And now I far less than half heard them, not openly showing themselves and contradicting me, but muttering, as it were, behind my back, and furtively plucking me as I was departing, to make me look back upon them. Yet they did delay me, so that I hesitated to burst and shake myself free from them, and to leap over whither I was called,—an unruly habit saying to me, “Dost thou think thou canst live without them?”

27. But now it said this very faintly; for on that side towards which I had set my face, and whither I trembled to go, did the chaste dignity of Continence appear unto me, cheerful, but not dissolutely gay, honestly alluring me to come and doubt nothing, and extending her holy hands, full of a multiplicity of good examples, to receive and embrace me. There were there so many young men and maidens, a multitude of youth and every age, grave widows and ancient virgins, and Continence herself in all, not barren, but a fruitful mother of children of joys, by Thee, O Lord, her Husband. And she smiled on me with an encouraging mockery, as if to say, “Canst not thou do what these youths and maidens can? Or can one or other do it of themselves, and not rather in the Lord their God? The Lord their God gave me unto them. Why standest thou in thine own strength, and so standest not? Cast thyself upon Him; fear not, He will not withdraw

that thou shouldest fall; cast thyself upon Him without fear, He will receive thee, and heal thee.” And I blushed beyond measure, for I still heard the muttering of those toys, and hung in suspense. And she again seemed to say, “Shut up thine ears against those unclean members of thine upon the earth, that they may be mortified. (Colossians 3:5) They tell thee of delights, but not as doth the law of the Lord thy God.” (Psalm 119:85) This controversy in my heart was naught but self against self. But Alypius, sitting close by my side, awaited in silence the result of my unwonted emotion.

**Commentary:** In paragraph 25 Augustine begins as he says, “Thus was I sick and tormented, accusing myself far more severely than was my wont, tossing and turning me in my chain till that was utterly broken, whereby I now was but slightly, but still was held.”

Augustine was struggling with the uncleanness that he felt because of his past.

Then in paragraph 26 he says, “The very toys of toys, and vanities of vanities, my old mistresses, still enthralled me; they shook my fleshly garment, and whispered softly, “Dost thou part with us? And from that moment shall we no more be with thee for ever? And from that moment shall not this or that be lawful for thee for ever?”

He calls them “toys”, and “vanities”, and “old mistresses”. These were impurities he felt shame for.

He concludes in paragraph 27, “And I blushed beyond measure, for I still heard the muttering of those toys, and hung in suspense.”

Then he hears Continence speaking to him as he continues, “And she again seemed to say, “Shut up thine ears against those unclean members of thine upon the earth, that they may be mortified. (Colossians 3:5)”

He refers to **Colossians 3 (KJV):5** Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

He continues, “They tell thee of delights, but not as doth the law of the Lord thy God.” (Psalm 119:85)”

He refers to Psalm 119 (KJV):85 The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law.

He continues, “This controversy in my heart was naught but self against self. But Alypius, sitting close by my side, awaited in silence the result of my unwonted emotion.”

We need to keep in mind what he was feeling as we continue in the next paragraphs.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions Book VIII, Chapter XII, paragraph 28-30, page 127-128**

**Chapter XII.**—Having Prayed to God, He Pours Forth a Shower of Tears, And, Admonished by a Voice, He Opens the Book and Reads the Words in Romans 13:13; By Which, Being Changed in His Whole Soul, He Discloses the Divine Favour to His Friend and His Mother.

28. But when a profound reflection had, from the secret depths of my soul, drawn together and heaped up all my misery before the sight of my heart, there arose a mighty storm, accompanied by as mighty a shower of tears. Which, that I might pour forth fully, with its

natural expressions, I stole away from Alypius; for it suggested itself to me that solitude was fitter for the business of weeping. So I retired to such a distance that even his presence could not be oppressive to me. Thus was it with me at that time, and he perceived it; for something, I believe, I had spoken, wherein the sound of my voice appeared choked with weeping, and in that state had I risen up. He then remained where we had been sitting, most completely astonished. I flung myself down, how, I know not, under a certain fig tree, giving free course to my tears, and the streams of mine eyes gushed out, an acceptable sacrifice unto Thee. (1 Peter 2:5) And, not indeed in these words, yet to this effect, spake I much unto Thee,—“But Thou, O Lord, how long?” (Psalm 6:3) “How long, Lord? Wilt Thou be angry for ever? Oh, remember not against us former iniquities;” (Psalm 79:5,8) for I felt that I was enthralled by them. I sent up these sorrowful cries,—“How long, how long? Tomorrow, and tomorrow? Why not now? Why is there not this hour an end to my uncleanness?”

29. I was saying these things and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when, lo, I heard the voice as of a boy or girl, I know not which, coming from a neighboring house, chanting, and oft repeating, “Take up and read; take up and read.” Immediately my countenance was changed, and I began most earnestly to consider whether it was usual for children in any kind of game to sing such words; nor could I remember ever to have heard the like. So, restraining the torrent of my tears, I rose up, interpreting it no other way than as a command to me from Heaven to open the book, and to read the first Chapter I should light upon. For I had heard of Antony, that, accidentally coming in whilst the gospel was being read, he received the admonition as if what was read were addressed to him, “Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.” (Matthew 19:21) And by such oracle was he forthwith converted unto Thee. So quickly I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting; for there had I put down the volume of the apostles, when I rose thence. I grasped, opened, and in silence read that paragraph on which my eyes first fell,—“Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.” (Romans 13:13,14) No further would I read, nor did I need; for instantly, as the sentence ended,—by a light, as it were, of security infused into my heart,—all the gloom of doubt vanished away.

30. Closing the book, then, and putting either my finger between, or some other mark, I now with a tranquil countenance made it known to Alypius. And he thus disclosed to me what was wrought in him, which I knew not. He asked to look at what I had read. I showed him; and he looked even further than I had read, and I knew not what followed. This it was, verily, “Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye;” (Romans 14:1) which he applied to himself, and discovered to me. By this admonition was he strengthened; and by a good resolution and purpose, very much in accord with his character (wherein, for the better, he was always far different from me), without any restless delay he joined me. Thence we go in to my mother. We make it known to her,—she rejoiceth. We relate how it came to pass,—she leapeth for joy, and triumpheth, and blesseth Thee, who art “able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think; (Ephesians 3:20) for she perceived Thee to have given her more for me than she used to ask by her pitiful and most doleful groanings. For Thou didst so convert me unto Thyself, that I sought neither a wife, nor any other of this world’s hopes,—standing in that rule of faith in which Thou, so many years before, had showed me unto her in a vision. And thou didst turn

her grief into a gladness, (Psalm 30:11) much more plentiful than she had desired, and much dearer and chaster than she used to crave, by having grandchildren of my body.

**Commentary:** Augustine was seeking a relationship with the living God. And in the depth of processing his feelings, God spoke to him. He knew it was the Lord because of the conviction he felt in the Scripture.

In paragraph 28, he refers to **1 Peter 2 (KJV):5** Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

And to **Psalm 6 (KJV):3** My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long?

And to **Psalm 79 (KJV):5** How long, Lord? Wilt thou be angry for ever? Shall thy jealousy burn like fire?

And to **Psalm 79 (KJV):8** O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low.

In paragraph 29, he hears from God who does not tell him where to read but just to “**Take up and read; take up and read.**”

He then remembers Antony who “received the admonition as if what was read were addressed to him, “Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.” He is referring to **Matthew 19 (KJV):21** Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

He then testifies, “**So quickly I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting; for there had I put down the volume of the apostles, when I rose thence. I grasped, opened, and in silence read that paragraph on which my eyes first fell,—“Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.”**

He opened to **Romans 13 (KJV):13** Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

He concludes that this was a message from God, as he then testifies, “**No further would I read, nor did I need; for instantly, as the sentence ended,—by a light, as it were, of security infused into my heart,—all the gloom of doubt vanished away.**”

In paragraph 30, he records his surrender, as he refers to **Romans 14 (KJV):1** Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

And to **Ephesians 3 (KJV):20** Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us...

And to **Psalm 30 (KJV):11** Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;

Augustine now finally surrendered all to the Lord. Now we move to Book IX to continue his conversion story.

**Book IX.** He speaks of his design of forsaking the profession of rhetoric; of the death of his friends, Nebridius and Verecundus; of having received baptism in the thirty-third year of his age; and of the virtues and death of his mother, Monica.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions**  
**Book IX, Chapter III, paragraphs 5-6, page 130-131**

**Chapter III.**—He Retires to the Villa of His Friend Verecundus, Who Was Not Yet a Christian, and Refers to His Conversion and Death, as Well as that of Nebridius.

5. Verecundus was wasted with anxiety at that our happiness, since he, being most firmly held by his bonds, saw that he would lose our fellowship. For he was not yet a Christian, though his wife was one of the faithful; and yet hereby, being more firmly enchained than by anything else, was he held back from that journey which we had commenced. Nor, he declared, did he wish to be a Christian on any other terms than those that were impossible. However, he invited us most courteously to make use of his country house so long as we should stay there. Thou, O Lord, wilt “recompense” him for this “at the resurrection of the just,” (Luke 14:14) seeing that Thou hast already given him “the lot of the righteous.” (Psalm 125:2) For although, when we were absent at Rome, he, being overtaken with bodily sickness, and therein being made a Christian, and one of the faithful, departed this life, yet hadst Thou mercy on him, and not on him only, but on us also; (Philippians 2:7) lest, thinking on the exceeding kindness of our friend to us, and unable to count him in Thy flock, we should be tortured with intolerable grief. Thanks be unto Thee, our God, we are Thine. Thy exhortations, consolations, and faithful promises assure us that Thou now repayest Verecundus for that country house at Cassiacum, where from the fever of the world we found rest in Thee, with the perpetual freshness of Thy Paradise, in that Thou hast forgiven him his earthly sins, in that mountain flowing with milk, that fruitful mountain,—Thine own.

6. He then was at that time full of grief; but Nebridius was joyous. Although he also, not being yet a Christian, had fallen into the pit of that most pernicious error of believing Thy Son to be a phantasm, yet, coming out thence, he held the same belief that we did; not as yet initiated in any of the sacraments of Thy Church, but a most earnest inquirer after truth. Whom, not long after our **conversion and regeneration by Thy baptism**, he being also a faithful member of the Catholic Church, and serving Thee in perfect chastity and continency amongst his own people in Africa, when his whole household had been brought to Christianity through him, **didst Thou release from the flesh; and now he lives in Abraham’s bosom. Whatever that may be which is signified by that bosom, there lives my Nebridius, my sweet friend, Thy son, O Lord, adopted of a freedman; there he liveth. For what other place could there be for such a soul?** There liveth he, concerning which he used to ask me much,—me, an inexperienced, feeble one. Now he puts not his ear unto my mouth, but his spiritual mouth unto Thy fountain, and drinketh as much as he is able, wisdom according to his desire,—happy without end. Nor do I believe that he is so inebriated with it as to forget me, seeing Thou, O Lord, whom he drinketh, art mindful of us. Thus, then, were we comforting the sorrowing Verecundus (our friendship being untouched) concerning our conversion, and exhorting him to a faith according to his condition, I mean, his married state. And tarrying for Nebridius to follow us, which being so near, he was just about to do, when, behold, those days passed over at last; for long and many they seemed, on account of my love of easeful liberty, that I might sing unto Thee from my very marrow. My heart said unto Thee,—I have sought Thy face; “Thy face, Lord, will I seek.”



**Commentary:** Augustine mentions “conversion and regeneration by Thy baptism”, in paragraph 6, about which we will discuss more later. Then he speaks of one Nebridius, “Whom, not long after our conversion and regeneration by Thy baptism, he being also a faithful member of the Catholic Church, and serving Thee in perfect chastity and continency amongst his own people in Africa, when his whole household had been brought to Christianity through him, **didst Thou release from the flesh; and now he lives in Abraham’s bosom. Whatever that may be which is signified by that bosom, there lives my Nebridius, my sweet friend, Thy son, O Lord, adopted of a freedman; there he liveth. For what other place could there be for such a soul?**”

Nebridius was probably never baptized. Because of this, Augustine believed he went to Abraham’s bosom, mentioned in Luke, chapter 16. We will discuss Abraham’s bosom later. For now, we continue to read of his conversion in the following Book IX, Chapter IV.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions**

#### **Book IX, Chapter IV, paragraphs 7-12, Augustine speaking of his conversion, page 131-133**

**Chapter IV.**—In the Country He Gives His Attention to Literature, and Explains the Fourth Psalm in Connection with the Happy Conversion of Alypius. He is Troubled with Toothache.

7. **And the day arrived on which, in very deed, I was to be released from the Professorship of Rhetoric, from which in intention I had been already released. And done it was; and Thou didst deliver my tongue whence Thou hadst already delivered my heart; and full of joy I blessed Thee for it, and retired with all mine to the villa.** What I accomplished here in writing, which was now wholly devoted to Thy service, though still, in this pause as it were, panting from the school of pride, my books testify,—those in which I disputed with my friends, and those with myself alone before Thee; and what with the absent Nebridius, my letters testify. And when can I find time to recount all Thy great benefits which Thou bestowedst upon us at that time, especially as I am hasting on to still greater mercies? For my memory calls upon me, and pleasant it is to me, O Lord, to confess unto Thee, by what inward goads Thou didst subdue me, and how Thou didst make me low, bringing down the mountains and hills of my imaginations, and didst straighten my crookedness, and smooth my rough ways; (Luke 3:5) and by what means Thou also didst subdue that brother of my heart, Alypius, unto the name of Thy only begotten, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which he at first refused to have inserted in our writings. For he rather desired that they should savour of the “cedars” of the schools, which the Lord hath now broken down (Psalm 19:5), than of the wholesome herbs of the Church, hostile to serpents.

8. What utterances sent I up unto Thee, my God, when I read the Psalms of David, those faithful songs and sounds of devotion which exclude all swelling of spirit, **when new to Thy true love, at rest in the villa with Alypius, a catechumen like myself,** my mother cleaving unto us,—in woman’s garb truly, but with a man’s faith, with the peacefulness of age, full of motherly love and Christian piety! What utterances used I to send up unto Thee in those Psalms, and how was I inflamed towards Thee by them, and burned to rehearse them, if it were possible, throughout the whole world, against the pride of the human race! And yet they are sung

throughout the whole world, and none can hide himself from Thy heat. (Psalm 19:6) With what vehement and bitter sorrow was I indignant at the Manichæans; whom yet again I pitied, for that they were ignorant of those sacraments, those medicaments, and were mad against the antidote which might have made them sane! I wished that they had been somewhere near me then, and, without my being aware of their presence, could have beheld my face, and heard my words, when I read the fourth Psalm in that time of my leisure,—how that Psalm wrought upon me. When I called upon Thee, Thou didst hear me, O God of my righteousness; Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. (Psalm 4:1) Oh that they might have heard what I uttered on these words, without my knowing whether they heard or no, lest they should think that I spake it because of them! For, of a truth, neither should I have said the same things, nor in the way I said them, if I had perceived that I was heard and seen by them; and had I spoken them, they would not so have received them as when I spake by and for myself before Thee, out of the private feelings of my soul.

9. I alternately quaked with fear, and warmed with hope, and with rejoicing in Thy mercy, O Father. And all these passed forth, both by mine eyes and voice, when Thy good Spirit, turning unto us, said, O ye sons of men, how long will ye be slow of heart? “How long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing?” (Psalm 4:1) **For I had loved vanity, and sought after leasing.** And Thou, O Lord, hadst already magnified Thy Holy One, raising Him from the dead, and setting Him at Thy right hand, whence from on high He should send His promise (Luke 24:49), the Paraclete, “the Spirit of Truth.” (John 14:16-17) And He had already sent Him, but I knew it not; He had sent Him (Acts 2:1-4), because He was now magnified, rising again from the dead, and ascending into heaven. For till then “the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” (John 7:39) And the prophet cries out, How long will ye be slow of heart? How long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Know this, that the Lord hath magnified His Holy One. He cries out, “How long?” He cries out, “Know this,” and I, so long ignorant, “loved vanity, and sought after leasing.” And therefore I heard and trembled, because these words were spoken unto such as I remembered that I myself had been. For in those phantasms which I once held for truths was there “vanity” and “leasing.” And I spake many things loudly and earnestly, in the sorrow of my remembrance, which, would that they who yet “love vanity and seek after leasing” had heard! They would perchance have been troubled, and have vomited it forth, and Thou wouldest hear them when they cried unto Thee; (Psalm 4:1) for by a true death in the flesh He died for us, who now maketh intercession for us with Thee. (Romans 8:34)

10. **I read further, “Be ye angry, and sin not.” (Ephesians 4:26)** And how was I moved, O my God, who had now learned to “be angry” with myself for the things past, so that in the future I might not sin! Yea, to be justly angry; for that it was not another nature of the race of darkness which sinned for me, as they affirm it to be who are not angry with themselves, and **who treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and of the revelation of Thy righteous judgment. (Romans 2:5)** Nor were my good things now without, nor were they sought after with eyes of flesh in that sun; for they that would have joy from without easily sink into oblivion, and are wasted upon those things which are seen and temporal, and in their starving thoughts do lick their very shadows. Oh, if only they were wearied out with their fasting, and said, “Who will show us any good?” And we would answer, and they hear, O Lord. The light of Thy countenance is lifted up upon us. For we are not that Light, which lighteth every man (John

1:9), but we are enlightened by Thee, that we, who were sometimes darkness, may be light in Thee. (Ephesians 5:8) Oh that they could behold the internal Eternal, which having tasted I gnashed my teeth that I could not show It to them, while they brought me their heart in their eyes, roaming abroad from Thee, and said, “Who will show us any good?” (Psalm 4:6) But there, where I was angry with myself in my chamber, where I was inwardly pricked, where I had offered my “sacrifice,” slaying my old man, and beginning the resolution of a new life, putting my trust in Thee, (Psalm 4:5)—there hadst Thou begun to grow sweet unto me, and to “put gladness in my heart.” (Psalm 4:7) And I cried out as I read this outwardly, and felt it inwardly. Nor would I be increased with worldly goods, wasting time and being wasted by time; whereas I possessed in Thy eternal simplicity other corn, and wine, and oil.

11. **And with a loud cry from my heart, I called out in the following verse, “Oh, in peace!” and “the self-same!” Oh, what said he, “I will lay me down and sleep!” (Psalm 4:8)** For who shall hinder us, when “shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:54) And Thou art in the highest degree “the self-same,” who changest not; and in Thee is the rest which forgetteth all labour, for there is no other beside Thee, nor ought we to seek after those many other things which are not what Thou art; but Thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in hope. (Psalm 4:9) These things I read, and was inflamed; but discovered not what to do with those deaf and dead, of whom I had been a pestilent member,—a bitter and a blind declaimer against the writings behonied with the honey of heaven and luminous with Thine own light; and I was consumed on account of the enemies of this Scripture.

12. When shall I call to mind all that took place in those holidays? Yet neither have I forgotten, nor will I be silent about the severity of Thy scourge, and the amazing quickness of Thy mercy. **Thou didst at that time torture me with toothache; and when it had become so exceeding great that I was not able to speak, it came into my heart to urge all my friends who were present to pray for me to Thee, the God of all manner of health. And I wrote it down on wax, and gave it to them to read. Presently, as with submissive desire we bowed our knees, that pain departed.** But what pain? Or how did it depart? I confess to being much afraid, my Lord my God, seeing that from my earliest years I had not experienced such pain. **And Thy purposes were profoundly impressed upon me; and, rejoicing in faith, I praised Thy name. And that faith suffered me not to be at rest in regard to my past sins, which were not yet forgiven me by Thy baptism.**

**Commentary:** In paragraph 7, Augustine says that he was, “released from the Professorship of Rhetoric, from which in intention I had been already released. And done it was; and Thou didst deliver my tongue whence Thou hadst already delivered my heart; and full of joy I blessed Thee for it, and retired with all mine to the villa.”

In paragraph 8, Augustine says he was “new to Thy true love, at rest in the villa with Alypius, a catechumen like myself”.

In paragraph 9, as Augustine is reading Psalm 4, he says that he, “had loved vanity, and sought after leasing.” The translation is after the **King James Version**. The word “leasing” is a translation of the Hebrew word **כָּזָב** (pronounced kazav) and means a lie, untruth, falsehood, deceptive thing. So let us read another version to get a better grasp of what is meant by leasing in verse 2.



**Psalm 4 (NASB):**1 Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Be gracious to me and hear my prayer.

2 O sons of men, how long will my honor become a reproach? How long will you love what is worthless and aim at deception? Selah.

3 But know that the LORD has set apart the godly man for Himself; The LORD hears when I call to Him.

4 Tremble, and do not sin; Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And trust in the LORD.

6 Many are saying, “Who will show us any good?” Lift up the light of Your countenance upon us, O LORD!

7 You have put gladness in my heart, More than when their grain and new wine abound.

8 In peace I will both lie down and sleep, For You alone, O LORD, make me to dwell in safety.

Augustine is processing his feelings with this Psalm, and the Lord is feeling with him.

Then in paragraph 10, Augustine continues to feel, as he says, “**I read further, “Be ye angry, and sin not.” (Ephesians 4:26)** And how was I moved, O my God, who had now learned to “be angry” with myself for the things past, so that in the future I might not sin! Yea, to be justly angry;”

He is getting angry with himself, or making up his mind not to go that way again. And he is reading in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):26** Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

And he doesn’t want to be as those Paul refers to in **Romans 2 (KJV):5** But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

He now recognizes the true light, as he refers to **John 1 (KJV):9** That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

And to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):8** For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

And he concludes in paragraph 10, as he says, “But there, where I was angry with myself in my chamber, where I was inwardly pricked, where I had offered my “sacrifice,” slaying my old man, and beginning the resolution of a new life, putting my trust in Thee, (Psalm 4:5)—there hadst Thou begun to grow sweet unto me, and to “put gladness in my heart.” (Psalm 4:7) And I cried out as I read this outwardly, and felt it inwardly. Nor would I be increased with worldly goods, wasting time and being wasted by time; whereas I possessed in Thy eternal simplicity other corn, and wine, and oil.”

Then in paragraph 11, he says, “And with a loud cry from my heart, I called out in the following verse, “Oh, in peace!” and “the self-same!” Oh, what said he, “I will lay me down and sleep!”, referring to Psalm 4:8 above.

And in paragraph 12, he is in pain, and asks for prayer, and is healed of a toothache. And finally he states, “**And Thy purposes were profoundly impressed upon me; and, rejoicing in**

faith, I praised Thy name. And that faith suffered me not to be at rest in regard to my past sins, which were not yet forgiven me by Thy baptism.”

Yes, Augustine was still a catechumen as he says in paragraph 8 above. He was in the process of repentance. Having a change of mind about his sin, and about the righteousness of God, he was resolved to start a new life.

Now, Augustine was born in 354 AD, became a catechumen in 385 AD, at the age of 31, and he was baptized when he was 33, which would have been 387 AD. But from what we have read so far, it would seem that Augustine was a believer before he was baptized.

So what was it like to be a catechumen? In the introduction to the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, James Donaldson notes, “It now seems to be generally admitted that the entire work is not later than the fourth century, although the usual allowance must be made for later textual changes, whether by accident or design.” So the following would have been the rule in the time of Augustine.

## The Catechumens

Now, in order for us to be familiar with the requirements of catechumens in the time of Augustine and the early Church, let us look at the Constitutions of the Holy Apostles.

Note: “The *Apostolic Constitutions* or *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* (Latin: *Constitutiones Apostolorum*) is a Christian collection of eight treatises which belongs to the Church Orders, a genre of early Christian literature, that offered authoritative "apostolic" prescriptions on moral conduct, liturgy and Church organization.”

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic\\_Constitutions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostolic_Constitutions)

The Constitutions of the Holy Apostles in its entirety was completed probably not later than the early fourth century. This means that it was in place in the time of Augustine. We will look at just Section III, and what must take place for a Catechumen to be baptized.

### **Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume VII, page 475-477**

#### **Constitutions of the Holy Apostles**

#### **Book VII. Concerning the Christian Life, and the Eucharist, and the Initiation into Christ.**

#### **Sec. III.—On the Instruction of Catechumens, and Their Initiation into Baptism.**

Now, after what manner those ought to live that are initiated into Christ, and what thanksgivings they ought to send up to God through Christ, has been said in the foregoing directions. But it is reasonable not to leave even those who are not yet initiated without assistance.

#### *How the Catechumens are to Be Instructed in the Elements.*

XXXIX. Let him, therefore, who is to be taught the truth in regard to piety be instructed before his baptism in the knowledge of the unbegotten God, in the understanding of His only begotten Son, in the assured acknowledgment of the Holy Ghost. Let him learn the order of the

several parts of the creation, the series of providence, the different dispensations of Thy laws. Let him be instructed why the world was made, and why man was appointed to be a citizen therein; let him also know his own nature, of what sort it is; let him be taught how God punished the wicked with water and fire, and did glorify the saints in every generation—I mean Seth, and Enos, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham and his posterity, and Melchizedek, and Job, and Moses, and Joshua, and Caleb, and Phineas the priest, and those that were holy in every generation; and how God still took care of and did not reject mankind, but called them from their error and vanity to the acknowledgment of the truth at various seasons, reducing them from bondage and impiety unto liberty and piety, from injustice to righteousness, from death eternal to everlasting life. **Let him that offers himself to baptism learn these and the like things during the time that he is a catechumen;** and let him who lays his hands upon him adore God, the Lord of the whole world, and thank Him for His creation, for His sending Christ His only begotten Son, that He might save man by blotting out his transgressions, and that He might remit ungodliness and sins, and might “purify him from all filthiness of flesh and spirit,” (2 Corinthians 7:1) and sanctify man according to the good pleasure of His kindness, that He might inspire him with the knowledge of His will, and enlighten the eyes of his heart to consider of His wonderful works, and make known to him the judgments of righteousness, that so he might hate every way of iniquity, and walk in the way of truth, **that he might be thought worthy of the laver of regeneration, to the adoption of sons, which is in Christ, that “being planted together in the likeness of the death of Christ,” (Romans 6:5) in hopes of a glorious communication, he may be mortified to sin, and may live to God, as to his mind, and word, and deed, and may be numbered together in the book of the living. And after this thanksgiving, let him instruct him in the doctrines concerning our Lord’s incarnation, and in those concerning His passion, and resurrection from the dead, and assumption.**

**Commentary:** Let us itemize what was taught to a Catechumen:

“Let him, therefore, who is to be taught the truth in regard to piety be instructed before his baptism...

- 1.) in the knowledge of the unbegotten God,
- 2.) in the understanding of His only begotten Son,
- 3.) in the assured acknowledgment of the Holy Ghost.
- 4.) Let him learn the order of the several parts of the creation,
- 5.) the series of providence,
- 6.) the different dispensations of Thy laws.
- 7.) Let him be instructed why the world was made,
- 8.) and why man was appointed to be a citizen therein;
- 9.) let him also know his own nature, of what sort it is;
- 10.) let him be taught how God punished the wicked with water and fire, and did glorify the saints in every generation—I mean Seth, and Enos, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham and his posterity, and Melchizedek, and Job, and Moses, and Joshua, and Caleb, and Phineas the priest, and those that were holy in every generation;
- 11.) and how God still took care of and did not reject mankind, but called them from their error and vanity to the acknowledgment of the truth at various seasons, reducing them from bondage and impiety unto liberty and piety, from injustice to

righteousness, from death eternal to everlasting life.

- 12.) And after this thanksgiving, let him instruct him in the doctrines concerning our Lord's incarnation, and in those concerning His passion, and resurrection from the dead, and assumption.

Let us continue to read in the next paragraph.

*A Constitution How the Catechumens are to Be Blessed by the Priests in Their Initiation, and What Things are to Be Taught Them.*

XL. And when it remains that the catechumen is to be baptized, let him learn what concerns the renunciation of the devil, and the joining himself with Christ; for it is fit that he should first abstain from things contrary, and then be admitted to the mysteries. He must beforehand purify his heart from all wickedness of disposition, from all spot and wrinkle, and then partake of the holy things; for as the skillfullest husbandman does first purge his ground of the thorns which are grown up therein, and does then sow his wheat, so ought you also to take away all impiety from them, and then to sow the seeds of piety in them, and vouchsafe them baptism. For even our Lord did in this manner exhort us, saying first, "Make disciples of all nations;" (Matthew 28:19) and then He adds this, "and baptize them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Let, therefore, the candidate for baptism declare thus in his renunciation: (Compare Justin Martyr, vol. I, pg. 183, this series)

**Commentary:** Let us continue to itemize what was taught to a Catechumen:

"And when it remains that the catechumen is to be baptized..."

- 1.) let him learn what concerns the renunciation of the devil,
- 2.) and the joining himself with Christ;
- 3.) for it is fit that he should first abstain from things contrary, and then be admitted to the mysteries.
- 4.) He must beforehand purify his heart from all wickedness of disposition, from all spot and wrinkle, and then partake of the holy things;

The reason is stated next, in the paragraph above, "for as the skillfullest husbandman does first purge his ground of the thorns which are grown up therein, and does then sow his wheat, so ought you also to take away all impiety from them, and then to sow the seeds of piety in them, and vouchsafe them baptism. For even our Lord did in this manner exhort us, saying first, "Make disciples of all nations;" (Matthew 28:19) and then He adds this, "and baptize them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Let, therefore, the candidate for baptism declare thus in his renunciation."

The reference is to **Matthew 28 (NASB):19** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

The word for "make disciples" in the Greek is **μαθητεύσατε** (pronounced mā-thā-tū'-sa-tay), and is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural, aorist 1, imperative active tense of the verb, **μαθητεύω**

(pronounced mā-thā-tyū'-ō), and means “intransitively, to become a pupil; transitively, to disciple, i.e. enroll as scholar:—be disciple, instruct, teach.”

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G3100&t=KJV>

The definition of transitive and intransitive verbs is, “A verb can be described as *transitive* or *intransitive* based on whether it requires an object to express a complete thought or not. A transitive verb is one that only makes sense if it exerts its action on an object. An intransitive verb will make sense without one. Some verbs may be used both ways.”

<https://www.grammarly.com/blog/transitive-and-intransitive-verbs/>

The direct object in the verse is “all the nations”. So the verb is transitive, and the **New American Standard Bible** has translated the verse correctly.

But the sense of the verse does not require consecutive actions. The word “baptizing” in the Greek is βαπτίζοντες (pronounced bāp-tē'-zōne-tes), and is in the nominative, plural, masculine, participle, present, active tense of βαπτίζω (pronounced bāp-tē'-zō). **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, 1978 Edition, Harold K. Moulton, Page 65.**

This means that the actions are concurrent. When Paul encountered disciples at Ephesus, as soon as he ascertained that they believed on Christ Jesus, he baptized them as we read in **Acts 19 (KJV):1** And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, **2** He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. **3** And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. **4** Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. **5** When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **6** And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. **7** And all the men were about twelve.

They were also baptized in the Holy spirit immediately afterwards as Paul laid his hands upon them. We need to understand the Church as it was in Augustine's time to understand Augustine's writing. This was not his fault. This is what he was born again into.

We continue to read of the renunciation in the next paragraph.

### *The Renunciation of the Adversary, and the Dedication to the Christ of God.*

XLI. I renounce Satan, and his works, and his pomps, and his worships, and his angels, and his inventions, and all things that are under him. And after his renunciation let him in his consociation say: And I associate myself to Christ, and believe, and am baptized into one unbegotten Being, the only true God Almighty, the Father of Christ, the Creator and Maker of all things, from whom are all things; and into the Lord Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, the Firstborn of the whole creation, **who before the ages was begotten by the good pleasure of the Father, by whom all things were made, both those in heaven and those on earth, visible and invisible;** who in the last days descended from heaven, and took flesh, and was born of the holy Virgin Mary, and did converse holily according to the laws of His God and Father, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and died for us, and rose again from the dead after His passion the third day, and ascended into the heavens, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and again is to come at the end of the world with glory to judge the quick and the dead, of whose



kingdom there shall be no end. And I am baptized into the Holy Ghost, that is, the Comforter, who wrought in all the saints from the beginning of the world, but was afterwards sent to the apostles by the Father, according to the promise of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ; and after the apostles, to all those that believe in the Holy Catholic Church; into the resurrection of the flesh, and into the remission of sins, and into the kingdom of heaven, and into the life of the world to come. And after this vow, he comes in order to the anointing with oil.

**Commentary:** First there is the renunciation, as we read, “I renounce Satan, and his works, and his pomps, and his worships, and his angels, and his inventions, and all things that are under him.”

Then there is the consociation, as we continue to read, “And after his renunciation let him in his consociation say:”

1.) “And I associate myself to Christ, and believe, and am baptized into one unbegotten Being, the only true God Almighty, the Father of Christ,

2.) the Creator and Maker of all things, from whom are all things;

3.) and into the Lord Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, the Firstborn of the whole creation,

4.) **who before the ages was begotten by the good pleasure of the Father, by whom all things were made, both those in heaven and those on earth, visible and invisible;**

5.) who in the last days descended from heaven, and took flesh, and was born of the holy Virgin Mary,

6.) and did converse holily according to the laws of His God and Father,

7.) and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and died for us, and rose again from the dead after His passion the third day,

8.) and ascended into the heavens,

9.) and sitteth at the right hand of the Father,

10.) and again is to come at the end of the world with glory to judge the quick and the dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end.

11.) And I am baptized into the Holy Ghost, that is, the Comforter, who wrought in all the saints from the beginning of the world, but was afterwards sent to the apostles by the Father, according to the promise of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ; and after the apostles, to all those that believe in the Holy Catholic Church;

12.) into the resurrection of the flesh,

13.) and into the remission of sins,

14.) and into the kingdom of heaven,

15.) and into the life of the world to come.”

This corresponds closely to the Rule of Faith which we will look at under the heading, Dogmas of the Early Church.

The paragraph then concludes, “And after this vow, he comes in order to the anointing with oil.”

But contrary to point 4 above, Jesus was not begotten before the ages, as we read in **Philippians 2 (KJV):** 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and

became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Let us continue to read of this anointing oil in the next paragraph.

*A Thanksgiving Concerning the Anointing with the Mystical Oil.*

XLII. Now this is blessed by the high priest for the remission of sins, and the first preparation for baptism. For he calls thus upon the unbegotten God, the Father of Christ, the King of all sensible and intelligible natures, that He would sanctify the oil in the name of the Lord Jesus, and impart to it spiritual grace and efficacious strength, the remission of sins, and the first preparation for the confession of baptism, that so the candidate for baptism, when he is anointed may be freed from all ungodliness, and may become worthy of initiation, according to the command of the Only-begotten.

**Commentary:** It is interesting that it mentions being “admitted to the mysteries” before in paragraph XL above. And here he mentions the oil as being “blessed by the high priest”. It was not understood in Augustine’s time that the priesthood had been changed, as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):** 11 If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

But the high priest sanctified “the oil in the name of the Lord Jesus”, and did “impart to it spiritual grace and efficacious strength”. Ritual was taking over in the Catholic Church. We are not done yet.

*A Thanksgiving Concerning the Mystical Water.*

XLIII. After this he comes to the water, and blesses and glorifies the Lord God Almighty, the Father of the only begotten God; (John 1:18) and the priest returns thanks that He has sent His Son to become man on our account, that He might save us; that He has permitted that He should in all things become obedient to the laws of that incarnation, to preach the kingdom of heaven, the remission of sins, and the resurrection of the dead. Moreover, he adores the only begotten God Himself, after His Father, and for Him, giving Him thanks that He undertook to die for all men by the cross, the type of which He has appointed to be the baptism of regeneration. He glorifies Him also, for that God who is the Lord of the whole world, in the name of Christ and by His Holy Spirit, has not cast off mankind but has suited His providence to the difference of seasons: at first giving to Adam himself paradise for an habitation of pleasure, and afterwards giving a command on account of providence, and casting out the offender justly, but through His goodness not utterly casting him off, but instructing his posterity in succeeding ages after various manners; on whose account, in the conclusion of the world, He has sent His Son to become man for man’s sake, and to undergo all human passions

without sin. Him, therefore, let the priest even now call upon in baptism, and let him say: Look down from heaven, and sanctify this water, and give it grace and power, that so he that is to be baptized, according to the command of Thy Christ, may be crucified with Him, and may die with Him, and may be buried with Him, and may rise with Him to the adoption which is in Him, that he may be dead to sin and live to righteousness. And after this, when he has baptized him in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, he shall anoint him with ointment, and shall add as follows:—

*A Thanksgiving Concerning the Mystical Ointment.*

XLIV. O Lord God, who art without generation, and without a superior, the Lord of the whole world, who hast scattered the sweet odour of the knowledge of the Gospel among all nations, do Thou grant at this time that this ointment may be efficacious upon him that is baptized, that so the sweet odour of Thy Christ may continue upon him firm and fixed; and that now he has died with Him, he may arise and live with Him. **Let him say these and the like things, for this is the efficacy of the laying on of hands on every one; for unless there be such a recital made by a pious priest over every one of these, the candidate for baptism does only descend into the water as do the Jews, and he only puts off the filth of the body, not the filth of the soul.** After this let him stand up, and pray that prayer which the Lord taught us. But, of necessity, he who is risen again ought to stand up and pray, because he that is raised up stands upright. Let him, therefore, who has been dead with Christ, and is raised up with Him, stand up. But let him pray towards the east. For this also is written in the second book of the Chronicles, that after the temple of the Lord was finished by King Solomon, in the very feast of dedication the priests and the Levites and the singers stood up towards the east, praising and thanking God with cymbals and psalteries, and saying, “Praise the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever.” (2 Chronicles 5:13)

*A Prayer for the New Fruits.*

XLV. But let him pray thus after the foregoing prayer, and say: O God Almighty, the Father of Thy Christ, Thy only begotten Son, give me a body undefiled, a heart pure, a mind watchful, an unerring knowledge, the influence of the Holy Ghost for the obtaining and assured enjoying of the truth, through Thy Christ, by whom glory be to Thee, in the Holy Spirit, for ever. Amen. We have thought it reasonable to make these constitutions concerning the catechumens.

**Commentary:** Right away we are struck by all of the ritual in the Church in the time of Augustine. We must understand the difficulties they faced in the early Church. Not everyone was able to read, and even if they were, there were no Bibles to hand out to everyone. In addition, the Gentiles were in deep darkness, worshipping gods of wood and stone. But we in our age have no excuse for not reading the word of God. In our day, we have many resources that they in Augustine’s time did not have.



So we understand today that Jesus is the door by which we enter into salvation. We do not have to reach a certain level of sanctification before we enter the door of believing in Jesus. But in order to enter this door, we must repent, for without repentance we will perish as Jesus taught in **Luke 13 (KJV):** 1 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

We will read of Augustine's baptism under the heading, **Regeneration by Baptism**, which was a dogma that was handed to Augustine by the Church of his time. But for now, let us read Augustine's writing about the Catechumens.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3**

#### **On the Catechising of the Uninstructed, Chapter 26-27, page 312-314**

Chapter 26.—Of the Formal Admission of the Catechumen, and of the Signs Therein Made Use of.

50. At the conclusion of this address the person is to be asked whether he believes these things and earnestly desires to observe them. And on his replying to that effect then certainly he is to be solemnly signed and dealt with in accordance with the custom of the Church. On the subject of the sacrament, indeed, which he receives, it is first to be well impressed upon his notice that the signs of divine things are, it is true, things visible, but that the invisible things themselves are also honored in them, and that that species, which is then sanctified by the blessing, is therefore not to be regarded merely in the way in which it is regarded in any common use. And thereafter he ought to be told what is also signified by the form of words to which he has listened, and what in him is seasoned by that (spiritual grace) of which this material substance presents the emblem. Next we should take occasion by that ceremony to admonish him that, if he hears anything even in the Scriptures which may carry a carnal sound, he should, even although he fails to understand it, nevertheless believe that something spiritual is signified thereby, which bears upon holiness of character and the future life. Moreover, in this way he learns briefly that, whatever he may hear in the canonical books of such a kind as to make him unable to refer it to the love of eternity, and of truth, and of sanctity, and to the love of our neighbor, he should believe that to have been spoken or done with a figurative significance; and that, consequently, he should endeavor to understand it in such a manner as to refer it to that twofold (duty of) love. He should be further admonished, however, not to take the term *neighbor* in a carnal sense, but to understand under it every one who may ever be with him in that holy city, whether there already or not yet apparent. And (he should finally be counseled) not to despair of the amendment of any man whom he perceives to be living under the patience of God for no other reason, as the apostle (Romans 2:4) says, than that he may be brought to repentance.

51. If this discourse, in which I have supposed myself to have been teaching some

uninstructed person in my presence, appears to you to be too long, you are at liberty to expound these matters with greater brevity. I do not think, however, that it ought to be longer than this. At the same time, much depends on what the case itself, as it goes on, may render advisable, and what the audience actually present shows itself not only to bear, but also to desire. When, however, rapid dispatch is required, notice with what facility the whole matter admits of being explained. Suppose once more that some one comes before us who desires to be a Christian; and accordingly, suppose further that he has been interrogated, and that he has returned the answer which we have taken the former catechumen to have given; for, even should he decline to make this reply, it must at least be said that he ought to have given it;—then all that remains to be said to him should be put together in the following manner:—

52. Of a truth, brother, that is great and true blessedness which is promised to the saints in a future world. All visible things, on the other hand, pass away, and all the pomp, and pleasure, and solicitude of this world will perish, and (even now) they drag those who love them along with them onward to destruction. The merciful God, willing to deliver men from this destruction, that is to say, from everlasting pains, if they should not prove enemies to themselves, and if they should not withstand the mercy of their Creator, sent His only begotten Son, that is to say, His Word, equal with Himself, by whom He made all things. And He, while abiding indeed in His divinity, and neither receding from the Father nor being changed in anything, did at the same time, by taking on Himself human nature, and appearing to men in mortal flesh, come unto men; in order that, just as death entered among the human race by one man, to wit, the first that was made, that is to say, Adam, because he consented unto his wife when she was seduced by the devil to the effect that they (both) transgressed the commandment of God; **even so by one man, Jesus Christ, who is also God, the Son of God, all those who believe in Him might have all their past sins done away with, and enter into eternal life.**

**Commentary:** Augustine is looking for absolute surrender in the catechumen, and he wants to make sure that they understand what God has done for them as he concludes, “**even so by one man, Jesus Christ, who is also God, the Son of God, all those who believe in Him might have all their past sins done away with, and enter into eternal life.**”

Chapter 27.—Of the Prophecies of the Old Testament in Their Visible Fulfillment in the Church.

53. “For all those things, which at present you witness in the Church of God, and which you see to be taking place under the name of Christ throughout the whole world, were predicted long ages ago. And even as we read of them, so also we now see them. And by means of these things we are built up unto faith. **Once of old there occurred a flood over the whole earth, the object of which was that sinners might be destroyed. And, nevertheless, those who escaped in the ark exhibited a sacramental sign of the Church that was to be, which at present is floating on the waves of the world, and is delivered from submersion by the wood of the cross of Christ.** It was predicted to Abraham, a faithful servant of God, a single man, that of Him it was determined that a people should be born who should worship one God in the midst of all other nations which worshipped idols; and all things which were prophesied of as destined to happen to that people have come to pass exactly as they were foretold. Among that people Christ, the

King of all saints and their God, was also prophesied of as destined to come of the seed of that same Abraham according to the flesh, which (flesh) He took unto Himself, in order that all those also who became followers of His faith might be sons of Abraham; and thus it has come to pass: Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, who belonged to that race. It was foretold by the prophets that He would suffer on the cross at the hands of that same people of the Jews, of whose lineage, according to the flesh, He came; and thus it has come to pass. It was foretold that He would rise again: He has risen again; and, in accordance with these same predictions of the prophets, He has ascended into heaven and has sent the Holy Spirit to His disciples. It was foretold not only by the prophets, but also by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, that His Church would exist throughout the whole world, extended by the martyrdoms and sufferings of the saints; and this was foretold at a time when as yet His name was at once undeclared to the Gentiles, and made a subject of derision where it was known; and, nevertheless, in the power of His miracles, whether those which He wrought by His own hand or those which he effected by means of His servants, as these things are being reported and believed, we already see the fulfillment of that which was predicted, and behold the very kings of the earth, who formerly were wont to persecute the Christians, even now brought into subjection to the name of Christ. It was also foretold that schisms and heresies would arise from His Church, and that under His name they would seek their own glory instead of Christ's, in such places as they might be able to command; and these predictions have been realized.

**Commentary:** Augustine refers to the Church as a type of the ark as he says, “Once of old there occurred a flood over the whole earth, the object of which was that sinners might be destroyed. And, nevertheless, those who escaped in the ark exhibited a sacramental sign of the Church that was to be, which at present is floating on the waves of the world, and is delivered from submersion by the wood of the cross of Christ.”

He refers to **Genesis 7 (KJV)**: 1 And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. 2 Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. 3 Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. 4 For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. 5 And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him. 6 And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth. 7 And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.

And to **1 Peter 3 (KJV)**: 18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: 22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

So by the term, “**sacramental sign of the Church**”, he means then baptism. We then continue in the next paragraph.

54. “Will those things, then, which yet remain fail to come to pass? It is manifest that, just as the former class of things which were foretold have come to pass, so will these latter also come to pass. I refer to all the tribulations of the righteous, which yet wait for fulfillment, and to the day of judgment, which will separate all the wicked from the righteous in the resurrection of the dead;—and not only will it thus separate those wicked men who are outside the Church, but also it will set apart for the fire, which is due to such, the chaff of the Church itself, which must be borne with in utmost patience on to the last winnowing. Moreover, they who deride the (doctrine of a) resurrection, because they think that this flesh, inasmuch as it becomes corrupt, cannot rise again, will certainly rise in the same unto punishment, and God will make it plain to such, that He who was able to form these bodies when as yet they were not, is able in a moment to restore them as they were. **But all the faithful who are destined to reign with Christ shall rise with the same body in such wise that they may also be counted worthy to be changed into angelic incorruption; so that they may be made equal unto the angels of God, even as the Lord Himself has promised; (Luke 20:36) and that they may praise Him without any failure and without any weariness, ever living in Him and of Him, with such joy and blessedness as can be neither expressed nor conceived by man.**

**Commentary:** He refers to **Luke 20 (KJV):36** Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

Our bodies at the resurrection will be like the glorious body of Jesus as Paul reveals in **Philippians 3 (KJV):20** For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

We now continue to read the next paragraph of Augustine’s writing.

55. “**Believe these things, therefore, and be on your guard against temptations (for the devil seeks for others who may be brought to perish along with himself); so that not only may that adversary fail to seduce you by the help of those who are without the Church, whether they be pagans, or Jews, or heretics; but you yourself also may decline to follow the example of those within the Catholic Church itself whom you see leading an evil life, either indulging in excess in the pleasures of the belly and the throat, or unchaste, or given up to the vain and unlawful observances of curious superstitions, whether they be addicted to (the inanities of) public spectacles, or charms, or divinations of devils, or be living in the pomp and inflated arrogance of covetousness and pride, or be pursuing any sort of life which the law condemns and punishes. But rather connect yourself with the good, whom you will easily find out, if you yourself were once become of that character; so that you may unite with each other in worshipping and loving God for His own sake; for He himself will be our complete reward to the intent that we may enjoy His goodness and beauty in that life. He is to be loved, however, not in the way in which any object that is seen with the eyes is loved, but as wisdom is loved, and truth, and holiness, and righteousness, and charity, and whatever else may be mentioned as**

of kindred nature; and further, with a love conformable to these things not as they are in men, but as they are in the very fountain of incorruptible and unchangeable wisdom. Whomsoever, therefore, you may observe to be loving these things, attach yourself to them, so that through Christ, who became man in order that He might be the Mediator between God and men, you may be reconciled to God.

But as regards the perverse, even if they find their way within the walls of the Church, think not that they will find their way into the kingdom of heaven; for in their own time they will be set apart, if they have not altered to the better. Consequently, follow the example of good men, bear with the wicked, love all; forasmuch as you know not what he will be tomorrow who today is evil. **Howbeit, love not the unrighteousness of such; but love the persons themselves with the express intent that they may apprehend righteousness; for not only is the love of God enjoined upon us, but also the love of our neighbor, on which two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:37,39) And this is fulfilled by no one save the man who has received the (other) gift, the Holy Spirit, who is indeed equal with the Father and with the Son; for this same Trinity is God; and on this God every hope ought to be placed. On man our hope ought not to be placed, of whatsoever character he may be. For He, by whom we are justified, is one thing; and they, together with whom we are justified, are another. Moreover, it is not only by lusts that the devil tempts, but also by the terrors of insults, and pains, and death itself. But whatever a man shall have suffered on behalf of the name of Christ, and for the sake of the hope of eternal life, and shall have endured in constancy, (in accordance therewith) the greater reward shall be given him; whereas, if he shall give way to the devil, he shall be damned along with him. But works of mercy, conjoined with pious humility, meet with this acknowledgment from God, to wit, that He will not suffer His servants to be tempted more than they are able to bear.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, **““Believe these things, therefore, and be on your guard against temptations (for the devil seeks for others who may be brought to perish along with himself); so that not only may that adversary fail to seduce you by the help of those who are without the Church, whether they be pagans, or Jews, or heretics; but you yourself also may decline to follow the example of those within the Catholic Church itself whom you see leading an evil life, either indulging in excess in the pleasures of the belly and the throat, or unchaste, or given up to the vain and unlawful observances of curious superstitions, whether they be addicted to (the inanities of) public spectacles, or charms, or divinations of devils, or be living in the pomp and inflated arrogance of covetousness and pride, or be pursuing any sort of life which the law condemns and punishes.”**

Augustine was aware of chaff within the Catholic Church. In Augustine’s time, there was a concern of new converts backsliding into the world. He continues, as he says, **“But rather connect yourself with the good, whom you will easily find out, if you yourself were once become of that character; so that you may unite with each other in worshipping and loving God for His own sake; for He himself will be our complete reward to the intent that we may enjoy His goodness and beauty in that life.”**

He continues, as he encourages, **“He is to be loved, however, not in the way in which any object that is seen with the eyes is loved, but as wisdom is loved, and truth, and holiness, and righteousness, and charity, and whatever else may be mentioned as of kindred nature; and**



further, with a love conformable to these things not as they are in men, but as they are in the very fountain of incorruptible and unchangeable wisdom. Whomsoever, therefore, you may observe to be loving these things, attach yourself to them, so that through Christ, who became man in order that He might be the Mediator between God and men, you may be reconciled to God.”

He continues, as he warns, “But as regards the perverse, even if they find their way within the walls of the Church, think not that they will find their way into the kingdom of heaven; for in their own time they will be set apart, if they have not altered to the better. Consequently, follow the example of good men, bear with the wicked, love all; forasmuch as you know not what he will be tomorrow who today is evil.”

There is no question of Augustine’s faith, as he then encourages the catechumen, and says, “Howbeit, love not the unrighteousness of such; but love the persons themselves with the express intent that they may apprehend righteousness; for not only is the love of God enjoined upon us, but also the love of our neighbor, on which two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:37,39)

He refers to **Matthew 22 (KJV):37** Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

And he believes in the trinity as he continues, “And this is fulfilled by no one save the man who has received the (other) gift, the Holy Spirit, who is indeed equal with the Father and with the Son; for this same Trinity is God; and on this God every hope ought to be placed.”

He continues, “On man our hope ought not to be placed, of whatsoever character he may be. For He, by whom we are justified, is one thing; and they, together with whom we are justified, are another. Moreover, it is not only by lusts that the devil tempts, but also by the terrors of insults, and pains, and death itself. But whatever a man shall have suffered on behalf of the name of Christ, and for the sake of the hope of eternal life, and shall have endured in constancy, (in accordance therewith) the greater reward shall be given him; whereas, if he shall give way to the devil, he shall be damned along with him.”

The possibility of losing one’s salvation was believed in Augustine’s time.

He concludes, “But works of mercy, conjoined with pious humility, meet with this acknowledgment from God, to wit, that He will not suffer His servants to be tempted more than they are able to bear.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):13** There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

We continue to read of Augustine’s thoughts concerning catechumens in the next section.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate XI. Chapter II. 23–25; III. 1–5, paragraph 1, page 74**

1. Opportunely has the Lord procured for us that this passage should occur in its order to day: for I suppose you have observed, beloved, that we have undertaken to consider and

explain the Gospel according to John in due course. Opportunely then it occurs, that today you should hear from the Gospel, that, “Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he shall not see the kingdom of God.” For it is time that we exhort you, who are still catechumens, who have believed in Christ in such wise, that you are still bearing your sins. And none shall see the kingdom of heaven while burdened with sins; for none shall reign with Christ, but he to whom they have been forgiven: but forgiven they cannot be, but to him who is born again of water and of the Holy Spirit. But let us observe all the words what they imply, that here the sluggish may find with what earnestness they must haste to put off their burden. For were they bearing some heavy load, either of stone, or of wood, or even of some gain; if they were carrying corn, or wine, or money, they would run to put off their loads: they are carrying a burden of sins, and yet are sluggish to run. You must run to put off this burden; it weighs you down, it drowns you.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Opportunely has the Lord procured for us that this passage should occur in its order to day: for I suppose you have observed, beloved, that we have undertaken to consider and explain the Gospel according to John in due course. Opportunely then it occurs, that today you should hear from the Gospel, that, “Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he shall not see the kingdom of God.” For it is time that we exhort you, who are still catechumens, who have believed in Christ in such wise, that you are still bearing your sins.”

That is, they had believed in Christ, but they had not been baptized, so they “are still bearing” their sins.

He continues, “And none shall see the kingdom of heaven while burdened with sins; for none shall reign with Christ, but he to whom they have been forgiven: but forgiven they cannot be, but to him who is born again of water and of the Holy Spirit.”

He is referring to **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

He concludes, “But let us observe all the words what they imply, that here the sluggish may find with what earnestness they must haste to put off their burden. For were they bearing some heavy load, either of stone, or of wood, or even of some gain; if they were carrying corn, or wine, or money, they would run to put off their loads: they are carrying a burden of sins, and yet are sluggish to run. You must run to put off this burden; it weighs you down, it drowns you.”

However, the moment we believe, we are born again as Jesus reveals in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

We are baptized because we believe in Jesus Christ, in obedience to His command.

Again we read in **John 3 (KJV):14** And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned

already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

So what happened with Moses in the wilderness? We read as in **Numbers 21 (KJV):8** And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. 9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

So in the same way then, the one who looks on the Son has eternal life. Baptism is only a token like circumcision. It doesn't save us. It is only a sign that we have believed.

We continue to read of Augustine's thoughts concerning catechumens.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XII. Chapter III. 6–21, paragraph 3, page 82**

3. It was in answer to Nicodemus, who was of them that had believed on Jesus, that it was said, And Jesus did not trust Himself to them. To certain men, indeed, He did not trust Himself, though they had already believed on Him. Thus it is written, "Many believed in His name, seeing the signs which He did. But Jesus did not trust Himself to them. For He needed not that any should testify of man; for Himself knew what was in man." Behold, they already believed on Jesus, and yet Jesus did not trust Himself to them. Why? because they were not yet born again of water and of the Spirit. From this have we exhorted and do exhort our brethren the catechumens. **For if you ask them, they have already believed in Jesus; but because they have not yet received His flesh and blood, Jesus has not yet trusted Himself to them. What must they do that Jesus may trust Himself to them? They must be born again of water and of the Spirit; the Church that is in travail with them must bring them forth. They have been conceived; they must be brought forth to the light: they have breasts to be nourished at; let them not fear lest, being born, they may be smothered; let them not depart from the mother's breasts.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "It was in answer to Nicodemus, who was of them that had believed on Jesus, that it was said, And Jesus did not trust Himself to them. To certain men, indeed, He did not trust Himself, though they had already believed on Him."

We first read about Nicodemus in **John 3 (KJV):1** There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

He continues, "Thus it is written, "Many believed in His name, seeing the signs which He did. But Jesus did not trust Himself to them. For He needed not that any should testify of man; for Himself knew what was in man.""

He refers to **John 2 (KJV):23** Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. 24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, 25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

He continues, "Behold, they already believed on Jesus, and yet Jesus did not trust



Himself to them. Why? Because they were not yet born again of water and of the Spirit.”

Augustine assumes that “they were not yet born again of water and of the Spirit” because of his belief that baptism is necessary in order to be born again.

Now Nicodemus believed that Jesus was “a teacher come from God”. Nicodemus had no knowledge of water baptism since he was a Jewish Pharisee. In the time of Jesus, no one was baptized in order to be born again. All of the boys had been circumcised, but circumcision did not save them, or cause them to be born again. It was their faith that saved them, just as it saved Abraham, and then Moses. And Jesus then explains as we read in **John 3 (KJV):** 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? 11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? 13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Just as the people in Moses’ time were saved by looking at the serpent, so it is now by looking at Jesus. Nicodemus believed after this, as we know from **John 7 (KJV):** 47 Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? 48 Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? 49 But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. 50 Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) 51 Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

And **John 19 (KJV):** 38 And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. 39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. 40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. 42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

Augustine then concludes, “From this have we exhorted and do exhort our brethren the catechumens. For if you ask them, they have already believed in Jesus; but because they have not yet received His flesh and blood, Jesus has not yet trusted Himself to them. What must they do that Jesus may trust Himself to them? They must be born again of water and of the Spirit; the Church that is in travail with them must bring them forth. They have been conceived; they must be brought forth to the light: they have breasts to be nourished at; let them not fear lest, being born, they may be smothered; let them not depart from the mother’s breasts.”

Augustine was held by the tradition of the Catholic Church in his time. In reality, once a catechumen had truly believed, they were born again. Augustine even admits that “They have

been conceived". The spiritual birth is not like the natural birth of flesh, for in the spiritual birth we are born of God as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And being born of God they have eternal life, as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XIII. Chapter III. 22–29, page 89**

7. But some one will say, "It were enough, then, that John baptized only the Lord; what need was there for others to be baptized by John?" Now we have said this too, that if John had baptized only the Lord, men would not be without this thought, that John had a better baptism than the Lord had. They would say, in fact, "So great was the baptism of John, that Christ alone was worthy to be baptized therewith." Therefore, to show that the baptism which the Lord was to give was better than that of John,—that the one might be understood as that of a servant, the other as that of the Lord,—the Lord was baptized to give an example of humility; but He was not the only one baptized by John, lest John's baptism should appear to be better than the baptism of the Lord. To this end, however, our Lord Jesus Christ showed the way, as you have heard, brethren, lest any man, arrogating to himself that he has abundance of some particular grace, should disdain to be baptized with the baptism of the Lord. **For whatever the catechumen's proficiency, he still carries the load of his iniquity: it is not forgiven him until he shall have come to baptism. Just as the people Israel were not rid of the Egyptians until they had come to the Red Sea, so no man is rid of the pressure of sins until he has come to the font of baptism.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "But some one will say, "It were enough, then, that John baptized only the Lord; what need was there for others to be baptized by John?" Now we have said this too, that if John had baptized only the Lord, men would not be without this thought, that John had a better baptism than the Lord had. They would say, in fact, "So great was the baptism of John, that Christ alone was worthy to be baptized therewith." Therefore, to show that the baptism which the Lord was to give was better than that of John,—that the one might be understood as that of a servant, the other as that of the Lord,—the Lord was baptized to give an example of humility; but He was not the only one baptized by John, lest John's baptism should appear to be better than the baptism of the Lord. To this end, however, our Lord Jesus Christ showed the way, as you have heard, brethren, lest any man, arrogating to himself that he has abundance of some particular grace, should disdain to be baptized with the baptism of the Lord."

Paul explains John's baptism in **Acts 19 (KJV):1** And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's

baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

Augustine continues, as he then asserts, “For whatever the catechumen’s proficiency, he still carries the load of his iniquity: it is not forgiven him until he shall have come to baptism. Just as the people Israel were not rid of the Egyptians until they had come to the Red Sea, so no man is rid of the pressure of sins until he has come to the font of baptism.”

Actually, the crossing of the Red Sea is a type of salvation. Baptism is only a figure as Peter reveals in **1 Peter 3 (KJV):20** Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Peter says in verse 21 that “The like figure whereunto even baptism” saves us. That is, just as the ark saved Noah and his family by water, which signifies the cleansing of the wicked by removing them from the earth, so baptism is a figure of cleansing the conscience “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ”. It is the blood of Jesus that cleanses us as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

The washing of regeneration relates to the cleansing of our sins when we have faith in Jesus Christ, as we read in **Titus 3 (KJV):4** But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

The crossing of the Red Sea is a type of this washing of regeneration. The catechumen, or anyone, is saved when they have faith in Jesus Christ. They are washed of all of their sins when they believe. Baptism is only a sign that one has believed, and a testimony to the world of one’s faith.

## Augustine Is Baptized

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions

#### Book IX, Chapter VI, paragraphs 14, Augustine is baptized, page 133-134

**Chapter VI.**—He is Baptized at Milan with Alypius and His Son Adeodatus. The Book “De Magistro.”

14. Thence, when the time had arrived at which I was to give in my name, having left the country, we returned to Milan. Alypius also was pleased to be born again with me in Thee, being now clothed with the humility appropriate to Thy sacraments, and being so brave a tamer of the body, as with unusual fortitude to tread the frozen soil of Italy with his naked feet. We

took into our company the boy Adeodatus, born of me carnally, of my sin. Well hadst Thou made him. He was barely fifteen years, yet in wit excelled many grave and learned men. I confess unto Thee Thy gifts, O Lord my God, Creator of all, and of exceeding power to reform our deformities; for of me was there naught in that boy but the sin. For that we fostered him in Thy discipline, Thou inspiredst us, none other,—Thy gifts I confess unto Thee. There is a book of ours, which is entitled *The Master*. It is a dialogue between him and me. Thou knowest that all things there put into the mouth of the person in argument with me were his thoughts in his sixteenth year. Many others more wonderful did I find in him. That talent was a source of awe to me. And who but Thou could be the worker of such marvels? Quickly didst Thou remove his life from the earth; and now I recall him to mind with a sense of security, in that I fear nothing for his childhood or youth, or for his whole self. We took him coeval with us in Thy grace, **to be educated in Thy discipline; and we were baptized, and solicitude about our past life left us**. Nor was I satiated in those days with the wondrous sweetness of considering the depth of Thy counsels concerning the salvation of the human race. How greatly did I weep in Thy hymns and canticles, deeply moved by the voices of Thy sweet speaking Church! The voices flowed into mine ears, and the truth was poured forth into my heart, whence the agitation of my piety overflowed, and my tears ran over, and blessed was I therein.

**Commentary:** Being “**educated in Thy discipline**” relates to the process of the catechumens. The education he received would have been a knowledge of the dogmas of the Church in his time. Augustine believed that he was born again at his baptism, where the “**solicitude about our past life left us**”, speaking of himself and his son, Adeodatus, and the remission of their former sins.

The word “solicitude” means:

**a:** the state of being concerned and anxious

**b:** attentive care and protectiveness *also* : an attitude of earnest concern or attention”

(Merriam Webster)

## His Polemic

Here is a short summary of Augustine’s beginnings. Augustine was a philosopher in his early age.

“Born in 354 CE in the North African city of Tagaste to a Christian mother and pagan father, Augustine began his career as a pagan teacher of rhetoric in, among other places, Carthage, in North Africa. In search of better students, Augustine traveled to Rome in 383, assuming considerable personal risk in doing so, but was disappointed to discover his newfound students lacking the virtue he thought the necessary prerequisite for a proper education. Failing to acquire satisfactory students, Augustine moved once again, this time to Milan where he accepted a position as a professor of rhetoric.

It was in Milan that Augustine adopted the study of Neoplatonism in earnest, though he had shown a fondness for classical philosophy, particularly the works of Virgil and Cicero, from an early age. In Neoplatonism the still young Augustine thought, with great confidence and enthusiasm, that he had found an academic school capable of uniting the teachings of

Christianity with those of Greek and Roman philosophy. Shortly thereafter Augustine converted to Christianity and, returning to North Africa, accepted the position of bishop in Hippo in 396, one that he would retain for the remainder of his life. It was arguably his encounter with Neoplatonism that caused Augustine to recognize the teachings of the Church as a source of intellectual insight not unlike that of classical philosophy. An autobiographical account of his religious conversion is the subject of Augustine's *Confessions*, which numbers among the most famous and influential of his works." <https://thegreatthinkers.org/augustine/>

Now the definition of "polemic" is:

- a:** an aggressive attack on or refutation of the opinions or principles of another
- b:** the art or practice of disputation or controversy —usually used in plural but singular or plural in construction

The definition of rhetoric is:

- 1:** the art of speaking or writing effectively: such as
  - a:** the study of principles and rules of composition formulated by critics of ancient times
  - b:** the study of writing or speaking as a means of communication or persuasion

So here is a sample of the rhetorical style of Augustine. Augustine discusses the terms "dying" and "living" and asks how can someone be said to be dying when he is still alive, or living.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XIII, Chapter 11, page 249**

Chapter 11.—Whether One Can Both Be Living and Dead at the Same Time.

But if it is absurd to say that a man is in death before he reaches death (for to what is his course running as he passes through life, if already he is in death?), and if it outrage common usage to speak of a man being at once alive and dead, as much as it does so to speak of him as at once asleep and awake, it remains to be asked when a man is dying? For, before death comes, he is not dying but living; and when death has come, he is not dying but dead. The one is before, the other after death. When, then, is he in death so that we can say he is dying? For as there are three times, before death, in death, after death, so there are three states corresponding, living, dying, dead. And it is very hard to define when a man is in death or dying, when he is neither living, which is before death, nor dead, which is after death, but dying, which is in death. For so long as the soul is in the body, especially if consciousness remain, the man certainly lives; for body and soul constitute the man. And thus, before death, he cannot be said to be in death, but when, on the other hand, the soul has departed, and all bodily sensation is extinct, death is past, and the man is dead. Between these two states the dying condition finds no place; for if a man yet lives, death has not arrived; if he has ceased to live, death is past. Never, then, is he dying, that is, comprehended in the state of death. So also in the passing of time,—you try to lay your finger on the present, and cannot find it, because the present occupies



no space, but is only the transition of time from the future to the past. Must we then conclude that there is thus no death of the body at all? For if there is, where is it, since it is in no one, and no one can be in it? Since, indeed, if there is yet life, death is not yet; for this state is before death, not in death: and if life has already ceased, death is not present; for this state is after death, not in death. On the other hand, if there is no death before or after, what do we mean when we say “after death,” or “before death?” This is a foolish way of speaking if there is no death. And would that we had lived so well in Paradise that in very truth there were now no death! But not only does it now exist, but so grievous a thing is it, that no skill is sufficient either to explain or to escape it.

Let us, then, speak in the customary way,—no man ought to speak otherwise,—and let us call the time before death come, “before death;” as it is written, “Praise no man before his death.” (Ecclesiasticus 11:28) And when it has happened, let us say that “after death” this or that took place. And of the present time let us speak as best we can, as when we say, “He, when dying, made his will, and left this or that to such and such persons,”—though, of course, he could not do so unless he were living, and did this rather before death than in death. And let us use the same phraseology as Scripture uses; for it makes no scruple of saying that the dead are not after but in death. So that verse, “For in death there is no remembrance of thee.” For until the resurrection men are justly said to be in death; as every one is said to be in sleep till he awakes. However, though we can say of persons in sleep that they are sleeping, we cannot speak in this way of the dead, and say they are dying. For, so far as regards the death of the body, of which we are now speaking, one cannot say that those who are already separated from their bodies continue dying. But this, you see, is just what I was saying,—that no words can explain how either the dying are said to live, or how the dead are said, even after death, to be in death. For how can they be after death if they be in death, especially when we do not even call them dying, as we call those in sleep, sleeping; and those in languor, languishing; and those in grief, grieving; and those in life, living? And yet the dead, until they rise again, are said to be in death, but cannot be called dying.

And therefore I think it has not unsuitably nor inappropriately come to pass, though not by the intention of man, yet perhaps with divine purpose, that this Latin word *moritur* cannot be declined by the grammarians according to the rule followed by similar words. For *oritur* gives the form *ortus est* for the perfect; and all similar verbs form this tense from their perfect participles. But if we ask the perfect of *moritur*, we get the regular answer *mortuusest*, with a double *u*. For thus *mortuus* is pronounced, like *fatuus*, *arduus*, *conspiciuus*, and similar words, which are not perfect participles but adjectives, and are declined without regard to tense. But *mortuus*, though in form an adjective, is used as perfect participle, as if that were to be declined which cannot be declined; and thus it has suitably come to pass that, as the thing itself cannot in point of fact be declined, so neither can the word significant of the act be declined. Yet, by the aid of our Redeemer’s grace, we may manage at least to decline the second. For that is more grievous still, and, indeed, of all evils the worst, since it consists not in the separation of soul and body, but in the uniting of both in death eternal. And there, in striking contrast to our present conditions, men will not be before or after death, but always in death; and thus never living, never dead, but endlessly dying. And never can a man be more disastrously in death than when death itself shall be deathless.

**Commentary:** So can we decide if one is dying or living? We see here, in this chapter of his writing, his philosophic use of rhetoric, clearly, I hope. I believe that this was the philosopher's hope that, by the use of rhetoric, if he went on long enough, the person or persons he was speaking to would just yield so that they could get him to just stop talking.

Let us continue to read of Augustine's purpose.

## Augustine's Purpose

The following is a quote from his writing in the section listed.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine  
Harmony of the Gospels, paragraph 19, page 234**

19. ...**For our object is to help those who are lovers of the Word of God and students of holy truth to understand** that, in his Gospel, John was indeed an announcer and preacher of the same Christ, the true and truthful One of whom the other three who have composed Gospels also testified, and to whom the rest of the apostles likewise bore witness, who, although they did not take in hand the construction of written narratives, did at least discharge the kindred service in officially preaching of Him: but that, at the same time, he was borne to far loftier heights in the doctrine of Christ from the very beginning of his book, and that it was but on rare occasions that he kept to the level pursued by the others...

**Commentary:** Augustine's purpose was **"to help those who are lovers of the Word of God and students of holy truth to understand..."**

Next we will look at one of his sermons.

## A Sermon

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine  
Sermons on New Testament Lessons, Sermon XVIII. [LXVIII. Ben.] Again on the words of the Gospel, Matt. xi. 25, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth," etc., paragraphs 1-6, page 313-315**

1. We have heard the Son of God saying, "I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." What doth he confess to Him? Wherein doth he praise Him? "Because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." (Matthew 11:25) Who are the "wise and prudent"? Who the "babes"? What hath He hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes? By the "wise and prudent," He signifieth those of whom St. Paul speaks; "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (1 Corinthians 1:20) Yet perhaps thou still askest who they are. They are they peradventure who in their much disputation concerning God,

have spoken falsely of Him; who, puffed up by their own doctrines, could in no wise find out and know God, and who for the God whose substance is incomprehensible and invisible, have thought the air and sky to be God, or the sun to be God, or anything which holds high place among the creatures to be God. For observing the grandeur and beauty and powers of the creatures, they rested in them, and found not the Creator.

2. These men does the Book of wisdom reprove, where it is said, “For if they were able to know so much as to aim at the world, how did they not sooner find out the Lord thereof?” (Wisdom 13:9) They are accused as wasting their time and their busy disputes in investigating and measuring as it were the creature; they sought out the courses of the stars, the intervals of the planets, the movements of the heavenly bodies, so as to arrive by certain calculations to that degree of knowledge as to foretell the eclipses of the sun and moon; and that as they had foretold, so should the event be according to the day and hour, and to the portion of the bodies which should be eclipsed. Great industry, great activity of mind. But in these things they sought after the Creator, who was not far off from them, and they found Him not. Whom if they could have found, they might have had within them. With the best reason then, and very rightly were they accused, who could investigate the numbers of the stars, and their varied movements, and know and foretell the eclipses of the luminaries: rightly accused, I say, in that they found not Him by whom these had been created and ordained, because they neglected to seek Him. But be not thou much disquieted, if thou art ignorant of the courses of the stars, and the proportions of the celestial and terrestrial bodies. Behold the fair beauty of the world, and praise its Creator’s counsel. Behold what He has made, and love Him who made it: be this thy greatest care. Love Him who made it; for He made thee also after His own image, that thou mightest love Him.

3. If then it is strange that those things of which Christ said, “Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent,” were hidden from such wise men as these, who, occupied wholly about the creatures, chose to seek the Creator carelessly, and could not find Him; still more strange is it that there should even be found some “wise and prudent” men who were able to know Him. “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.” (Romans 1:18) Perhaps thou dost ask, what truth do they hold in unrighteousness? “Because that which may be known of God is manifest among them.” How is it manifest? He goes on to say, “For God hath manifested it to them.” (Romans 1:19) Dost thou still enquire how He manifested it to them to whom He gave not the law? How? “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.” (Romans 1:20) There were then some such, not as Moses the servant of God, not as many Prophets who had an insight into and knowledge of these things, and were aided by the Spirit of God, which they drew in by faith, and drank with the throat of godliness, and poured forth again by the mouth of the interior man. Not such as these were they; but far unlike them, who by means of this visible creation were able to attain to the understanding of the Creator, and to say of these things which God hath made; Behold what things He hath made, He governeth and containeth also. He who hath made them, Himself filleth what He hath made with His own presence. Thus much they were enabled to say. For these Paul also made mention of in the Acts of the Apostles, where, when he had said of God, “For in Him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28) (forasmuch as he was speaking to the Athenians among whom those learned men had existed); he subjoined immediately; “As certain also of your own have said.” Now it was no trivial thing



they said; “That in Him we live and move and have our being.”

4. In what then were they unlike the others? Why were they blamed? Why rightly accused? Hear the words of the Apostle which I had begun to quote; “The wrath of God,” saith he, “is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness” (even of those, namely, who had not received the law); “against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.” What truth? “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them.” By whose manifestation of it? “For God hath manifested it to them.” How? “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His Eternal Power and Godhead.” Why did He manifest it? “That they might be without excuse.” Wherein then are they to be blamed? “Because that when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God.”

5. What mean these words, “Glorified Him not as God?” They did not give Him thanks. Is this then to glorify God; to give God thanks? Yes, verily. For what can be worse, if having been created after the image of God, and having come to know God, thou shalt not be thankful to Him? This surely, this is to glorify God, to give God thanks. The faithful know where and when it is said, “Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.” But who gives thanks to God, save he who “lifts up his heart unto the Lord?” Therefore are they blameable and without excuse, “Because when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, nor gave Him thanks. But”—what? “But they became vain in their imaginations.” Whence did they become vain, but because they were proud? Thus smoke vanishes away by rising up aloft, and a flame burns the more brightly and strongly in proportion as it is kept low; “They became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” So smoke, though it rise higher than the flame, is dark.

6. Finally, mark what follows, and see the point on which the whole matter depends. “For professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” For arrogating to themselves what God had given, God took away what He had given. Therefore from the proud He hid Himself, who conveyed the knowledge of Himself only to those who through the creature sought diligently after the Creator. Well then did our Lord say, “Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent;” whether from those who in their manifold disputations, and most busy search, have reached to the full investigation of the creature, but knew nothing of the Creator, or from them who when they knew God, glorified Him not as God, nor gave Him thanks, and who could not see perfectly or healthfully because they were proud. “Therefore Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” What babes? To the lowly. Say on whom doth My Spirit rest? “Upon him that is lowly and quiet, and who trembleth at My words.” (Isaiah 66:2) At these words Peter trembled; Plato trembled not. Let the fisherman hold fast what that most famous philosopher has lost. “Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” Thou hast hid them from the proud, and revealed them to the humble. What things are these? For when He said this, He did not intend the heaven and earth, or point them out as it were with His hand as He spake. For these who does not see? The good see them, the bad see them; for He “maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good.” (Matthew 5:45) What then are these things? “All things are delivered unto Me of My Father.” (Matthew 11:27)

**Commentary:** We can see that Augustine was truly a believer, and had separated himself

from the philosophers. He had a deep understanding of man's sinful state, as it is described in Romans by the apostle, Paul. We can agree with Augustine here, and we note his passion. We now will look at the dogmas of the early Church, and how this affected his ministry.

## Dogmas of the Early Church

Now in the **Constitutions of the Holy Apostles**, we read of the process whereby a catechumen was finally released to be baptized. Baptism is when it was believed by the early Church that one was born again, or regenerated. This was an accepted dogma, or tenet of belief, in the Catholic Church, or the universal church in his time. The word “Catholic” at first meant of, relating to, or forming the church universal, and of, relating to, or forming the ancient undivided Christian church or a church claiming historical continuity from it. It did not mean Roman Catholic yet.

Some tenets of dogma, or belief, in Augustine’s time were the following:

- 1.) Regeneration by baptism
- 2.) Sacerdotal order or priesthood
- 3.) Apostolic succession
- 4.) Transubstantiation, that is, the body and blood of the Lord are present at the invocation of the priest in Communion
- 5.) The elevation of a bishop over a presbyter
- 6.) Purgatory, a place of punishment after death for the remission of sins after baptism
- 7.) Mortal and Venial sins
- 8.) A church hierarchy comprised of pontiff, bishop, presbyter, deacon, acolyte
- 9.) Mary was a perpetual virgin

Augustine was not responsible for initiating any of these dogmas. Now a dogma is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as the following:

- 1 a: something held as an established opinion *especially* : a definite authoritative tenet  
b: a code of such tenets : pedagogical *dogma*  
c: a point of view or tenet put forth as authoritative without adequate grounds
- 2 a: doctrine or body of doctrines concerning faith or morals formally stated and authoritatively proclaimed by a church (**Merriam Webster**)

This definition gives us a good understanding of how the world in Augustine’s time, and also the world today, views doctrine. It is something that is held unchangeable by a church. When a dogma, or doctrine, is based on tradition, it becomes a problem. A better definition for doctrine in the Biblical sense is that it is a Biblical truth. That is, a doctrine is something derived from, and has its basis solely in, the word of God. When a tradition does not agree with the Biblical truth in the word of God, it must be abandoned.

Though Augustine was not responsible for initiating any of the tenets of dogma mentioned above, he was definitely impacted by the dogmas of the Church in his time. This was the Church he had grown up in with his mother, Monica. We will look at these dogmas and others, as evidenced in Augustine’s writings, in order to have a clearer understanding of who he really was. But first, let us look at some of the heresies of Augustine’s time.

# The Rule of Faith

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3, On the Creed, A Sermon to the Catechumens, paragraph 1-17, page 369-375

1. Receive, my children, the Rule of Faith, which is called the Symbol (or Creed). And when ye have received it, write it in your heart, and be daily saying it to yourselves; before ye sleep, before ye go forth, arm you with your Creed. The Creed no man writes so as it may be able to be read: but for rehearsal of it, lest haply forgetfulness obliterate what care hath delivered, let your memory be your record-roll; what ye are about to hear, that are ye to believe; and what ye shall have believed, that are about to give back with your tongue. For the Apostle says, “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:10) For this is the Creed which ye are to rehearse and to repeat in answer. These words which ye have heard are in the Divine Scriptures scattered up and down: but thence gathered and reduced into one, that the memory of slow persons might not be distressed; that every person may be able to say, able to hold, what he believes. For have ye now merely heard that God is Almighty? But ye begin to have him for your father, when ye have been born by the church as your Mother.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as says, “Receive, my children, the Rule of Faith, which is called the Symbol (or Creed). And when ye have received it, write it in your heart, and be daily saying it to yourselves; before ye sleep, before ye go forth, arm you with your Creed. The Creed no man writes so as it may be able to be read: but for rehearsal of it, lest haply forgetfulness obliterate what care hath delivered, let your memory be your record-roll; what ye are about to hear, that are ye to believe; and what ye shall have believed, that are about to give back with your tongue. For the Apostle says, “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:10)”

He refers to **Romans 10 (KJV):10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

By Creed he means what is commonly known today as the Apostles Creed. This became a ritual prayer to be said daily, “saying it to yourselves; before ye sleep, before ye go forth”.

He continues, “For this is the Creed which ye are to rehearse and to repeat in answer. These words which ye have heard are in the Divine Scriptures scattered up and down: but thence gathered and reduced into one, that the memory of slow persons might not be distressed; that every person may be able to say, able to hold, what he believes.”

The Creed was helpful in those days because the Scriptures were not available to everyone as they are today.

He then concludes, “For have ye now merely heard that God is Almighty? But ye begin to have him for your father, when ye have been born by the church as your Mother.”

It must have been logical to have “the church as your Mother” if God is your father. But there is no reference to the church in this way in the Scriptures.

He will then go through the Creed line by line.

2. Of this, then, ye have now received, have meditated, and having meditated have held, that ye should say, “I believe in God the Father Almighty.” God is Almighty, and yet, though Almighty, He cannot die, cannot be deceived, cannot lie; and, as the Apostle says, “cannot deny Himself.” (2 Timothy 2:13) How many things that He cannot do, and yet is Almighty! Yea therefore is Almighty, because He cannot do these things. For if He could die, He were not Almighty; if to lie, if to be deceived, if to do unjustly, were possible for Him, He were not Almighty: because if this were in Him, He should not be worthy to be Almighty. To our Almighty Father, it is quite impossible to sin. **He does whatsoever He will: that is Omnipotence. He does whatsoever He rightly will, whatsoever He justly will: but whatsoever is evil to do, He wills not.** There is no resisting one who is Almighty, that He should not do what He will. It was He Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, invisible and visible. Invisible such as are in heaven, thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, archangels, angels: all, if we shall live aright, our fellow-citizens. He made in heaven the things visible; the sun, the moon, the stars. With its terrestrial animals He adorned the earth, filled the air with things that fly, the land with them that walk and creep, the sea with them that swim: all He filled with their own proper creatures. **He made also man after His own image and likeness, in the mind: for in that is the image of God. This is the reason why the mind cannot be comprehended even by itself, because in it is the image of God.** To this end were we made, that over the other creatures we should bear rule: but through sin in the first man we fell, and are all come into an inheritance of death. We were brought low, became mortal, were filled with fears, with errors: this by desert of sin: with which desert and guilt is every man born. This is the reason why, as ye have seen today, as ye know, even little children undergo exsufflation, exorcism; to drive away from them the power of the devil their enemy, which deceived man that it might possess mankind. It is not then the creature of God that in infants undergoes exorcism or exsufflation: but he under whom are all that are born with sin; for he is the first of sinners. And for this cause by reason of one who fell and brought all into death, there was sent One without sin, Who should bring unto life, by delivering them from sin, all that believe on Him.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as says, “Of this, then, ye have now received, have meditated, and having meditated have held, that ye should say, “I believe in God the Father Almighty.” God is Almighty, and yet, though Almighty, He cannot die, cannot be deceived, cannot lie; and, as the Apostle says, “cannot deny Himself.” (2 Timothy 2:13)”

He refers to **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):13** If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

So the first words in the Creed are, “I believe in God the Father Almighty.”

He continues, “How many things that He cannot do, and yet is Almighty! Yea therefore is Almighty, because He cannot do these things. For if He could die, He were not Almighty; if to lie, if to be deceived, if to do unjustly, were possible for Him, He were not Almighty: because if this were in Him, He should not be worthy to be Almighty. To our Almighty Father, it is quite impossible to sin.”

And we can agree with Augustine here.

He then summarizes, **“He does whatsoever He will: that is Omnipotence. He does whatsoever He rightly will, whatsoever He justly will: but whatsoever is evil to do, He wills not.”**

Augustine continues, “There is no resisting one who is Almighty, that He should not do what He will. It was He Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, invisible and visible. Invisible such as are in heaven, thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, archangels, angels: all, if we shall live aright, our fellow-citizens. He made in heaven the things visible; the sun, the moon, the stars. With its terrestrial animals He adorned the earth, filled the air with things that fly, the land with them that walk and creep, the sea with them that swim: all He filled with their own proper creatures.”

God is the creator of all things, visible and invisible, as Augustine has said.

He then says, “**He made also man after His own image and likeness, in the mind: for in that is the image of God. This is the reason why the mind cannot be comprehended even by itself, because in it is the image of God.**”

He then continues, speaking of man’s dominion over the creation, and his sin, as he says, “**To this end were we made, that over the other creatures we should bear rule: but through sin in the first man we fell, and are all come into an inheritance of death. We were brought low, became mortal, were filled with fears, with errors: this by desert of sin: with which desert and guilt is every man born.**”

And this is according to the Scripture as we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV):26** And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

And we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):15** And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

And in **Genesis 3 (KJV):6** And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. 7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. 8 And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. 9 And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. 11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? 12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

He then continues, “**This is the reason why, as ye have seen today, as ye know, even little children undergo exsufflation, exorcism; to drive away from them the power of the devil their enemy, which deceived man that it might possess mankind. It is not then the creature of God that in infants undergoes exorcism or exsufflation: but he under whom are all that are born with sin; for he is the first of sinners.**”

Note that **Merriam-Webster** says that “exsufflation” means “the action of breathing forth or blowing; *especially* : this action used as an exorcism in some rites of baptism”.

Augustine is saying that some infants undergo exorcism or exsufflation in baptism because of Adam’s sin.



He concludes, “**And for this cause by reason of one who fell and brought all into death, there was sent One without sin, Who should bring unto life, by delivering them from sin, all that believe on Him.**”

And he agrees with **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

3. **For this reason we believe also in His Son, that is to say, God the Father Almighty’s, “His Only Son, our Lord.”** When thou hearest of the Only Son of God, **acknowledge Him God. For it could not be that God’s Only Son should not be God.** What He is, the same did He beget, though He is not that Person Whom He begot. If He be truly Son, He is that which the Father is; if He be not that which the Father is, He is not truly Son. Observe mortal and earthly creatures: what each is, that it engendereth. Man begets not an ox, sheep begets not dog, nor dog sheep. Whatever it be that begetteth, that which it is, it begetteth. Hold ye therefore boldly, firmly, faithfully, that the Begotten of God the Father is what Himself is, Almighty. These mortal creatures engender by corruption. Does God so beget? He that is begotten mortal generates that which himself is; the Immortal generates what He is: corruptible begets corruptible, Incorruptible begets Incorruptible: the corruptible begets corruptibly, Incorruptible, Incorruptibly: yea, so begetteth what Itself is, that One begets One, and therefore Only. **Ye know, that when I pronounced to you the Creed, so I said, and so ye are bounden to believe; that we “believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ His Only Son.”** Here too, when thou believest that He is the Only, believe Him Almighty: for it is not to be thought that God the Father does what He will, and God the Son does not what He will. One Will of Father and Son, because one Nature. For it is impossible for the will of the Son to be any whit parted from the Father’s will. God and God; both one God: Almighty and Almighty; both One Almighty.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, as he notes the next line of the Creed, “**For this reason we believe also in His Son, that is to say, God the Father Almighty’s, “His Only Son, our Lord.”**”

To summarize, Augustine explains the deity of the Son of God, and says “**When thou hearest of the Only Son of God, acknowledge Him God. For it could not be that God’s Only Son should not be God.**”

He then continues, as he says, “What He is, the same did He beget, though He is not that Person Whom He begot. If He be truly Son, He is that which the Father is; if He be not that which the Father is, He is not truly Son. Observe mortal and earthly creatures: what each is, that it engendereth. Man begets not an ox, sheep begets not dog, nor dog sheep. Whatever it be that begetteth, that which it is, it begetteth. Hold ye therefore boldly, firmly, faithfully, that the Begotten of God the Father is what Himself is, Almighty. These mortal creatures engender by corruption. Does God so beget? He that is begotten mortal generates that which himself is; the Immortal generates what He is: corruptible begets corruptible, Incorruptible begets Incorruptible: the corruptible begets corruptibly, Incorruptible, Incorruptibly: yea, so begetteth what Itself is, that One begets One, and therefore Only.”

However, in his zeal to explain this line in the creed, he makes it sound as if the Son had a beginning. The Son is begotten in His manhood. In His Deity, He was always God, as Paul reveals in **Philippians 2 (KJV):5** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made



himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Augustine then asserts the authority of the Creed as he says “**Ye know, that when I pronounced to you the Creed, so I said, and so ye are bounden to believe; that we “believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ His Only Son.”**”

And he concludes, “Here too, when thou believest that He is the Only, believe Him Almighty: for it is not to be thought that God the Father does what He will, and God the Son does not what He will. One Will of Father and Son, because one Nature. For it is impossible for the will of the Son to be any whit parted from the Father’s will. God and God; both one God: Almighty and Almighty; both One Almighty.”

And this agrees with the Scripture as we read in **John 1 (KJV):**1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And in **John 1 (KJV):**14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

And in **John 1 (KJV):**18 No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

And in **John 3 (KJV):**16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

And in **John 3 (KJV):**18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

And in **1 John 4 (KJV):**9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Amen and amen.

4. We do not bring in two Gods as some do, who say, “God the Father and God the Son, but greater God the Father and lesser God the Son.” They both are what? Two Gods? Thou blushest to speak it, blush to believe it. Lord God the Father, thou sayest, and Lord God the Son: and the Son Himself saith, “No man can serve two Lords. (Matthew 6:24) In His family shall we be in such wise, that, like as in a great house where there is the father of a family and he hath a son, so we should say, the greater Lord, the lesser Lord? Shrink from such a thought. If ye make to yourselves such like in your heart, ye set up idols in the “one soul.” Utterly repel it. First believe, then understand. Now to whom God gives that when he has believed he soon understands; that is God’s gift, not human frailness. Still, if ye do not yet understand, believe: One God the Father, God Christ the Son of God. Both are what? One God. **And how are both said to be One God? How? Dost thou marvel? In the Acts of the Apostles, “There was,” it says, “in the believers, one soul and one heart.” (Acts 4:32) There were many souls, faith had made them one.** So many thousands of souls were there; they loved each other, and many are one:

they loved God in the fire of charity, and from being many they are come to the oneness of beauty. If all those many souls the dearness of love made one soul, what must be the dearness of love in God, where is no diversity, but entire equality! If on earth and among men there could be so great charity as of so many souls to make one soul, where Father from Son, Son from Father, hath been ever inseparable, could They both be other than One God? Only, those souls might be called both many souls and one soul; but God, in Whom is ineffable and highest conjunction, may be called One God, not two Gods.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “We do not bring in two Gods as some do, who say, “God the Father and God the Son, but greater God the Father and lesser God the Son.” They both are what? Two Gods? Thou blushest to speak it, blush to believe it. Lord God the Father, thou sayest, and Lord God the Son: and the Son Himself saith, “No man can serve two Lords. (Matthew 6:24)”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):24** No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

He continues, “In His family shall we be in such wise, that, like as in a great house where there is the father of a family and he hath a son, so we should say, the greater Lord, the lesser Lord? Shrink from such a thought. If ye make to yourselves such like in your heart, ye set up idols in the “one soul.” Utterly repel it. First believe, then understand. Now to whom God gives that when he has believed he soon understands; that is God’s gift, not human frailness. Still, if ye do not yet understand, believe: One God the Father, God Christ the Son of God. Both are what? One God.”

God the Son humbled Himself and became a man. In this sense, He is the only begotten of the Father. But He was always God before He became a man.

Augustine continues, as he says, “**And how are both said to be One God? How? Dost thou marvel? In the Acts of the Apostles, “There was,” it says, “in the believers, one soul and one heart.” (Acts 4:30) There were many souls, faith had made them one.**”

He refers here to **Acts 4 (KJV):32** And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

Augustine is trying to show that though there is a trinity of persons, yet there is one God, who expresses Himself in one will.

The greatest illustration of the trinity is man, for man is made in the image of God in **Genesis 1 (KJV):27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

And man is composed of three parts as we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The spirit is where we connect with God, who is Spirit. The soul is where we connect with other men and women on this earth. The soul communicates through the flesh, which has the five senses of sight, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching. The flesh is how we communicate with the physical world.

These three parts of man correspond to God the Father who is Spirit, and God the Son,

and God the Holy Spirit. God the Father plans, God the Son executes the Father's plan, and God the Holy Spirit brings the plan to completion. They are three persons in one God.

Augustine continues...

5. The Father doeth what He will, and what He will doeth the Son. Do not imagine an Almighty Father and a not Almighty Son: it is error, blot it out within you, let it not cleave in your memory, let it not be drunk into your faith, and if haply any of you shall have drunk it in, let him vomit it up. Almighty is the Father, Almighty the Son. If Almighty begat not Almighty, He begat not very Son. For what say we, brethren, if the Father being greater begat a Son less than He? What said I, begat? Man engenders, being greater, a son being less: it is true: but that is because the one grows old, the other grows up, and by very growing attains to the form of his father. The Son of God, if He groweth not because neither can God wax old, was begotten perfect. And being begotten perfect, if He groweth not, and remained not less, He is equal. For that ye may know Almighty begotten of Almighty, hear Him Who is Truth. That which of Itself Truth saith, is true. What saith Truth? What saith the Son, Who is Truth? "Whatsoever things the Father doeth, these also the Son likewise doeth." (John 5:19) The Son is Almighty, in doing all things that He willeth to do. For if the Father doeth some things which the Son doeth not, the Son said falsely, "Whatsoever things the Father doeth, these also the Son doeth likewise." But because the Son spake truly, believe it: "Whatsoever things the Father doeth, these also the Son doeth likewise," and ye have believed in the Son that He is Almighty. Which word although ye said not in the Creed, yet this is it that ye expressed when ye believed in the Only Son, Himself God. Hath the Father aught that the Son hath not? This Arian heretic blasphemers say, not I. But what say I? If the Father hath aught that the Son hath not, the Son lieth in saying, "All things that the Father hath, are Mine." (John 16:15) **Many and innumerable are the testimonies by which it is proved that the Son is Very Son of God the Father, and the Father God hath His Very-begotten Son God, and Father and Son is One God.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "The Father doeth what He will, and what He will doeth the Son. Do not imagine an Almighty Father and a not Almighty Son: it is error, blot it out within you, let it not cleave in your memory, let it not be drunk into your faith, and if haply any of you shall have drunk it in, let him vomit it up. Almighty is the Father, Almighty the Son. If Almighty begat not Almighty, He begat not very Son."

The Son of God was the only begotten in that He became a man. He was always God. Jesus told His disciples that unless they eat His flesh and drink His blood, they have no life in them as He reveals in **John 6 (KJV):53** Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

He then explained as we read in **John 6 (NASB):61** But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble? 62 What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? 63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

Where was Jesus before? He was in heaven with the Father. It is the Spirit that gives life. The flesh profits nothing. He was not talking about literally eating His flesh and blood, but about identifying with the sacrifice that He would make on the cross for our sins.

Augustine continues, "For what say we, brethren, if the Father being greater begat a Son

less than He? What said I, begat? Man engenders, being greater, a son being less: it is true: but that is because the one grows old, the other grows up, and by very growing attains to the form of his father. The Son of God, if He groweth not because neither can God wax old, was begotten perfect. And being begotten perfect, if He groweth not, and remained not less, He is equal.”

The Son of God became a man. As a man, He did not have a sin nature because He was begotten of God by the Holy Spirit, as we read in **Luke 1 (KJV):30** And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. 34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Augustine continues, “For that ye may know Almighty begotten of Almighty, hear Him Who is Truth. That which of Itself Truth saith, is true. What saith Truth? What saith the Son, Who is Truth? “Whatsoever things the Father doeth, these also the Son likewise doeth.” (John 5:19)”

He refers to **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

And to **John 5 (KJV):19** Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

He continues, “The Son is Almighty, in doing all things that He willeth to do. For if the Father doeth some things which the Son doeth not, the Son said falsely, “Whatsoever things the Father doeth, these also the Son doeth likewise.” But because the Son spake truly, believe it: “Whatsoever things the Father doeth, these also the Son doeth likewise,” and ye have believed in the Son that He is Almighty. Which word although ye said not in the Creed, yet this is it that ye expressed when ye believed in the Only Son, Himself God. Hath the Father aught that the Son hath not? This Arian heretic blasphemers say, not I. But what say I? If the Father hath aught that the Son hath not, the Son lieth in saying, “All things that the Father hath, are Mine.” (John 16:15)”

Augustine refers to **John 16 (KJV):15** All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

And he concludes, “**Many and innumerable are the testimonies by which it is proved that the Son is Very Son of God the Father, and the Father God hath His Very-begotten Son God, and Father and Son is One God.**”

To quote just a few of them we read in **John 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And in **John 1 (KJV):14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

And in **John 10 (KJV):29** My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no



man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and my Father are one.

And in **John 17 (KJV)**:1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: 2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. 3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. 4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

And in **Romans 9 (KJV)**:5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

6. But this Only Son of God, the Father Almighty, let us see what He did for us, what He suffered for us. “Born of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary.” He, so great God, equal with the Father, born of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary, born lowly, that thereby He might heal the proud. Man exalted himself and fell; God humbled Himself and raised him up. Christ’s lowliness, what is it? God hath stretched out an hand to man laid low. We fell, He descended: we lay low, He stooped. Let us lay hold and rise, that we fall not into punishment. So then His stooping to us is this, “Born of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary.” His very Nativity too as man, it is lowly, and it is lofty. Whence lowly? That as man He was born of men. Whence lofty? That He was born of a virgin. A virgin conceived, a virgin bore, and after the birth was a virgin still.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins and says, “But this Only Son of God, the Father Almighty, let us see what He did for us, what He suffered for us.”

Augustine then gives us the next line in the Creed, as he continues, “Born of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary.”

And we read in **Matthew 1 (KJV)**:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. 24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

Augustine continues, “He, so great God, equal with the Father, born of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary, born lowly, that thereby He might heal the proud. Man exalted himself and fell; God humbled Himself and raised him up. Christ’s lowliness, what is it? God hath stretched out an hand to man laid low. We fell, He descended: we lay low, He stooped.”

And that “He stooped” is mentioned in **Philippians 2 (KJV)**:5 Let this mind be in you,

which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Augustine continues, “Let us lay hold and rise, that we fall not into punishment. So then His stooping to us is this, “Born of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary.” His very Nativity too as man, it is lowly, and it is lofty. Whence lowly? That as man He was born of men. Whence lofty? **That He was born of a virgin. A virgin conceived, a virgin bore, and after the birth was a virgin still.**

Mary was still a virgin after she conceived and bore Jesus, but she did not remain a virgin as we read in **Matthew 1 (KJV):25** And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

Joseph “knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus”.

And so we read in **Mark 6 (KJV):3** Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

That Mary remained a virgin became a tradition in the Catholic Church very early on.

7. What next? **“Suffered under Pontius Pilate.”** He was in office as governor and was the judge, this same Pontius Pilate, what time as Christ suffered. In the name of the judge there is a mark of the times, when He suffered under Pontius Pilate: when He suffered, **“was crucified, dead, and buried.”** Who? what? for whom? Who? God’s Only Son, our Lord. What? Crucified, dead, and buried. For whom? for ungodly and sinners. Great condescension, great grace! “What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath bestowed on me?” (Psalm 116:12)

**Commentary:** Augustine gives us the next lines in the Creed, as he says, **“Suffered under Pontius Pilate,”** and **“was crucified, dead, and buried.”**

He refers to **Psalm 116 (KJV):12** What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?

Remember he is speaking to Catechumens. And before reading the next section, note that the word coeval means “having the same age or date of origin; contemporary”.

8. **He was begotten before all times, before all worlds. “Begotten before.”** Before what, He in Whom is no before? Do not in the least imagine any time before that Nativity of Christ whereby He was begotten of the Father; of that Nativity I am speaking by which He is Son of God Almighty, His Only Son our Lord; of that am I first speaking. Do not imagine in this Nativity a beginning of time; do not imagine any space of eternity in which the Father was and the Son was not. Since when the Father was, since then the Son. And what is that “since,” where is no beginning? Therefore ever Father without beginning, ever Son without beginning.



And how, thou wilt say, was He begotten, if He have no beginning? Of eternal, coeternal. At no time was the Father, and the Son not, and yet Son of Father was begotten. Whence is any manner of similitude to be had? We are among things of earth, we are in the visible creature. Let the earth give me a similitude: it gives none. Let the element of the waters give me some similitude: it hath not whereof to give. Some animal give me a similitude: neither can this do it. An animal indeed engenders, both what engenders and what is engendered: but first is the father, and then is born the son. Let us find the coeval and imagine it coeternal. If we shall be able to find a father coeval with his son, and son coeval with his father, let us believe God the Father coeval with His Son, and God the Son coeternal with His Father. On earth we can find some coeval, we cannot find any coeternal. Let us stretch the coeval and imagine it coeternal. Some one, it may be, will put you on the stretch, by saying, “When is it possible for a father to be found coeval with his son, or son coeval with his father? That the father may beget he goes before in age; that the son may be begotten, he comes after in age: but this father coeval with son, or son with father, how can it be?” Imagine to yourselves fire as father, its shining as son; see, we have found the coevals. From the instant that the fire begins to be, that instant it begets the shining: neither fire before shining, nor shining after fire. And if we ask, which begets which? the fire the shining, or the shining the fire? Immediately ye conceive by natural sense, by the innate wit of your minds ye all cry out, The fire the shining, not the shining the fire. Lo, here you have a father beginning; lo, a son at the same time, neither going before nor coming after. Lo, here then is a father beginning, lo, a son at the same time beginning. If I have shown you a father beginning, and a son at the same time beginning, believe the Father not beginning, and with Him the Son not beginning either; the one eternal, the other coeternal. If ye get on with your learning, ye understand: take pains to get on. The being born, ye have; but also the growing, ye ought to have; because no man begins with being perfect. **As for the Son of God, indeed, He could be born perfect, because He was begotten without time, coeternal with the Father, long before all things, not in age, but in eternity. He then was begotten coeternal, of which generation the Prophet said, “His generation who shall declare? (Isaiah 53:8) begotten of the Father without time, He was born of the Virgin in the fullness of times.** This nativity had times going before it. In opportunity of time, when He would, when He knew, then was He born: for He was not born without His will. None of us is born because he will, and none of us dies when he will: He, when He would, was born; when He would, He died: how He would, He was born of a Virgin: how He would, He died; on the cross. Whatever He would, He did: because He was in such wise Man that, unseen, He was God; God assuming, Man assumed; One Christ, God and Man.

**Commentary:** Augustine testifies that Jesus is God the Son. He begins as he says, **“He was begotten before all times, before all worlds. “Begotten before.”** Before what, He in Whom is no before? Do not in the least imagine any time before that Nativity of Christ whereby He was begotten of the Father; of that Nativity I am speaking by which He is Son of God Almighty, His Only Son our Lord; of that am I first speaking.”

Now the word “begotten” is found in **John 1 (KJV):14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

And in **John 1 (KJV):18** No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son,

which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

And in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

And in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

And in **Acts 13 (KJV):33** God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

This is referring to **Psalms 2 (KJV):7** I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

We see by these Scriptures that the word “begotten” refers to His becoming a man. This is what is stated in **Philippians 2 (KJV):6** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

He became a man in order to save us as we read in **Hebrews 2 (KJV):9** But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. 10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. 13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. 14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17 Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

In due course, Augustine says, “As for the Son of God, indeed, He could be born perfect, because He was begotten without time, coeternal with the Father, long before all things, not in age, but in eternity. He then was begotten coeternal, of which generation the Prophet said, “His generation who shall declare? (Isaiah 53:8) begotten of the Father without time, He was born of the Virgin in the fullness of times.”

He refers to **Isaiah 53 (KJV):8** He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

Jesus is as Augustine testifies, “**coeternal with the Father**”, **John 17 (KJV):5** And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

9. Of His cross what shall I speak, what say? This extremest kind of death He chose, that not any kind of death might make His Martyrs afraid. The doctrine He shewed in His life as Man, the example of patience He demonstrated in His Cross. There, you have the work, that He was crucified; example of the work, the Cross; reward of the work, Resurrection. He shewed us in the Cross what we ought to endure, He shewed in the Resurrection what we have to hope. Just like a consummate taskmaster in the matches of the arena, He said, Do, and bear; do the work and receive the prize; strive in the match and thou shall be crowned. What is the work? Obedience. What the prize? Resurrection without death. Why did I add, “without death?” Because “Lazarus rose, and died: Christ rose again, “dieth no more, death will no longer have dominion over Him.” (Romans 6:9)

**Commentary:** In summary, here we can say, “Yes, and Amen”. He refers to **Romans 6 (KJV):9** Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10. Scripture saith, “Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord.” (James 5:11) When we read what great trials Job endured, it makes one shudder, it makes one shrink, it makes one quake. And what did he receive? The double of what he had lost. Let not a man therefore with an eye to temporal rewards be willing to have patience, and say to himself, “Let me endure loss, God will give me back sons twice as many; Job received double of all, and begat as many sons as he had buried.” Then is this not the double? Yes, precisely the double, because the former sons still lived. Let none say, “Let me bear evils, and God will repay me as He repaid Job:” that it be now no longer patience but avarice. For if it was not patience which that Saint had, nor a brave enduring of all that came upon him; the testimony which the Lord gave, whence should he have it? “Hast thou observed,” saith the Lord, “my servant Job? For there is not like him any on the earth, a man without fault, true worshipper of God.” What a testimony, my brethren, did this holy man deserve of the Lord! And yet him a bad woman sought by her persuasion to deceive, she too representing that serpent, who, like as in Paradise he deceived the man whom God first made, so likewise here by suggesting blasphemy thought to be able to deceive a man who pleased God. What things he suffered, my brethren! Who can have so much to suffer in his estate, his house, his sons, his flesh, yea in his very wife who was left to be his tempter! But even her who was left, the devil would have taken away long ago, but that he kept her to be his helper: because by Eve he had mastered the first man, therefore had he kept an Eve. What things, then, he suffered! He lost all that he had; his house fell; would that were all! It crushed his sons also. And, to see that patience had great place in him, hear what he answered; “The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; as it pleased the Lord, so hath it been done; (Job 1:21) blessed be the name of the Lord.” He hath taken what He gave, is He lost Who gave? He hath taken what He gave. As if he should say, He hath taken away all, let Him take all, send me away naked, and let me keep Him. What shall I lack if I have God? Or what is the good of all else to me, if I have not God? Then it came to his flesh, he was

stricken with a wound from head to foot; he was one running sore, one mass of crawling worms: and showed himself immovable in his God, stood fixed. The woman wanted, devil's helper as she was not husband's comforter, to put him up to blaspheme God. "How long," said she, "dost thou suffer" so and so; "speak some word against the Lord, and die." (Job 2:9) So then, because he had been brought low, he was to be exalted. And this the Lord did, in order to show it to men; as for His servant, He kept greater things for him in heaven. So then Job who was brought low, He exalted; the devil who was lifted up, He brought low: for "He putteth down one and setteth up another." (Psalm 75:7) But let not any man, my beloved brethren, when he suffers any suchlike tribulations, look for a reward here: for instance, if he suffer any losses, let him not peradventure say, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; as it pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord;" only with the mind to receive twice as much again. Let patience praise God, not avarice. If what thou hast lost thou seekest to receive back twofold, and therefore praisest God, it is of covetousness thou praisest, not of love. Do not imagine this to be the example of that holy man; thou deceivest thyself. When Job was enduring all, he was not hoping for to have twice as much again. Both in his first confession when he bore up under his losses, and bore out to the grave the dead bodies of his sons, and in the second when he was now suffering torments of sores in his flesh, ye may observe what I am saying. Of his former confession the words run thus: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21) He might have said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; He that took away can once more give; can bring back more than He took." He said not this, but, "As it pleased the Lord," said he, "so is it done:" because it pleases Him, let it please me: let not that which hath pleased the good Lord misplease His submissive servant; what pleased the Physician, not misplease the sick man. Hear his other confession: "Thou hast spoken," said he to his wife, "like one of the foolish women. If we have received good at the hand of the Lord, why shall we not bear evil?" (Job 2:10) He did not add, what, if he had said it, would have been true. "The Lord is able both to bring back my flesh into its former condition, and that which He hath taken away from us, to make manifold more:" lest he should seem to have endured in hope of this. This was not what he said, not what he hoped. But, that we might be taught, did the Lord that for him, not hoping for it, by which we should be taught, that God was with him: because if He had not also restored to him those things, there was the crown indeed, but hidden, and we could not see it. And therefore what says the divine Scripture in exhorting to patience and hope of things future, not reward of things present? "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord." Why is it, "the patience of Job," and not, Ye have seen the end of Job himself? Thou wouldest open thy mouth for the "twice as much;" wouldest say, "Thanks be to God; let me bear up: I receive twice as much again, like Job." "Patience of Job, end of the Lord." The patience of Job we know, and the end of the Lord we know. (Psalm 22:1) What end of the Lord? "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" They are the words of the Lord hanging on the cross. He did as it were leave Him for present felicity, not leave Him for eternal immortality. In this is "the end of the Lord." The Jews hold Him, the Jews insult, the Jews bind Him, crown Him with thorns, dishonor Him with spitting, scourge Him, overwhelm Him with revilings, hang Him upon the tree, pierce Him with a spear, last of all bury Him. He was as it were left: but by whom? By those insulting ones. Therefore thou shall but to this end have patience, that thou mayest rise again and not die, that is, never die, even as Christ. For so we read, "Christ rising

from the dead henceforth dieth not. (Romans 6:9)

**Commentary:** Here we can also say, “Yes, and Amen”. Augustine begins as he says, “Scripture saith, “Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord.” (James 5:11)

He refers to **James 5 (KJV):11** Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

And he refers in context to **Job 1 (KJV):18** While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: 19 And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, 21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. 22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

And in context to **Job 2 (KJV):3** And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. 4 And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. 5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. 6 And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. 7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. 8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. 9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die. 10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

And to **Psalms 75 (KJV):7** But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

And to **Psalms 22 (KJV):1** My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

And to **Matthew 27 (KJV):46** And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

And again to **Romans 6 (KJV):9** Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

We can agree with Augustine that “the divine Scripture” exhorts “to patience and hope of things future, not reward of things present”.

And Job did receive double for his patience, as we read in **Job 42 (KJV):10** And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before. 11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought

upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. 12 So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. 13 He had also seven sons and three daughters. 14 And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch. 15 And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren. 16 After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. 17 So Job died, being old and full of days.

11. **“He ascended into heaven:” believe. “He sitteth at the right hand of the Father:” believe.** By sitting, understand dwelling: as [in Latin] we say of any person, “In that country he dwelt (sedit) three years.” The Scripture also has that expression, that such an one dwelt (sedisse) in a city for such a time. (1 Kings 2:38) Not meaning that he sat and never rose up? On this account the dwellings of men are called seats (sedes). Where people are seated (in this sense), are they always sitting? Is there no rising, no walking, no lying down? And yet they are called seats (sedes). In this way, then, believe an inhabiting of Christ on the right hand of God the Father: He is there. And let not your heart say to you, What is He doing? Do not want to seek what is not permitted to find: He is there; it suffices you. He is blessed, and from blessedness which is called the right hand of the Father, of very blessedness the name is, right hand of the Father. For if we shall take it carnally, then because He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, the Father will be on His left hand. Is it consistent with piety so to put Them together, the Son on the right, the Father on the left? There it is all right-hand, because no misery is there.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine then gives us the next lines in the Creed, as he says, **““He ascended into heaven:” believe. “He sitteth at the right hand of the Father:” believe.”**

And he refers to **1 Kings 2 (KJV):38** And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

The word “dwelt” in Hebrew is יָשַׁב (pronounced yā·shav), and means to sit, sit down, to be set, to remain, stay, to dwell, have one’s abode).

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The right hand is the place of honor.

12. **“Thence He shall come to judge the quick and dead.”** The quick, who shall be alive and remain; the dead, who shall have gone before. It may also be understood thus: The living, the just; the dead, the unjust. For He judges both, rendering unto each his own. To the just He will say in the judgment, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.” (Matthew 25:34) For this prepare yourselves, for these things hope, for this live, and so live, for this believe, for this be baptized, that it may be said to you, “Come ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” To them on the left hand, what? “Go into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matthew 25:41) Thus will they be judged by Christ, the quick and the dead. We have spoken of Christ’s first nativity, which is without time; spoken of the other in the fullness of time, Christ’s nativity of the Virgin; spoken of the passion of Christ; spoken of



the coming of Christ to judgment. The whole is spoken, that was to be spoken of Christ, God's Only Son, our Lord. But not yet is the Trinity perfect.

**Commentary:** Augustine then gives us the next lines in the Creed, as he says, **“Thence He shall come to judge the quick and dead.”**

The judgment he is referring to is mentioned in **Acts 10 (KJV):42** And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

And in **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):1** I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

And to **1 Peter 4 (KJV):5** Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

He then explains, “The quick, who shall be alive and remain; the dead, who shall have gone before.”

And then he adds another interpretation, as he says, “It may also be understood thus: The living, the just; the dead, the unjust. For He judges both, rendering unto each his own. To the just He will say in the judgment, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.” (Matthew 25:34)

He refers here to **Matthew 25 (KJV):34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

But he mixes up the judgments. We now read in context in **Matthew 25 (KJV):31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

This judgment occurs immediately after the tribulation of seven years. The Son of man has just been victorious in the battle of Armageddon, and He now sits upon “the throne of his glory”, in order to set up the Kingdom on earth of one thousand years. The place of this judgment is on earth where “before him shall be gathered all nations”. He will separate the sheep nations from the goat nations, and the judgment upon each shall be given according to how they treated the brethren of the Lord, the Jews, during the tribulation period.

We continue to read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger,

and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

The sheep or righteous nations shall go into the Kingdom, while the goats shall go into “everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels”.

Augustine did not understand that there would be a rapture just before the tribulation period which is the last week of the seventy referred to by Daniel in **Daniel 9 (KJV):24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

The final week is then mentioned in **Daniel 9 (KJV):27** And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

We are in the time between the times. The 69 weeks passed when Messiah the Prince was cut off. The city and the sanctuary were destroyed in 70 AD by Titus, the Roman. This is the time Jesus referred to in **Luke 21 (KJV):20** And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. 22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

The times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled when the Church is raptured, and then God will again deal with Israel and bring them through the seven year tribulation period, which will be the last week of the 70 weeks determined on Israel. This will be the time of Jacob’s trouble as it is referred to in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV):4** And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5 For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. 8 For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall

no more serve themselves of him: 9 But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

Israel will be melted as silver as we read in **Ezekiel 22 (KJV):22** As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you.

But they “shall be saved out of it” as in Jeremiah 30:7 above.

The Kingdom Age will then begin a thousand year reign of Christ, who will rule the nations with a rod of iron as we read in **Revelation 12 (KJV):5** And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

And in **Revelation 19 (KJV):15** And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

And we read of this thousand year reign in **Revelation 20 (KJV):1** And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

The first resurrection is for the righteous. The next resurrection will be after the thousand year reign of Christ, at the time of the white throne judgment in **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

This judgment is for the wicked dead who did not accept Christ. They will be judged by their works, and ultimately cast into the lake of fire.

13. It follows in the Creed, “And in the Holy Ghost.” This Trinity, one God, one nature, one substance, one power; highest equality, no division, no diversity, perpetual dearness of love. Would ye know the Holy Ghost, that He is God? Be baptized, and ye will be His temple. The Apostle says, “Know ye not that your bodies are the temple within you of the Holy Ghost, Whom ye have of God?” (1 Corinthians 6:19) A temple is for God: thus also Solomon, king and

prophet, was bidden to build a temple for God. If he had built a temple for the sun or moon or some star or some angel, would not God condemn him? Because therefore he built a temple for God he showed that he worshipped God. And of what did he build? Of wood and stone, because God deigned to make unto Himself by His servant an house on earth, where He might be asked, where He might be had in mind. Of which blessed Stephen says, “Solomon built Him an house; howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made by hand.” (Acts 7:47-48) If then our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost, what manner of God is it that built a temple for the Holy Ghost? But it was God. For if our bodies be a temple of the Holy Ghost, the same built this temple for the Holy Ghost, that built our bodies. Listen to the Apostle saying, “God hath tempered the body, giving unto that which lacked the greater honor;” (1 Corinthians 12:24) when he was speaking of the different members that there should be no schisms in the body. God created our body. The grass, God created; our body Who created? How do we prove that the grass is God’s creating? He that clothes, the same creates. Read the Gospel, “If then the grass of the fields,” saith it, “which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, God so clotheth.” (Matthew 6:30) He, then, creates Who clothes. And the Apostle: “Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but a bare grain, as perchance of wheat, or of some other corn; but God giveth it a body as He would, and to each one of seeds its proper body.” (1 Corinthians 15:36-38) If then it be God that builds our bodies, God that builds our members, and our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost, doubt not that the Holy Ghost is God. And do not add as it were a third God; because Father and Son and Holy Ghost is One God. So believe ye.

**Commentary:** Augustine then gives us the next lines in the Creed, as he says, “**It follows in the Creed, “And in the Holy Ghost.”**”

He then continues, “This Trinity, one God, one nature, one substance, one power; highest equality, no division, no diversity, perpetual dearness of love. Would ye know the Holy Ghost, that He is God? Be baptized, and ye will be His temple. The Apostle says, “Know ye not that your bodies are the temple within you of the Holy Ghost, Whom ye have of God?” (1 Corinthians 6:19)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

But that the Holy Spirit is God is also revealed in **Acts 5 (KJV):1** But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

Ananias lied to the Holy Ghost in verse 3, and in so lying, he did not lie unto men but “unto God” as in verse 5.

Augustine then continues, “A temple is for God: thus also Solomon, king and prophet, was bidden to build a temple for God. If he had built a temple for the sun or moon or some star or some angel, would not God condemn him? Because therefore he built a temple for God he showed that he worshipped God. And of what did he build? Of wood and stone, because God

deigned to make unto Himself by His servant an house on earth, where He might be asked, where He might be had in mind. Of which blessed Stephen says, “Solomon built Him an house; howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made by hand.” (Acts 7:47-48)

He refers in context to **Acts 7 (KJV):**47 But Solomon built him an house. 48 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, 49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? 50 Hath not my hand made all these things?

And we can agree with Augustine that the Holy Ghost is God.

14. It follows after commendation of the Trinity, “**The Holy Church.**” God is pointed out, and His temple. “For the temple of God is holy,” says the Apostle, “which (temple) are ye.” (1 Corinthians 3:17) This same is the holy Church, the one Church, the true Church, the Catholic Church, fighting against all heresies: fight, it can: be fought down, it cannot. As for heresies, they went all out of it, like as unprofitable branches pruned from the vine: but itself abideth in its root, in its Vine, in its charity. “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18)

**Commentary:** Augustine then gives us the next lines in the Creed, as he says,” It follows after commendation of the Trinity, “**The Holy Church.**” God is pointed out, and His temple.”

We will read the entire creed shortly. He then continues, ““For the temple of God is holy,” says the Apostle, “which (temple) are ye.” (1 Corinthians 3:17)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):**16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

Augustine then continues, “This same is the holy Church, the one Church, the true Church, the Catholic Church, fighting against all heresies: fight, it can: be fought down, it cannot.”

This is also revealed in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):**19 Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

He then concludes, “As for heresies, they went all out of it, like as unprofitable branches pruned from the vine: but itself abideth in its root, in its Vine, in its charity. “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:18)”

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):**18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Again, we say, “Amen”.

15. “**Forgiveness of sins.**” Ye have [this article of] the Creed perfectly in you when ye receive Baptism. Let none say, “I have done this or that sin: perchance that is not forgiven me.” What hast thou done? How great a sin hast thou done? Name any heinous thing thou hast committed, heavy, horrible, which thou shudderest even to think of: have done what thou wilt: hast thou killed Christ? There is not than that deed any worse, because also than Christ there is



nothing better. What a dreadful thing is it to kill Christ! Yet the Jews killed Him, and many afterwards believed on Him and drank His blood: they are forgiven the sin which they committed. When ye have been baptized, hold fast a good life in the commandments of God, that ye may guard your Baptism even unto the end. I do not tell you that ye will live here without sin; but they are venial, without which this life is not. For the sake of all sins was Baptism provided; for the sake of light sins, without which we cannot be, was prayer provided. What hath the Prayer? “Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12) Once for all we have washing in Baptism, every day we have washing in prayer. Only, do not commit those things for which ye must needs be separated from Christ’s body: which be far from you! For those whom ye have seen doing penance, have committed heinous things, either adulteries or some enormous crimes: for these they do penance. Because if theirs had been light sins, to blot out these daily prayer would suffice.

**Commentary:** Augustine then gives us the next lines in the Creed, as he says, **““Forgiveness of sins.”** Ye have [this article of] the Creed perfectly in you when ye receive Baptism.”

We are saved when we believe. We are then baptized because we believe. But in Augustine’s day it was all about the ritual of baptism.

Augustine continues, “Let none say, “I have done this or that sin: perchance that is not forgiven me.” What hast thou done? How great a sin hast thou done? Name any heinous thing thou hast committed, heavy, horrible, which thou shudderest even to think of: have done what thou wilt: hast thou killed Christ? There is not than that deed any worse, because also than Christ there is nothing better. What a dreadful thing is it to kill Christ! Yet the Jews killed Him, and many afterwards believed on Him and drank His blood: they are forgiven the sin which they committed.”

We have only to look at what happened at Pentecost to know that many Jews did repent when Peter preached the Gospel in **Acts 2 (KJV):35** Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. 36 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. 40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. 41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Augustine then continues, “When ye have been baptized, hold fast a good life in the commandments of God, that ye may guard your Baptism even unto the end. I do not tell you that ye will live here without sin; but they are venial, without which this life is not. For the sake of all sins was Baptism provided; for the sake of light sins, without which we cannot be, was prayer provided.”

Light sins, he says, are “venial, without which this life is not”. Prayer takes care of these he says.

He continues, “What hath the Prayer? “Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our



debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)”

He refers again to **Matthew 6 (KJV):12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

He then concludes, “Once for all we have washing in Baptism, every day we have washing in prayer. Only, do not commit those things for which ye must needs be separated from Christ’s body: which be far from you! For those whom ye have seen doing penance, have committed heinous things, either adulteries or some enormous crimes: for these they do penance. Because if theirs had been light sins, to blot out these daily prayer would suffice.”

Augustine does not use the word “mortal” here, as in mortal sins, but clearly that is what he has in mind.

And “penance” is “an act of self-abasement, mortification (see MORTIFICATION SENSE 3), or devotion performed to show sorrow or repentance for sin”. (**Merriam Webster**)

This word “penance” is not found in Scripture however. The tradition surrounding the word “penance” became so strong in the Roman Catholic Church that they even translated the Greek word for “repentance” as “penance” in the **Douay-Rheims Bible**, as we read in **Acts 2 (Douay-Rheims):38** But Peter said to them: Do penance: and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins. And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Wikipedia says, “The **Douay-Rheims Bible** is a translation of the **Latin Vulgate**. The New Testament was first published in 1582 in Rheims, France, and the Old Testament portion was published in two volumes twenty-seven years later in 1609 and 1610 by the University of Douai.” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douay-Rheims\\_Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douay-Rheims_Bible)

The Douay-Rheims Bible translated the Latin word “paenitentiam” as “do penance”. But the Greek word is **μετανοέω** (pronounced me-tä-no-e'-ō) and means “to change one’s mind, i.e. repent”. <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G3340&t=NASB>

The Roman Catholic Church finally updated their Bible after the second Vatican Council in 1965. And so we read in the **New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition** as in **Acts 2 (NRSVCE):38** Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Jerome initiated the translation of the **Latin Vulgate** edition of the Bible in 382. Jerome was a contemporary of Augustine.

But Augustine seems to equivocate. He first says, “For the sake of all sins was Baptism provided”. But he then says, “Only, do not commit those things for which ye must needs be separated from Christ’s body: which be far from you! For those whom ye have seen doing penance, have committed heinous things, either adulteries or some enormous crimes: for these they do penance. Because if theirs had been light sins, to blot out these daily prayer would suffice.”

In the Catholic Church in Augustine’s time, there was already a tradition of “doing penance” for sin, for “heinous things, either adulteries or some enormous crimes”.

But Jesus spoke as in **John 13 (KJV):10** Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

When we are born again, we are washed. Then we only need to wash our feet and we are all clean. But repentance will always be involved in washing our feet. We must confess our sins, and turn from them. Not doing so will involve chastening from the Lord.

16. **In three ways then are sins remitted in the Church; by Baptism, by prayer, by the greater humility of penance; yet God doth not remit sins but to the baptized.** The very sins which He remits first, He remits not but to the baptized. When? When they are baptized. The sins which are after remitted upon prayer, upon penance, to whom He remits, it is to the baptized that He remitteth. For how can they say, “Our Father,” who are not yet born sons? The Catechumens, so long as they be such, have upon them all their sins. If Catechumens, how much more Pagans? How much more heretics? But to heretics we do not change their baptism. Why? because they have baptism in the same way as a deserter has the soldier’s mark: just so these also have Baptism; they have it, but to be condemned thereby, not crowned. And yet if the deserter himself, being amended, begin to do duty as a soldier, does any man dare to change his mark?

**Commentary:** Augustine then says, **“In three ways then are sins remitted in the Church; by Baptism, by prayer, by the greater humility of penance; yet God doth not remit sins but to the baptized.”**

He continues as he says, “The very sins which He remits first, He remits not but to the baptized. When? When they are baptized. The sins which are after remitted upon prayer, upon penance, to whom He remits, it is to the baptized that He remitteth. For how can they say, “Our Father,” who are not yet born sons? The Catechumens, so long as they be such, have upon them all their sins.”

The Catechumens had not been baptized yet. This is why they “have upon them all their sins.”

He continues, “If Catechumens, how much more Pagans? How much more heretics? But to heretics we do not change their baptism. Why? because they have baptism in the same way as a deserter has the soldier’s mark: just so these also have Baptism; they have it, but to be condemned thereby, not crowned. And yet if the deserter himself, being amended, begin to do duty as a soldier, does any man dare to change his mark?”

So heretics do not have to be rebaptized, because they have what is like “the soldier’s mark”. Baptism was when one was regenerated, according to the thinking of the Catholic Church in Augustine’s time. But for him to characterize it as a “soldier’s mark” shows us that he did not have much understanding of what takes place when one is born again. A heretic or one who sinned heinously was thought to have all their sins back on them, and to be outside the church. If they did not repent before death, they would be lost and going to hell.

We see that way too much emphasis was placed on baptism because of a lack of proper understanding of the Scriptures. But this was the church in Augustine’s time. Ritual was beginning to take over the Church.

17. **We believe also “the resurrection of the flesh,” which went before in Christ: that the body too may have hope of that which went before in its Head.** The Head of the Church, Christ: the Church, the body of Christ. Our Head is risen, ascended into heaven: where the Head, there

also the members. In what way the resurrection of the flesh? Lest any should chance to think it like as Lazarus's resurrection, that thou mayest know it to be not so, it is added, "Into life everlasting." God regenerate you! God preserve and keep you! God bring you safe unto Himself, Who is the Life Everlasting. Amen.

**Commentary:** Augustine then gives us the next lines in the Creed, as he says, **"We believe also 'the resurrection of the flesh,' which went before in Christ: that the body too may have hope of that which went before in its Head."**

He then testifies, "The Head of the Church, Christ: the Church, the body of Christ. Our Head is risen, ascended into heaven: where the Head, there also the members."

This agrees with the Scripture as we read in **Colossians 1 (KJV):18** And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

And we also read as in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):4** But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Augustine then concludes, "In what way the resurrection of the flesh? Lest any should chance to think it like as Lazarus's resurrection, that thou mayest know it to be not so, it is added, "Into life everlasting." God regenerate you! God preserve and keep you! God bring you safe unto Himself, Who is the Life Everlasting. Amen."

Lazarus was brought back from the dead. That Lazarus was dead we have Jesus' words in **John 11 (KJV):11** These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. 12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. 13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. 14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

And Jesus called Lazarus back from the dead as we read in **John 11 (KJV):38** Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. 39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. 40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? 41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. 43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

But Lazarus was not glorified yet. This is what Augustine is saying, when he says, "Lest any should chance to think it like as Lazarus's resurrection, that thou mayest know it to be not so, it is added, "Into life everlasting.""

At the resurrection, our bodies will be changed from mortal to immortal, from corruptible to incorruptible as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):** 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Lazarus was not yet resurrected to immortality, but he was still brought back from the dead.

So if we were to put the Creed together from this writing of Augustine, it might look something like this, with the paragraph number:

I believe in God the Father Almighty (2)  
Creator of heaven and earth (2)  
And in Jesus Christ His Only Son, our Lord (3)  
Born of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary (6)  
Suffered under Pontius Pilate (7)  
Was crucified, dead, and buried (7)  
He was begotten before all times, before all worlds (8)  
He ascended into heaven (11)  
He sitteth at the right hand of the Father (11)  
Thence He shall come to judge the quick and dead (12)  
And in the Holy Ghost (13)  
The Holy Church (14)  
The Forgiveness of sins (15)  
The resurrection of the flesh (17)

We also read of the Creed in another book of St. Augustine in the following.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3**  
**Treatise on Faith and the Creed, Introductory Notice, page 318**

The following text of the Apostles' Creed may be collected from this book of St. Augustin, and was current in North Africa towards the close of the fourth century:

I Believe in God the Father Almighty. Chs. 2 and 3.  
(And) In Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-Begotten of the Father, or, His Only Son, Our Lord. Ch. 3.  
Who Was Born Through the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary. Ch. 4 (§ 8.)  
Who Under Pontius Pilate Was Crucified and Buried. Ch. 5 (§ 11.)  
On the Third Day He Rose Again from the Dead. Ch. 5 (§ 12.)  
He Ascended into Heaven. Ch. 6 (§ 13.)  
He Sitteth at the Right Hand of the Father. Ch. 7 (§ 14.)

From Thence He Will Come and Judge the Living and the Dead. Ch. 8 (§ 15.)  
(and I Believe) in the Holy Spirit. Ch. 9 (§ 16–19.)  
I Believe the Holy Church (Catholic). Ch. 10 (§ 21.)  
The Forgiveness of Sin. Ch. 10 (§ 23.)  
The Resurrection of the Body. Ch. 10 (§ 23, 24.)

Augustine gives us his understanding of the purpose of the Creed in the next quote of his writing.

### **A Treatise on Faith and the Creed.**

#### **Chapter 1.—Of the Origin and Object of the Composition.**

1. Inasmuch as it is a position, written and established on the most solid foundation of apostolic teaching, “that the just lives of faith;” (Hebrews 2:4, Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38) and inasmuch also as this faith demands of us the duty at once of heart and tongue,—for an apostle says, “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,” (Romans 10:10)—it becomes us to be mindful both of righteousness and of salvation. For, destined as we are to reign hereafter in everlasting righteousness, we certainly cannot secure our salvation from the present evil world, unless at the same time, while laboring for the salvation of our neighbors, we likewise with the mouth make our own profession of the faith which we carry in our heart. And it must be our aim, by pious and careful watchfulness, to provide against the possibility of the said faith sustaining any injury in us, on any side, through the fraudulent artifices [or, cunning fraud] of the heretics.

We have, however, the catholic faith in the Creed, known to the faithful and committed to memory, contained in a form of expression as concise as has been rendered admissible by the circumstances of the case; the purpose of which [compilation] was, that individuals who are but beginners and sucklings among those who have been born again in Christ, and who have not yet been strengthened by most diligent and spiritual handling and understanding of the divine Scriptures, should be furnished with a summary, expressed in few words, of those matters of necessary belief which were subsequently to be explained to them in many words, as they made progress and rose to [the height of] divine doctrine, on the assured and steadfast basis of humility and charity. It is underneath these few words, therefore, which are thus set in order in the Creed, that most heretics have endeavored to conceal their poisons; whom divine mercy has withstood, and still withstands, by the instrumentality of spiritual men, who have been counted worthy not only to accept and believe the catholic faith as expounded in those terms, but also thoroughly to understand and apprehend it by the enlightenment imparted by the Lord. For it is written, “Unless ye believe, ye shall not understand.” (Isaiah 7:9, Septuagint) But the handling of the faith is of service for the protection of the Creed; not, however, to the intent that this should itself be given instead of the Creed, to be committed to memory and repeated by those who are receiving the grace of God, but that it may guard the matters which are retained in the Creed against the insidious assaults of the heretics, by means of catholic authority and a more entrenched defence.

## The Scriptures

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, On Christian Doctrine Book I, Chapter 39, paragraph 43, page 534

Chapter 39.—He Who is Mature in Faith, Hope and Love, Needs Scripture No Longer.

43. And thus a man who is resting upon faith, hope and love, and who keeps a firm hold upon these, does not need the Scriptures except for the purpose of instructing others. Accordingly, many live without copies of the Scriptures, even in solitude, on the strength of these three graces. So that in their case, I think, the saying is already fulfilled: “Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.” (1 Corinthians 13:8) Yet by means of these instruments (as they may be called), so great an edifice of faith and love has been built up in them, that, holding to what is perfect, they do not seek for what is only in part perfect—of course, I mean, so far as is possible in this life; for, in comparison with the future life, the life of no just and holy man is perfect here. Therefore the apostle says: “Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” (1 Corinthians 13:13) because, when a man shall have reached the eternal world, while the other two graces will fail, love will remain greater and more assured.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, as he asserts, “And thus a man who is resting upon faith, hope and love, and who keeps a firm hold upon these, does not need the Scriptures except for the purpose of instructing others.”

Before we comment on this statement, let us read further as he then says, “Accordingly, many live without copies of the Scriptures, even in solitude, on the strength of these three graces.”

In Augustine’s time, “many live without copies of the Scriptures”. Now this is hard for us in our day to understand, for the Scriptures are even available on the internet. And it is even shocking for someone to say that anyone “does not need the Scriptures except for the purpose of instructing others.”

But he continues, “So that in their case, I think, the saying is already fulfilled: “Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.” (1 Corinthians 13:8)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):8** Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

But let us read this verse in context with **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):9** For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

The time when knowledge would pass away was “when that which is perfect is come”, when we shall see “face to face”. This is speaking of the resurrection, when we shall see Him,



as John reveals in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

It is then that I shall “know even as also I am known” in 1 Corinthians 13:12 above. But we can be very understanding of the time in which he lived, for the Scriptures are readily available to all who desire to have them in our time. He may have been trying to assure those without the Scriptures to rest “**even in solitude, on the strength of these three graces**”, the graces being faith, hope, and love.

Augustine then continues, “**Yet by means of these instruments (as they may be called), so great an edifice of faith and love has been built up in them, that, holding to what is perfect, they do not seek for what is only in part perfect—of course, I mean, so far as is possible in this life; for, in comparison with the future life, the life of no just and holy man is perfect here. Therefore the apostle says: “Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity:” (1 Corinthians 13:13) because, when a man shall have reached the eternal world, while the other two graces will fail, love will remain greater and more assured.**”

He refers here to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):13** And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

The Scripture doesn’t say that “**the other two graces will fail**”, that is, faith and hope. It says, “And now abideth faith, hope, charity...”

Augustine did understand that the “perfect” related to a time in the future life, as he said that, “**the life of no just and holy man is perfect here**”.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, On Christian Doctrine Book II, Chapter 9, paragraph 14, page 534**

### **Chapter 9.—How We Should Proceed in Studying Scripture.**

**14. In all these books those who fear God and are of a meek and pious disposition seek the will of God. And in pursuing this search the first rule to be observed is, as I said, to know these books, if not yet with the understanding, still to read them so as to commit them to memory, or at least so as not to remain wholly ignorant of them.** Next, those matters that are plainly laid down in them, whether rules of life or rules of faith, are to be searched into more carefully and more diligently; and the more of these a man discovers, the more capacious does his understanding become. For among the things that are plainly laid down in Scripture are to be found all matters that concern faith and the manner of life,—to wit, hope and love, of which I have spoken in the previous book. After this, when we have made ourselves to a certain extent familiar with the language of Scripture, we may proceed to open up and investigate the obscure passages, and in doing so draw examples from the plainer expressions to throw light upon the more obscure, and use the evidence of passages about which there is no doubt to remove all hesitation in regard to the doubtful passages. And in this matter memory counts for a great deal; but if the memory be defective, no rules can supply the want.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “**In all these books those who fear God and are of a meek and pious disposition seek the will of God. And in pursuing this search the first rule**

to be observed is, as I said, to know these books, if not yet with the understanding, still to read them so as to commit them to memory, or at least so as not to remain wholly ignorant of them.”

This is a good first rule. We must not be ignorant of the Scriptures. Augustine was a man who was in the Scriptures. There is no doubt that he studied the Scriptures, for he quotes them frequently in his many writings.

He continues, “Next, those matters that are plainly laid down in them, whether rules of life or rules of faith, are to be searched into more carefully and more diligently; and the more of these a man discovers, the more capacious does his understanding become. For among the things that are plainly laid down in Scripture are to be found all matters that concern faith and the manner of life,—to wit, hope and love, of which I have spoken in the previous book.”

This is a good method if one is searching for the truth. But what is understood in Augustine’s time is that, in your studying, you would search for what was in agreement with the dogma of the Catholic Church, that is the “rules of faith”.

Augustine then concludes, “After this, when we have made ourselves to a certain extent familiar with the language of Scripture, we may proceed to open up and investigate the obscure passages, and in doing so draw examples from the plainer expressions to throw light upon the more obscure, and use the evidence of passages about which there is no doubt to remove all hesitation in regard to the doubtful passages. And in this matter memory counts for a great deal; but if the memory be defective, no rules can supply the want.”

Augustine had a thirst for truth. Most of the bishops in his time did not have the knowledge of the word of God that Augustine had. At times, his search lead him outside the bounds of the dogma of the Catholic Church. But he was committed to maintaining the unity of the faith.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, On Christian Doctrine Book II, Chapter 11, paragraph 16, page 534**

Chapter 11.—Knowledge of Languages, Especially of Greek and Hebrew, Necessary to Remove Ignorance or Signs.

16. The great remedy for ignorance of proper signs is knowledge of languages. **And men who speak the Latin tongue, of whom are those I have undertaken to instruct, need two other languages for the knowledge of Scripture, Hebrew and Greek, that they may have recourse to the original texts if the endless diversity of the Latin translators throw them into doubt.**

Although, indeed, we often find Hebrew words untranslated in the books as for example, Amen, Halleluia, Racha, Hosanna, and others of the same kind. Some of these, although they could have been translated, have been preserved in their original form on account of the more sacred authority that attaches to it, as for example, Amen and Halleluia. Some of them, again, are said to be untranslatable into another tongue, of which the other two I have mentioned are examples. For in some languages there are words that cannot be translated into the idiom of another language. And this happens chiefly in the case of interjections, which are words that express rather an emotion of the mind than any part of a thought we have in our mind. And the two given above are said to be of this kind, Racha expressing the cry of an angry man, Hosanna that of a joyful man. **But the knowledge of these languages is necessary, not for the sake of a few**

words like these which it is very easy to mark and to ask about, but, as has been said, on account of the diversities among translators. For the translations of the Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek can be counted, but the Latin translators are out of all number. For in the early days of the faith every man who happened to get his hands upon a Greek manuscript, and who thought he had any knowledge, were it ever so little, of the two languages, ventured upon the work of translation.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “The great remedy for ignorance of proper signs is knowledge of languages. And men who speak the Latin tongue, of whom are those I have undertaken to instruct, need two other languages for the knowledge of Scripture, Hebrew and Greek, that they may have recourse to the original texts if the endless diversity of the Latin translators throw them into doubt.”

Augustine spoke and wrote in Latin.

Philip Schaff, the noted historian, said, “But his knowledge of Greek literature was mostly derived from Latin translations. With the Greek language, as he himself frankly and modestly confesses, he had, in comparison with Jerome, but a superficial acquaintance. Hebrew he did not understand at all. Hence, with all his extraordinary familiarity with the Latin Bible, he made many mistakes in exposition. He was rather a thinker than a scholar, and depended mainly on his own resources, which were always abundant.”

When he says that Augustine only had a superficial acquaintance with the Greek language compared to Jerome, Schaff also notes, “It is sometimes asserted that he had no knowledge at all of the Greek. So Gibbon, for example, says (ch. xxxiii.): “The superficial learning of Augustin was confined to the Latin language.” But this is a mistake. In his youth he had a great aversion to the glorious language of Hellas because he had a bad teacher and was forced to it (*Conf.* i. 14). He read the writings of Plato in a Latin translation (vii. 9). But after his baptism, during his second residence in Rome, he resumed the study of Greek with greater zest, for the sake of his biblical studies. In Hippo he had, while presbyter, good opportunity to advance in it, since his bishop, Aurelius, a native Greek, understood his mother tongue much better than the Latin. In his books he occasionally makes reference to the Greek.” **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, PROLEGOMENA, Chapter 3, page 9.**

Augustine continues, “Although, indeed, we often find Hebrew words untranslated in the books as for example, Amen, Halleluia, Racha, Hosanna, and others of the same kind. Some of these, although they could have been translated, have been preserved in their original form on account of the more sacred authority that attaches to it, as for example, Amen and Halleluia. Some of them, again, are said to be untranslatable into another tongue, of which the other two I have mentioned are examples. For in some languages there are words that cannot be translated into the idiom of another language. And this happens chiefly in the case of interjections, which are words that express rather an emotion of the mind than any part of a thought we have in our mind. And the two given above are said to be of this kind, Racha expressing the cry of an angry man, Hosanna that of a joyful man. But the knowledge of these languages is necessary, not for the sake of a few words like these which it is very easy to mark and to ask about, but, as has been said, on account of the diversities among translators.”

Augustine saw a good reason to have “the knowledge of these languages”. It is to his credit, as he then concludes, “For the translations of the Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek can

be counted, but the Latin translators are out of all number. For in the early days of the faith every man who happened to get his hands upon a Greek manuscript, and who thought he had any knowledge, were it ever so little, of the two languages, ventured upon the work of translation.”

Knowledge of Greek and Hebrew allows us to get closer to the original meaning and intent of the Scriptures, since they are the languages which the original Scriptures were written in.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, On Christian Doctrine  
Book II, Chapter 14, paragraph 21, page 542**

Chapter 14.—How the Meaning of Unknown Words and Idioms is to Be Discovered.

21. About ambiguous signs, however, I shall speak afterwards. I am treating at present of unknown signs, of which, as far as the words are concerned, there are two kinds. For either a word or an idiom, of which the reader is ignorant, brings him to a stop. Now if these belong to foreign tongues, we must either make inquiry about them from men who speak those tongues, or if we have leisure we must learn the tongues ourselves, or we must consult and compare several translators. If, however, there are words or idioms in our own tongue that we are unacquainted with, we gradually come to know them through being accustomed to read or to hear them. There is nothing that it is better to commit to memory than those kinds of words and phrases whose meaning we do not know, so that where we happen to meet either with a more learned man of whom we can inquire, or with a passage that shows, either by the preceding or succeeding context, or by both, the force and significance of the phrase we are ignorant of, we can easily by the help of our memory turn our attention to the matter and learn all about it. So great, however, is the force of custom, even in regard to learning, that those who have been in a sort of way nurtured and brought up on the study of Holy Scripture, are surprised at other forms of speech, and think them less pure Latin than those which they have learnt from Scripture, but which are not to be found in Latin authors. **In this matter, too, the great number of the translators proves a very great assistance, if they are examined and discussed with a careful comparison of their texts. Only all positive error must be removed. For those who are anxious to know the Scriptures ought in the first place to use their skill in the correction of the texts, so that the uncorrected ones should give way to the corrected, at least when they are copies of the same translation.**

**Commentary:** We certainly can agree with Augustine that “**all positive error must be removed**”, from the different translations.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, On Christian Doctrine  
Book III, Chapter 1, paragraph 1, page 556**

Chapter 1.—Summary of the Foregoing Books, and Scope of that Which Follows.

**1. The man who fears God seeks diligently in Holy Scripture for a knowledge of His will.**

And when he has become meek through piety, so as to have no love of strife; when furnished also with a knowledge of languages, so as not to be stopped by unknown words and forms of speech, and with the knowledge of certain necessary objects, so as not to be ignorant of the force and nature of those which are used figuratively; and assisted, besides, by accuracy in the texts, which has been secured by skill and care in the matter of correction;—when thus prepared, let him proceed to the examination and solution of the ambiguities of Scripture. And that he may not be led astray by ambiguous signs, so far as I can give him instruction (it may happen, however, that either from the greatness of his intellect, or the greater clearness of the light he enjoys, he shall laugh at the methods I am going to point out as childish),—but yet, as I was going to say, so far as I can give instruction, let him who is in such a state of mind that he can be instructed by me know, that the ambiguity of Scripture lies either in proper words or in metaphorical, classes which I have already described in the second book.

**Commentary:** In the days in which we live, those who will be teachers of the word of God should have a basic knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. However, there are great resources available for even those who are completely ignorant of these languages.

But looking at the Greek and Hebrew can help us find a “**solution of the ambiguities of Scripture**”.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, On Christian Doctrine Book III, Chapters 2-3, paragraphs 2-6, page 556-558**

Chapter 2.—Rule for Removing Ambiguity by Attending to Punctuation.

2. But when proper words make Scripture ambiguous, we must see in the first place that there is nothing wrong in our punctuation or pronunciation. **Accordingly, if, when attention is given to the passage, it shall appear to be uncertain in what way it ought to be punctuated or pronounced, let the reader consult the rule of faith which he has gathered from the plainer passages of Scripture, and from the authority of the Church, and of which I treated at sufficient length when I was speaking in the first book about things. But if both readings, or all of them (if there are more than two), give a meaning in harmony with the faith, it remains to consult the context, both what goes before and what comes after, to see which interpretation, out of many that offer themselves, it pronounces for and permits to be dovetailed into itself.**

**Commentary:** We will discuss the “**rule of faith**” and “**the authority of the Church**” in the next chapters. Augustine looked to the “rule of faith” as a standard among the common people who did not have a copy of the Scriptures. But here we see that he was seeking to know the truth in the Scriptures. Consulting the context is always a good thing, as he also says, “**it remains to consult the context, both what goes before and what comes after, to see which interpretation, out of many that offer themselves, it pronounces for and permits to be dovetailed into itself.**”



3. Now look at some examples. The heretical pointing, “*In principio erat verbum, et verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat,*” (In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and God was) so as to make the next sentence run, “*Verbum hoc erat in principio apud Deum,*” (this word was in the beginning with God) arises out of unwillingness to confess that the Word was God. **But this must be rejected by the rule of faith**, which, in reference to the equality of the Trinity, directs us to say: “*et Deus erat verbum,*” (and the word was God) and then to add: “*hoc erat in principio apud Deum.*” (the same was in the beginning with God)

**Commentary:** Augustine here demonstrates the importance of translation. The “rule of faith” will be discussed in the next section.

4. But the following ambiguity of punctuation does not go against the faith in either way you take it, and therefore must be decided from the context. It is where the apostle says: “What I shall choose I wot not: for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.” (Philippians 1:22-24) Now it is uncertain whether we should read, “*exduobus concupiscentiam habens*” [having a desire for two things], or “*compellor autem ex duobus*” [I am in a strait betwixt two]; and so to add: “*concupiscentiam habens dissolvi, et esse cum Christo*” [having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ]. But since there follows “*multo enim magis optimum*” [for it is far better], it is evident that he says he has a desire for that which is better; so that, while he is in a strait betwixt two, yet he has a desire for one and sees a necessity for the other; a desire, viz., to be with Christ, and a necessity to remain in the flesh. Now this ambiguity is resolved by one word that follows, which is translated *enim* [for]; and the translators who have omitted this particle have preferred the interpretation which makes the apostle seem not only in a strait betwixt two, but also to have a desire for two. We must therefore punctuate the sentence thus: “*et quid eligam ignoro: compellor autem ex duobus*” [what I shall choose I wot not: for I am in a strait betwixt two]; and after this point follows: “*concupiscentiam habens dissolvi, et esse cum Christo*” [having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ]. And, as if he were asked why he has a desire for this in preference to the other, he adds: “*multo enim magis optimum*” [for it is far better]. **Why, then, is he in a strait betwixt the two? Because there is a need for his remaining, which he adds in these terms: “manere in carne necessarium propter vos” [nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you].**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But the following ambiguity of punctuation does not go against the faith in either way you take it, and therefore must be decided from the context.”

He then continues, “It is where the apostle says: “What I shall choose I wot not: for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.” (Philippians 1:22-24)

He refers to **Philippians 1 (KJV):22** But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my



labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. 23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

He then demonstrates his method, and concludes, “Why, then, is he in a strait betwixt the two? Because there is a need for his remaining, which he adds in these terms: “*manere in carne necessarium propter vos*” [nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you].”

5. Where, however, the ambiguity cannot be cleared up, either by the rule of faith or by the context, there is nothing to hinder us to point the sentence according to any method we choose of those that suggest themselves. As is the case in that passage to the Corinthians: “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Receive us; we have wronged no man.” (2 Corinthians 7:1-2) It is doubtful whether we should read, “*mundemus nos ab omni coinquinatione carnis et spiritus*” [let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit], in accordance with the passage, “that she may be holy both in body and in spirit,” (1 Corinthians 7:34) or, “*mundemus nos ab omni coinquinatione carnis*” [let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh], so as to make the next sentence, “*et spiritus perficientes sanctificationem in timore Dei capitenos*” [and perfecting holiness of spirit in the fear of God, receive us]. Such ambiguities of punctuation, therefore, are left to the reader’s discretion.

**Commentary:** Augustine here explains the “ambiguities of punctuation”. He begins as he says, “Where, however, the ambiguity cannot be cleared up, either by the rule of faith or by the context, there is nothing to hinder us to point the sentence according to any method we choose of those that suggest themselves.”

But we must at all times rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for this is why He has been sent to us as we read in **John 16 (KJV):13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Augustine then continues, “As is the case in that passage to the Corinthians: “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Receive us; we have wronged no man.” (2 Corinthians 7:1-2)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 7 (KJV):1** Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2 Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.

He continues, “It is doubtful whether we should read, “*mundemus nos ab omni coinquinatione carnis et spiritus*” [let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit], in accordance with the passage, “that she may be holy both in body and in spirit,” (1 Corinthians 7:34) or, “*mundemus nos ab omni coinquinatione carnis*” [let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh], so as to make the next sentence, “*et spiritus perficientes sanctificationem in timore Dei capitenos*” [and perfecting holiness of spirit in the fear of God,

receive us]. Such ambiguities of punctuation, therefore, are left to the reader's discretion.

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):34** There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.

To summarize, he says "It is doubtful whether we should read" the first "in accordance with the" other. And we can agree with Augustine here. But the context itself should keep us from matching the two passages, for they have nothing to do with each other.

### Chapter 3.—How Pronunciation Serves to Remove Ambiguity. Different Kinds of Interrogation.

6. And all the directions that I have given about ambiguous punctuations are to be observed likewise in the case of doubtful pronunciations. **For these too, unless the fault lies in the carelessness of the reader, are corrected either by the rule of faith, or by a reference to the preceding or succeeding context; or if neither of these methods is applied with success, they will remain doubtful, but so that the reader will not be in fault in whatever way he may pronounce them.** For example, if our faith that God will not bring any charges against His elect, and that Christ will not condemn His elect, did not stand in the way, this passage, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" might be pronounced in such a way as to make what follows an answer to this question, "God who justifieth," and to make a second question, "Who is he that condemneth?" with the answer, "Christ Jesus who died." (Romans 8:33-34) But as it would be the height of madness to believe this, the passage will be pronounced in such a way as to make the first part a question of inquiry, and the second a rhetorical interrogative. Now the ancients said that the difference between an inquiry and an interrogative was this, that an inquiry admits of many answers, but to an interrogative the answer must be either "No" or "Yes." The passage will be pronounced, then, in such a way that after the inquiry, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" what follows will be put as an interrogative: "Shall God who justifieth?"—the answer "No" being understood. And in the same way we shall have the inquiry, "Who is he that condemneth?" and the answer here again in the form of an interrogative, "Is it Christ who died? Yea, rather, who is risen again? Who is even at the right hand of God? Who also maketh intercession for us?"—the answer "No" being understood to every one of these questions. On the other hand, in that passage where the apostle says, "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness have attained to righteousness; (Romans 9:30) unless after the inquiry, "What shall we say then?" what follows were given as the answer to this question: "That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness;" it would not be in harmony with the succeeding context. But with whatever tone of voice one may choose to pronounce that saying of Nathanael's, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" John 1:47)—whether with that of a man who gives an affirmative answer, so that "out of Nazareth" is the only part that belongs to the interrogation, or with that of a man who asks the whole question with doubt and hesitation,—I do not see how a difference can be made. But neither sense is opposed to faith.

**Commentary:** Augustine here explains his method, and his point is well taken. We must not take the Scripture out of context. And again he refers to the “rule of faith”.

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

And in context to **Romans 9 (KJV):30** What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

And in context to **John 1 (KJV):45** Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. 46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! 48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. 49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

Jesus here had a revelation of where Nathanael was, so that Nathanael would have faith in who He was.

In each of these passages, the context determines exactly how it should be translated.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, On Christian Doctrine Book III, Chapter 14, page 562-563**

### **Chapter 14.—Error of Those Who Think that There is No Absolute Right and Wrong.**

22. But when men unacquainted with other modes of life than their own meet with the record of such actions, unless they are restrained by authority, they look upon them as sins, and do not consider that their own customs either in regard to marriage, or feasts, or dress, or the other necessities and adornments of human life, appear sinful to the people of other nations and other times. And, distracted by this endless variety of customs, some who were half asleep (as I may say)—that is, who were neither sunk in the deep sleep of folly, nor were able to awake into the light of wisdom—have thought that there was no such thing as absolute right, but that every nation took its own custom for right; and that, since every nation has a different custom, and right must remain unchangeable, it becomes manifest that there is no such thing as right at all. Such men did not perceive, to take only one example, that the precept, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them,” (Matthew 7:12) cannot be altered by any diversity of national customs. And this precept, when it is referred to the love of God, destroys all vices when to the love of one’s neighbor, puts an end to all crimes. For no one is willing to defile his own dwelling; he ought not,

therefore, to defile the dwelling of God, that is, himself. And no one wishes an injury to be done him by another; he himself, therefore, ought not to do injury to another.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But when men unacquainted with other modes of life than their own meet with the record of such actions, unless they are restrained by authority, they look upon them as sins, and do not consider that their own customs either in regard to marriage, or feasts, or dress, or the other necessities and adornments of human life, appear sinful to the people of other nations and other times.”

This is an outline of the “course of this world” which Paul mentions in **Ephesians 2 (KJV)**: 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Augustine continues, “And, distracted by this endless variety of customs, some who were half asleep (as I may say)—that is, who were neither sunk in the deep sleep of folly, nor were able to awake into the light of wisdom—have thought that there was no such thing as absolute right, but that every nation took its own custom for right; and that, since every nation has a different custom, and right must remain unchangeable, it becomes manifest that there is no such thing as right at all. Such men did not perceive, to take only one example, that the precept, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them,” (Matthew 7:12) cannot be altered by any diversity of national customs.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 7 (KJV)**: 11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? 12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. 13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

And we read in **Romans 2 (KJV)**: 14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

The truth is the truth. Up is up, and down is down, for everyone. Why not take the narrow way “which leadeth unto life”?

Well, we’ve always done it this way.

Well, you have a mind, and a heart. You can receive the truth, and allow your perceptions to be changed, as Augustine concludes, “And this precept, when it is referred to the love of God, destroys all vices when to the love of one’s neighbor, puts an end to all crimes. For no one is willing to defile his own dwelling; he ought not, therefore, to defile the dwelling of God, that is, himself. And no one wishes an injury to be done him by another; he himself, therefore, ought not to do injury to another.”

It’s not that hard. As Augustine has said, so we can agree.

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Predestination of the Saints, Chapter 27, page 511

Chapter 27.—The Book of Wisdom Obtains in the Church the Authority of Canonical Scripture.

And since these things are so, the judgment of the book of Wisdom ought not to be repudiated, since for so long a course of years that book has deserved to be read in the Church of Christ from the station of the readers of the Church of Christ, and to be heard by all Christians, from bishops downwards, even to the lowest lay believers, penitents, and catechumens, with the veneration paid to divine authority. For assuredly, if, from those who have been before me in commenting on the divine Scriptures, I should bring forward a defense of this judgment, which we are now called upon to defend more carefully and copiously than usual against the new error of the Pelagians,—that is, that God's grace is not given according to our merits, and that it is given freely to whom it is given, because it is neither of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy; but that by righteous judgment it is not given to whom it is not given, because there is no unrighteousness with God;—if, therefore, I should put forth a defense of this opinion from Catholic commentators on the divine oracles who have preceded us, assuredly these brethren for whose sake I am now discoursing would acquiesce, for this you have intimated in your letters. What need is there, then, for us to look into the writings of those who, before this heresy sprang up, had no necessity to be conversant in a question so difficult of solution as this, which beyond a doubt they would have done if they had been compelled to answer such things? Whence it arose that they touched upon what they thought of God's grace briefly in some passages of their writings, and cursorily; but on those matters which they argued against the enemies of the Church, and in exhortations to every virtue by which to serve the living and true God for the purpose of attaining eternal life and true happiness, they dwelt at length. But the grace of God, what it could do, shows itself artlessly by its frequent mention in prayers; for what God commands to be done would not be asked for from God, unless it could be given by Him that it should be done.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he asserts, “And since these things are so, the judgment of the book of Wisdom ought not to be repudiated, since for so long a course of years that book has deserved to be read in the Church of Christ from the station of the readers of the Church of Christ, and to be heard by all Christians, from bishops downwards, even to the lowest lay believers, penitents, and catechumens, with the veneration paid to divine authority.”

About the book of Wisdom, **Wikipedia** says:

The **Wisdom of Solomon** or **Book of Wisdom** is a Jewish work, written in Greek, and most likely composed in Alexandria, Egypt. Generally dated to the mid first century BC, the central theme of the work is "Wisdom" itself, appearing under two principal aspects. In its relation to man, Wisdom is the perfection of knowledge of the righteous as a gift from God showing itself in action. In direct relation to God, Wisdom is with God from all eternity. It is one of the seven Sapiential or wisdom books included within the Septuagint, along with Psalms,



Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs (Song of Solomon), Job, and Sirach, and is included in the canon of Deuterocanonical books by the Roman Catholic Church and the *anagignoskomena* (Gr. ἀναγινωσκόμενα, meaning "those which are to be read") of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Most Protestants consider it part of the Apocrypha.

As to its composition, **Wikipedia** says:

The Wisdom of Solomon was written in Greek, in Alexandria (Egypt), in the late 1st century BC to early 1st century AD; the author's prime literary source was the Septuagint, in particular the Wisdom literature and the Book of Isaiah, and he was familiar with late Jewish works as the Book of Enoch and with Greek philosophical literature. It is uncertain whether the book has a single author or comes from a school of writers, but recent scholarship has favoured regarding it as a unified work. In either case its blend of Greek and Jewish features suggests a learned Hellenistic background, and despite the address to the "rulers of the world" the actual audience was probably members of the author's own community who were tempted to give up their Jewishness in the face of the temptations of Greek culture and the hostile conditions facing Jews in the Greek world.

Since this book was written while Israel was in a state of apostasy, this book should not be considered as part of the canon of the word of God.

Nevertheless, Augustine considered it so, and refers to it several times in his writing.

Now Augustine continues, "For assuredly, if, from those who have been before me in commenting on the divine Scriptures, I should bring forward a defense of this judgment, which we are now called upon to defend more carefully and copiously than usual against the new error of the Pelagians,—that is, that God's grace is not given according to our merits, and that it is given freely to whom it is given, because it is neither of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy; but that by righteous judgment it is not given to whom it is not given, because there is no unrighteousness with God;"

Augustine displays his greatness here, as he refers here to **Romans 3 (KJV):24** Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

And to **Romans 9 (KJV):16** So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

And in context to **Romans 9 (KJV):13** As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. 14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

Augustine then continues, "—if, therefore, I should put forth a defense of this opinion from Catholic commentators on the divine oracles who have preceded us, assuredly these brethren for whose sake I am now discoursing would acquiesce, for this you have intimated in your letters. What need is there, then, for us to look into the writings of those who, before this heresy sprang up, had no necessity to be conversant in a question so difficult of solution as this, which beyond a doubt they would have done if they had been compelled to answer such things? Whence it arose that they touched upon what they thought of God's grace briefly in some passages of their writings, and cursorily; but on those matters which they argued against the



enemies of the Church, and in exhortations to every virtue by which to serve the living and true God for the purpose of attaining eternal life and true happiness, they dwelt at length. But the grace of God, what it could do, shows itself artlessly by its frequent mention in prayers; for what God commands to be done would not be asked for from God, unless it could be given by Him that it should be done.”

Augustine’s understanding of the grace of God here is according to the Scriptures.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermons on New Testament Lessons, Sermon XXXIX, paragraph 4-5, page 390-391**

4....Therefore, Brethren, I must tell you, and teach you according to my poor abilities, which the Lord giveth me for your benefit, and must convey to you what ye may hold as a rule in the interpretation of all Scripture. Everything that is said or done is to be understood either in its literal signification, or else it signifies something figuratively; or at least contains both of these at once, both its own literal interpretation, and a figurative signification also. Thus I have set forth three things, examples of them must now be given; and from whence, but from the Holy Scriptures? It is said in its literal acceptance, that the Lord suffered, that He rose again, and ascended into heaven; that we shall rise again at the end of the world, that we shall reign with Him for ever, if we do not despise Him. Take all this as spoken literally, and look not out for figures; as it is expressed, so it really is. And so also with divers actions. The Apostle went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, the Apostle actually did this, it actually took place, it was an action peculiar to himself. It is a fact which he tells you; a simple fact according to its literal meaning. “The stone which the builders refused, is become the Head of the corner,” (Matthew 21:42, Psalm 118:22) is spoken in a figure. If we take “the stone” literally, what “stone did the builders refuse, which became the Head of the corner”? If we take “the stone” literally, of what corner is this “stone” become the Head? If we admit that it was figuratively expressed, and take it figuratively, the Cornerstone is Christ: the head of the corner, is the Head of the Church. Why is the Church the Corner? Because she has called the Jews from one side, and the Gentiles from another, and these two walls as it were coming from different quarters, and meeting together in one, she has bound together by the grace of her peace. For, “He is our peace, who hath made both one.” (Ephesians 2:14)

5. Ye have heard instances of a literal expression, and a literal action, and of a figurative expression; ye are waiting for an instance of a figurative action. There are many such, but meanwhile, as is suggested by this mention of the cornerstone, when Jacob anointed the stone which he had placed at his head as he slept, and in his sleep saw a mysterious dream, ladders rising from the earth to heaven, and Angels ascending and descending, and the Lord standing upon the ladder, (Genesis 28:11) he understood what it was designed to figure, and took the stone for a figure of Christ, to prove to us thereby that he was no stranger to the understanding of that vision and revelation. Do not wonder then that he anointed it, for Christ received His Name from “the anointing.” Now this Jacob was said in the Scripture to be “a man without guile.” (Genesis 25:27) And this Jacob ye know was called Israel. Accordingly in the Gospel, when the Lord saw Nathanael, He said, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” And that Israelite not yet knowing who it was that talked with him, answered, “Whence knewest Thou me?” And the Lord said to him, “When thou wast under the figtree I saw thee;” (John

1:47) as though he would say, When thou wast in the shadow of sin, I predestinated thee. And Nathanael, because he remembered that he had been under the figtree, where the Lord was not, acknowledged His Divinity, and answered, “Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel.” He who had been under the figtree was not made a withered figtree; he acknowledged Christ. And the Lord said unto him, “Because I said, When thou wast under the figtree I saw thee, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.” What are these “greater things”? “Verily I say unto you” (for he “is an Israelite in whom is no guile;” remember Jacob in whom was no guile; and recollect of what he is speaking, the stone at his head, the vision in his sleep, the ladder from earth to heaven, the Angels ascending and descending; and so see what it is that the Lord would say to “the Israelite without guile”); “Verily I say unto you, Ye shall see heaven opened” (hear, thou guileless Nathanael, what guileless Jacob saw); “ye shall see heaven opened, and Angels ascending and descending” (unto whom?) “unto the Son of Man.” Therefore was He, as the Son of Man, anointed on the head; for “the head of the woman is the man, and the Head of the man is Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:3) Now observe, He did not say, “ascending from the Son of Man, and descending to the Son of Man,” as if He were only above; but “ascending and descending unto the Son of Man.” Hear the Son of Man crying out from above, “Saul, Saul.” Hear the Son of Man from below, “Why persecutest thou Me?” (Acts 9:4)

**Commentary:** I have elided the first part of the paragraph 4 because it is not relevant to our topic in this section.

So we begin where Augustine says, “...Therefore, Brethren, I must tell you, and teach you according to my poor abilities, which the Lord giveth me for your benefit, and must convey to you what ye may hold as a rule in the interpretation of all Scripture. Everything that is said or done is to be understood either in its literal signification, or else it signifies something figuratively; or at least contains both of these at once, both its own literal interpretation, and a figurative signification also. Thus I have set forth three things, examples of them must now be given; and from whence, but from the Holy Scriptures?”

He continues with his first example:

1.) “It is said in its literal acceptance, that the Lord suffered, that He rose again, and ascended into heaven; that we shall rise again at the end of the world, that we shall reign with Him for ever, if we do not despise Him. Take all this as spoken literally, and look not out for figures; as it is expressed, so it really is. And so also with divers actions. The Apostle went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, the Apostle actually did this, it actually took place, it was an action peculiar to himself. It is a fact which he tells you; a simple fact according to its literal meaning.

2.) ““The stone which the builders refused, is become the Head of the corner,” (Matthew 21:42, Psalm 118:22) is spoken in a figure.”

He refers to **Matthew 21 (KJV):42** Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

And in context to **Psalm 118 (KJV):22** The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. 23 This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

He continues, “If we take “the stone” literally, what “stone did the builders refuse, which became the Head of the corner”? If we take “the stone” literally, of what corner is this “stone” become the Head? If we admit that it was figuratively expressed, and take it figuratively, the

Cornerstone is Christ: the head of the corner, is the Head of the Church. Why is the Church the Corner? Because she has called the Jews from one side, and the Gentiles from another, and these two walls as it were coming from different quarters, and meeting together in one, she has bound together by the grace of her peace. For, “He is our peace, who hath made both one.” (Ephesians 2:14)”

He refers to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):23** For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

And to **Colossians 1 (KJV):18** And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

And to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):14** For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

And Peter explains this analogy in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):3** If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

And Peter quotes from **Isaiah 28 (KJV):16** Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

Augustine’s analogy of the corner being the place where Jew and Gentiles are joined together is good. But the corner stone is the pivotal stone upon which the entire building is aligned. And He is also a stone “for a foundation”, and a “sure foundation”. This was also pointed out by Paul in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):9** For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

We are “God’s building”. The foundation is Jesus Christ. Everything we build is upon Him.

Now Augustine continues in paragraph 5, as he summarizes and says, “Ye have heard instances of a literal expression, and a literal action, and of a figurative expression; ye are waiting for an instance of a figurative action.”

He then explains the third example, which, as he says in paragraph 4, “contains both of these at once, both its own literal interpretation, and a figurative signification also”.

So Augustine continues in paragraph 5:

“...There are many such, but meanwhile, as is suggested by this mention of the cornerstone, when Jacob anointed the stone which he had placed at his head as he slept, and in his sleep saw a mysterious dream, ladders rising from the earth to heaven, and Angels ascending and descending, and the Lord standing upon the ladder, (Genesis 28:11) he understood what it was designed to figure, and took the stone for a figure of Christ, to prove to

us thereby that he was no stranger to the understanding of that vision and revelation.”

He refers in context to **Genesis 28 (KJV)**:10 And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. 11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. 12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13 And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15 And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. 16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. 17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. 18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. 20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, 21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: 22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Augustine then continues, “Do not wonder then that he anointed it, for Christ received His Name from “the anointing.” Now this Jacob was said in the Scripture to be “a man without guile.” (Genesis 25:27)”

He refers to **Genesis 25 (Septuagint)**:27 And the lads grew, and Esau was a man skilled in hunting, dwelling in the country, and Jacob a simple man, dwelling in a house.

He continues, “And this Jacob ye know was called Israel. Accordingly in the Gospel, when the Lord saw Nathanael, He said, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.” And that Israelite not yet knowing who it was that talked with him, answered, “Whence knewest Thou me?” And the Lord said to him, “When thou wast under the figtree I saw thee;” (John 1:47) as though he would say, When thou wast in the shadow of sin, I predestinated thee.”

He refers in context to **John 1 (KJV)**:47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! 48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. 49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. 50 Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the figtree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. 51 And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

Augustine continues, “And Nathanael, because he remembered that he had been under the figtree, where the Lord was not, acknowledged His Divinity, and answered, “Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel.” He who had been under the figtree was not made a withered figtree; he acknowledged Christ.”

That is, Nathanael bore fruit. Augustine continues, “And the Lord said unto him, “Because I said, When thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee, believest thou? Thou shall see greater things than these.” What are these “greater things”? “Verily I say unto you” (for he “is an Israelite in whom is no guile;” remember Jacob in whom was no guile; and recollect of what he is speaking, the stone at his head, the vision in his sleep, the ladder from earth to heaven, the Angels ascending and descending; and so see what it is that the Lord would say to “the Israelite without guile”); “Verily I say unto you, Ye shall see heaven opened” (hear, thou guileless Nathanael, what guileless Jacob saw); “ye shall see heaven opened, and Angels ascending and descending” (unto whom?) “unto the Son of Man.” Therefore was He, as the Son of Man, anointed on the head; for “the head of the woman is the man, and the Head of the man is Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:3)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):3** But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

Jesus’ words in John 1:51, “the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man”, do remind us of Jacob in **Genesis 28 (KJV):12** And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

He continues, “Now observe, He did not say, “ascending from the Son of Man, and descending to the Son of Man,” as if He were only above; but “ascending and descending unto the Son of Man.” Hear the Son of Man crying out from above, “Saul, Saul.” Hear the Son of Man from below, “Why persecutest thou Me?” (Acts 9:4)”

He refers to **Acts 9 (KJV):4** And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

Jesus did speak figuratively at times as we read in **John 2 (KJV):18** Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? **19** Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. **20** Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? **21** But he spake of the temple of his body.

And we read of the High Priest in the Old Testament entering the Holy Place as a figure in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):6** Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. **7** But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: **8** The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: **9** Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; **10** Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. **11** But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; **12** Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. **13** For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: **14** How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? **15** And for this cause he is the mediator of



the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

If we are to rightly divide the word of God, we must understand when the word is speaking in a figure, and when it is speaking literally, as Augustine has said.

To conclude this chapter, we note that Augustine also noted, “**This, the Manicheans, too, do not receive, who not only reject all the Scriptures of the Old Testament as of authority, but even receive those which belong to the New Testament in such a manner as that each man, by his own prerogative as it were, or rather by his own sacrilege, takes what he likes, and rejects what he does not like,—in opposition to whom I treated in my writings on Free Will, whence they think that they have a ground of objection against me.**” **Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings, On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapter 26, page 535**

We have already commented on this in the chapter on **Heresy** under **Dogmas of the Early Church**.

The importance of rightly dividing the Scriptures cannot be overstated when we consider all of the tradition that has developed over the years in the Churches. Let us remember Jesus’ words in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm 105, paragraph 6, page 521-522**

6. “He hath been alway mindful of His covenant” (ver. 8). Other copies read, “for evermore;” and this arises from the ambiguity of the Greek. But if we are to understand “alway” of this world and not of eternity, why, when he explaineth what covenant He was mindful of, doth he add, “The word that He made to a thousand generations”? Now this may be understood with a certain limitation; but he afterwards saith, “Even the covenant that He made with Abraham” (ver. 9): “and the oath that He sware unto Isaac; and appointed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting testament” (ver. 10). But if in this passage the Old Testament is to be understood, on account of the land of Canaan; for thus the language of the Psalm runneth, “saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan: the lot of your inheritance” (ver. 11): how is it to be understood as everlasting, since that earthly inheritance could not be everlasting? **And for this reason it is called the Old Testament, because it is abolished by the New.** But a thousand generations do not seem to signify anything eternal, since they involve an end; and yet are also too numerous for this very temporal state. For by howsoever few years a generation is limited, such as in Greek is called γενεα, whereof the shortest period some have fixed is at fifteen years, after which period man hath the power of generation; what then are those “thousand generations,” not only from the time of Abraham, when that promise was made him, unto the New Testament, but from Adam himself down to the end of the world? For who would dare to say that this world should last for 15000 years? **Hence it seemeth to me that we ought not to understand here the Old Testament, which it said through the prophet was to be cancelled by the New: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant.” (Jeremiah 31:31-32)...**After saying, “He hath been mindful of His covenant unto an age;” which we ought to understand as lasting for evermore, the covenant, namely, of



justification and an eternal inheritance, which God hath promised to faith; he addeth, “and the Word that He commanded unto a thousand generations.” What meaneth “commanded”?...The command then was faith, that the righteous should live by faith: (Romans 1:17) and an eternal inheritance is set before this faith. “A thousand generations,” then, are, on account of the perfect number, to be understood for all; that is, as long as generation succeedeth generation, so long is it commanded to us to live by faith. This the people of God doth observe, the sons of promise who succeed by birth, and depart by death, until every generation be finished; and this is signified by the number thousand; because the solid square of the number ten, ten times ten, and this taken ten times amounts to a thousand. “Even the covenant,” he saith, “which He made with Abraham: and the oath that He sware unto Isaac; and appointed the same unto Jacob,” that is, Jacob himself, “for a law.” These are the very three patriarchs, whose God He calleth Himself in a special sense, whom the Lord also doth name in the New Testament, where He saith, “Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 8:11) This is everlasting inheritance....

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as says, ““He hath been alway mindful of His covenant” (ver. 8).”

He refers to **Psalm 105 (KJV):8** He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.

He continues, “Other copies read, “for evermore;” and this arises from the ambiguity of the Greek. But if we are to understand “alway” of this world and not of eternity, why, when he explaineth what covenant He was mindful of, doth he add, “The word that He made to a thousand generations”? Now this may be understood with a certain limitation; but he afterwards saith, “Even the covenant that He made with Abraham” (ver. 9): “and the oath that He sware unto Isaac; and appointed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting testament” (ver. 10).”

He refers to **Psalm 105 (KJV):9** Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; 10 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant:

He continues, “But if in this passage the Old Testament is to be understood, on account of the land of Canaan; for thus the language of the Psalm runneth, “saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan: the lot of your inheritance” (ver. 11): how is it to be understood as everlasting, since that earthly inheritance could not be everlasting?”

He refers to **Psalm 105 (KJV):11** Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance:

He continues, “**And for this reason it is called the Old Testament, because it is abolished by the New.** But a thousand generations do not seem to signify anything eternal, since they involve an end; and yet are also too numerous for this very temporal state. For by howsoever few years a generation is limited, such as in Greek is called γενTΜα, whereof the shortest period some have fixed is at fifteen years, after which period man hath the power of generation; what then are those “thousand generations,” not only from the time of Abraham, when that promise was made him, unto the New Testament, but from Adam himself down to the end of the world? For who would dare to say that this world should last for 15000 years? **Hence it seemeth to me that we ought not to understand here the Old Testament, which it said through**

the prophet was to be cancelled by the New: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant.” (Jeremiah 31:31-32)”

He refers to **Jeremiah 31 (KJV)**:31 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:

He continues, “...After saying, “He hath been mindful of His covenant unto an age;” which we ought to understand as lasting for evermore, the covenant, namely, of justification and an eternal inheritance, which God hath promised to faith; he addeth, “and the Word that He commanded unto a thousand generations.” What meaneth “commanded”?...The command then was faith, that the righteous should live by faith: (Romans 1:17) and an eternal inheritance is set before this faith.”

He refers to **Romans 1 (KJV)**:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

He continues, ““A thousand generations,” then, are, on account of the perfect number, to be understood for all; that is, as long as generation succeedeth generation, so long is it commanded to us to live by faith. This the people of God doth observe, the sons of promise who succeed by birth, and depart by death, until every generation be finished; and this is signified by the number thousand; because the solid square of the number ten, ten times ten, and this taken ten times amounts to a thousand. “Even the covenant,” he saith, “which He made with Abraham: and the oath that He sware unto Isaac; and appointed the same unto Jacob,” that is, Jacob himself, “for a law.” These are the very three patriarchs, whose God He calleth Himself in a special sense, whom the Lord also doth name in the New Testament, where He saith, “Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 8:11) This is everlasting inheritance....”

He refers to **Matthew 8 (KJV)**:11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

Let us read in the next section to get a clearer understanding of what Augustine thought of the Old Testament.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm 106, paragraph 32, page 531-532**

32. So “He gave them unto compassions, in the sight of all that had taken them captive” (ver. 46). That they might not be vessels of wrath, but vessels of mercy. (Romans 9:22-23) The compassions unto which He gave them are named in the plural for this reason, I imagine, because each one hath a gift of his own from God, one in one way, another in another. (1 Corinthians 7:7) **Come then, whosoever readest this, and dost recognise the grace of God, by which we are redeemed unto eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, by reading in the apostolical writings, and by searching in the Prophets, and seest the Old Testament revealed in the New, the New veiled in the Old;** remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, where, when He driveth him out of the hearts of the faithful, He saith, “Now is the prince of this world cast

out:” (John 12:31) and again of the Apostle, when he saith, “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” (Colossians 1:13) Meditate on these and such like things, examine also the Old Testament, and see what is sung in that Psalm, the title of which is, When the temple was being built after the captivity: (Psalm 96:1 Septuagint) for there it is said, “Sing unto the Lord a new song.” And, that thou mayest not think it doth refer to the Jewish people only, he saith, “Sing unto the Lord, all the whole earth: sing unto the Lord, and praise His Name: declare,” or rather, “give the good news of,” or, to transfer the very word used in the Greek, “evangelize day from day, His salvation.” Here the Gospel (Evangelium) is mentioned, in which is announced the Day that came from Day, our Lord Christ, the Light from Light, the Son from the Father. This also is the meaning of His salvation: for Christ is the Salvation of God, as we have shown above....

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as says, “So “He gave them unto compassions, in the sight of all that had taken them captive” (ver. 46).”

He refers to **Psalm 106 (Douay Rheims):46** And he gave them unto mercies, in the sight of all those that had made them captives.

And to **Psalm 106 (KJV):46** He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.

He continues, “That they might not be vessels of wrath, but vessels of mercy. (Romans 9:22-23)”

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):22** What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

He continues, “The compassions unto which He gave them are named in the plural for this reason, I imagine, because each one hath a gift of his own from God, one in one way, another in another. (1 Corinthians 7:7)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):7** For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

He continues, “Come then, whosoever redest this, and dost recognise the grace of God, by which we are redeemed unto eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, by reading in the apostolical writings, and by searching in the Prophets, and seest the Old Testament revealed in the New, the New veiled in the Old; remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, where, when He driveth him out of the hearts of the faithful, He saith, “Now is the prince of this world cast out:” (John 12:31) and again of the Apostle, when he saith, “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.” (Colossians 1:13)”

He refers to **John 12 (KJV):31** Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

And to **Colossians 1 (KJV):13** Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

He continues, “Meditate on these and such like things, examine also the Old Testament, and see what is sung in that Psalm, the title of which is, When the temple was being built after the captivity: (Psalm 96:1 Septuagint) for there it is said, “Sing unto the Lord a new song.” And, that thou mayest not think it doth refer to the Jewish people only, he saith, “Sing unto the Lord,

all the whole earth: sing unto the Lord, and praise His Name: declare,” or rather, “give the good news of,” or, to transfer the very word used in the Greek, “evangelize day from day, His salvation.””

He refers to **Psalm 96 (Septuagint)**: 1 Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. 2 Sing to the Lord, bless his name: proclaim his salvation from day to day. 3 Publish his glory among the Gentiles, his wonderful works among all people.

He continues, “Here the Gospel (Evangelium) is mentioned, in which is announced the Day that came from Day, our Lord Christ, the Light from Light, the Son from the Father. This also is the meaning of His salvation: for Christ is the Salvation of God, as we have shown above....”

## Heresy

In Augustine’s time there were two major heresies that he was writing against, that is, Manichean teachings or Manichaeism, and the teachings of Pelagius. He himself was a former Manichean.

## Manichaeism

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapter 26, page 535**

Chapter 26.—The Manicheans Do Not Receive All the Books of the Old Testament, and of the New Only Those that They Choose.

But wherefore is “the case of infants not allowed,” as you write, “to be alleged as an example for their elders,” by men who do not hesitate to affirm against the Pelagians that there is original sin, which entered by one man into the world, and that from one all have gone into condemnation? **This, the Manicheans, too, do not receive, who not only reject all the Scriptures of the Old Testament as of authority, but even receive those which belong to the New Testament in such a manner as that each man, by his own prerogative as it were, or rather by his own sacrilege, takes what he likes, and rejects what he does not like,—in opposition to whom I treated in my writings on Free Will, whence they think that they have a ground of objection against me.** I have been unwilling to deal plainly with the very laborious questions that occurred, lest my work should become too long, in a case which, as opposed to such perverse men, I could not have the assistance of the authority of the sacred Scriptures. And I was able,—as I actually did, whether anything of the divine testimonies might be true or not, seeing that I did not definitely introduce them into the argument,—nevertheless, by certain reasoning, to conclude that God in all things is to be praised, without any necessity of believing, as they would have us, that there are two co-eternal, confounded substances of good and evil.

**Commentary:** Augustine was a former Manichean. When he became a Christian, he repented, and gave up Manichaeism, which started in 216 AD. **Wikipedia** says the following:

**Manichaeism** (in Modern Persian مان‌ی آیین *Āyin-e Māni*; Chinese: 摩尼教; pinyin: *Móní Jiào*) was a major religion founded by the Iranian prophet Mani (in Persian: مان‌ی, Syriac *Mānī*, Latin: *Manichaeus* or *Manes* from Koine Greek: Μάνης; c. 216–274) in the Sasanian Empire.

Manichaeism taught an elaborate dualistic cosmology describing the struggle between a good, spiritual world of light, and an evil, material world of darkness. Through an ongoing process that takes place in human history, light is gradually removed from the world of matter and returned to the world of light, whence it came. Its beliefs were based on local Mesopotamian religious movements and Gnosticism.

Manichaeism was quickly successful and spread far through the Aramaic-speaking regions. It thrived between the third and seventh centuries, and at its height was one of the most widespread religions in the world. Manichaean churches and Scriptures existed as far east as China and as far west as the Roman Empire. It was briefly the main rival to Christianity before the spread of Islam in the competition to replace classical paganism. Manichaeism survived longer in the east than in the west, and it appears to have finally faded away after the 14th century in south China, contemporary to the decline of the Church of the East in Ming China. While most of Manichaeism's original writings have been lost, numerous translations and fragmentary texts have survived. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manichaeism>

We need to remember that Augustine was opposed to Manichaeism mainly because their proponents “not only reject all the Scriptures of the Old Testament as of authority, but even receive those which belong to the New Testament in such a manner as that each man, by his own prerogative as it were, or rather by his own sacrilege, takes what he likes, and rejects what he does not like”.

Next we will look at Pelagianism.

## **Pelagianism**

### **Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings**

#### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, On Nature and Grace, Chapter 10, page 124**

Chapter 10 [IX.]—He Could Not Be Justified, Who Had Not Heard of the Name of Christ; Rendering the Cross of Christ of None Effect.

But they say: “He is not condemned; because the statement that all sinned in Adam, was not made because of the sin which is derived from one’s birth, but because of imitation of him.” If, therefore, Adam is said to be the author of all the sins which followed his own, because he was the first sinner of the human race, then how is it that Abel, rather than Christ, is not placed at the head of all the righteous, because he was the first righteous man? But I am not speaking of the case of an infant. I take the instance of a young man, or an old man, who has died in a region where he could not hear of the name of Christ. Well, could such a man have become righteous by nature and free will; or could he not? If they contend that he could, then see what it is to render the cross of Christ of none effect, (1 Corinthians 1:17) to contend that any man



without it, can be justified by the law of nature and the power of his will. We may here also say, then is Christ dead in vain (Galatians 2:21) forasmuch as all might accomplish so much as this, even if He had never died; and if they should be unrighteous, they would be so because they wished to be, not because they were unable to be righteous. **But even though a man could not be justified at all without the grace of Christ, he would absolve him, if he dared, in accordance with his words, to the effect that, “if a man were of such a character, because he could not possibly have been of any other, he would be free from all blame.”**

**Commentary:** Augustine is writing against the Pelagians here, as he begins and writes, **“But they say: “He is not condemned; because the statement that all sinned in Adam, was not made because of the sin which is derived from one’s birth, but because of imitation of him.”**

Augustine then argues, “If, therefore, Adam is said to be the author of all the sins which followed his own, because he was the first sinner of the human race, then how is it that Abel, rather than Christ, is not placed at the head of all the righteous, because he was the first righteous man? But I am not speaking of the case of an infant. I take the instance of a young man, or an old man, who has died in a region where he could not hear of the name of Christ. Well, could such a man have become righteous by nature and free will; or could he not? If they contend that he could, then see what it is to render the cross of Christ of none effect, (1 Corinthians 1:17) to contend that any man without it, can be justified by the law of nature and the power of his will.

He refers to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):17** For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

Augustine continues, “We may here also say, then is Christ dead in vain (Galatians 2:21) forasmuch as all might accomplish so much as this, even if He had never died; and if they should be unrighteous, they would be so because they wished to be, not because they were unable to be righteous.”

Augustine refers to **Galatians 2 (KJV):21** I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

And he concludes, as he then argues, **“But even though a man could not be justified at all without the grace of Christ, he would absolve him, if he dared, in accordance with his words, to the effect that, “if a man were of such a character, because he could not possibly have been of any other, he would be free from all blame.”**

That is, Pelagius **“would absolve him, if he dared...”** But Augustine agrees with the Scripture as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

It is because of sin that man needs a Savior.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, Book IV, Chapter 18-19, page 424-425**

### **Chapter 19.—The Craft of the Pelagians.**

**And if these things be so, let the Pelagians cease by their most insidious praises of these five things—that is, the praise of the creature, the praise of marriage, the praise of the law, the**



praise of free will, the praise of the saints—from feigning that they desire to pluck men, as it were, from the little snares of the Manicheans, in order that they may entangle them in their own nets—that is, that they may deny original sin; may begrudge to infants the aid of Christ the physician; may say that the grace of God is given according to our merits, and thus that grace is no more grace; and may say that the saints in this life had not sin, and thus make the prayer of none effect which He gave to the saints who had no sin, and by which all sin is pardoned to the saints that pray unto Him.

**Commentary:**     **Wikipedia** says the following about Pelagianism:

**Pelagianism**, also called the **Pelagian heresy**, is the Christian theological position that the original sin did not taint human nature and mortal will is still capable of choosing good or evil without special divine aid or assistance. This theological theory is named after the British monk Pelagius (354–420 or 440), although he denied, at least at some point in his life, many of the doctrines associated with his name. Pelagius taught human will, as created with its abilities by God, was sufficient to live a sinless life, although he believed God's grace assisted every good work. Pelagianism has come to be identified with the view (whether taught by Pelagius or not) human beings can earn salvation by their own efforts.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pelagianism>

When Augustine says above in the last sentence, “...and thus make the prayer of none effect which He gave to the saints who had no sin, and by which all sin is pardoned to the saints that pray unto Him”, he is referring to the Lord’s Prayer, or Our Father as it is commonly known. So Augustine is arguing against Pelagius that, if we had no sin, why would the Lord say to pray, “Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors...” Matthew 6:9-12.

It is clear, according to Scripture, that the whole human race is under sin as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):9** What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

And in **Galatians 3 (KJV):22** But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

The Pelagians are in error.

## Arianism

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine  
Sermons on New Testament Lessons, Sermon XL. [XC. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel,  
Matt. xxii. 2, etc., about the marriage of the king’s son; against the Donatists, on charity.  
Delivered at Carthage in the Restituta., paragraph 5-9, page 393-396**

3. But the Arian heresy makes answer, and says. What says it to me? “Mark what thou hast said”? What have I said? “That the Son of a man may be compared to the Son of God.”

Certainly he may be compared; but not as you suppose, in strictness of expression; but for a similitude. But tell me now what you would make of this. “Do you not see,” says he, “that the father who begets is greater in age, and the son who is begotten less? How then say ye? Tell me; how then say ye, that the Father and the Son, God and Christ, are equal; when ye see that when a man begets a son, the son is less, and the father greater?” Thou wise one, in eternity thou art looking for times; where there are no times, thou art looking for differences of age! When the father is greater in age, and the son less, both are in time; the one groweth, for that the other groweth old. For by nature, the man, the father, did not beget one less, by nature, as I said, but by age. Wouldest thou know, how that by nature he did not beget one less? Wait, let him grow, and he will be equal to his father. For a little boy even by growing attains to his father’s full size. Whereas you assert that the Son of God is in such wise born less, as never to grow, and by growing even to attain to His Father’s size. Now then a man’s son born of a man, is born in a better condition than the Son of God. How? Because the former grows, and attains to his father’s size. But Christ, if it is as ye say, is in such wise born less, as that He must ever remain less, and no growth of years at least is to be looked for here. Thus then you say that there is a diversity in nature. But why say you so, but because you will not believe the Son to be of the Same Substance which the Father is? Finally, first acknowledge that He is of the Same Substance, and so call Him less. Consider the case of a man, he is a man. What is his substance? He is a man. What is he whom he begets? He is less, but he is a man. The age is unequal, the nature equal. Do you then say too, “What the Father is, That is the Son, but the Son is less”? Say so, make a step forward, say, “of the Same Substance, only less;” and you will get to His being equal. For it is not a little step you take, it is not a little approach you make to the truth, of acknowledging Him equal, if you shall acknowledge Him to be of the Same Substance, though less. “But He is not of the Same Substance,” this you say. So then in that you say this, here is gold and silver; what you say is as if a man were to beget a horse. For a man is of one substance, a horse of another. If then the Son is of another substance than the Father, the Father hath begotten a monster. For when a creature, that is a woman, gives birth to anything that is not a man, it is called a monster. But that it be not a monster, he that is born is that which he is that begat him, that is, a man and a man, a horse and a horse, a dove and a dove, a sparrow and a sparrow.

**Commentary:**     **Wikipedia** says the following about **Arianism**:

**Arianism** is a nontrinitarian Christological doctrine which asserts the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who was begotten by God the Father at a point in time, a creature distinct from the Father and is therefore subordinate to him, but the Son is also God (i.e. God the Son). Arian teachings were first attributed to Arius (c. AD 256–336), a Christian presbyter in Alexandria of Egypt. The term "Arian" is derived from the name Arius; and like "Christian", it was not a self-chosen designation but bestowed by hostile opponents—and never accepted by those on whom it had been imposed. The nature of Arius's teaching and his supporters were opposed to the theological views held by Homoousian Christians, regarding the nature of the Trinity and the nature of Christ. The Arian concept of Christ is based on the belief that the Son of God did not always exist but was begotten within time by God the Father.

“Homooousian Christians” are those who believe that the Father and the Son of God are of the “same substance”. Arius was clearly in error. He did not understand the Divinity of the Son of God, which Paul clearly states in **Philippians 2 (KJV)**:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Next, we will look at more of Augustine’s thoughts about heretics.

## Sabellianism

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate XXIX. Chapter VII. 14–18, paragraph 7, page 185

7. This sentence overthrows the Sabellian heresy. **The Sabellians have dared to affirm that the Son is the very same as He who is also the Father: that the names are two, but the reality one. If the names were two and reality one, it would not be said, “My doctrine is not mine.”** Anyhow, if Thy doctrine is not Thine, O Lord, whose is it, unless there be another whose it is? The Sabellians understand not what Thou saidst; for they see not the trinity, but follow the error of their own heart. Let us worshippers of the trinity and unity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and one God, understand concerning Christ’s doctrine, how it is not His. And He said that He spoke not from Himself for this reason, because Christ is the Son of the Father, and the Father is the Father of Christ; and the Son is from God the Father, God, but God the Father is God not from God the Son.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “This sentence overthrows the Sabellian heresy. **The Sabellians have dared to affirm that the Son is the very same as He who is also the Father: that the names are two, but the reality one. If the names were two and reality one, it would not be said, “My doctrine is not mine.”**”

He refers in context to **John 7 (KJV)**:14 Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. 15 And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? 16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. 17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. 18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

He continues, “Anyhow, if Thy doctrine is not Thine, O Lord, whose is it, unless there be another whose it is? The Sabellians understand not what Thou saidst; for they see not the trinity, but follow the error of their own heart. Let us worshippers of the trinity and unity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and one God, understand concerning Christ’s doctrine, how it is not His.

And He said that He spoke not from Himself for this reason, because Christ is the Son of the Father, and the Father is the Father of Christ; and the Son is from God the Father, God, but God the Father is God not from God the Son.”

Augustine has said it correctly. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three persons in the one Godhead. The Sabellians are in error.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine**

#### **Tractate XXXVI. Chapter VIII. 15–18, paragraphs 8-9, page 211-212**

8. For there are certain heretics called Sabellians, who are also called Patripassians, who affirm that it was the Father Himself that had suffered. Do not thou so affirm, O Catholic; for if thou wilt be a Patripassian, thou wilt not be sane. Understand, then, that the incarnation of the Son is termed the sending of the Son; and do not believe that the Father was incarnate, but do not yet believe that He departed from the incarnate Son. The Son carried flesh, the Father was with the Son. If the Father was in heaven, the Son on earth, how was the Father with the Son? Because both Father and Son were everywhere: for God is not in such manner in heaven as not to be on earth. Hear him who would flee from the judgment of God, and found not a way to flee by: “Whither shall I go,” saith he, “from Thy Spirit; and whither shall I flee from Thy face? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there.” The question was about the earth; hear what follows: “If I descend unto hell, Thou art there.” (Psalm 139:7-8) If, then, He is said to be present even in hell, what in the universe remains where He is not present? For the voice of God with the prophet is, “I fill heaven and earth.” (Jeremiah 23:24) Hence He is everywhere, who is confined by no place. Turn not thou away from Him, and He is with thee. If thou wouldst come to Him, be not slow to love; for it is not with feet but with affections thou runnest. Thou comest while remaining in one place, if thou believest and lovest. Wherefore He is everywhere; and if everywhere, how not also with the Son? Is it so that He is not with the Son, while, if thou believest, He is even with thee?

**Commentary:** Augustine affirms the Scripture here. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three distinct persons in the Godhead. The Father did not suffer, but the Son suffered on the cross.

Augustine refers in context to **Psalm 139 (KJV):7** Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? **8** If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. **9** If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; **10** Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. **11** If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. **12** Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

And to **Jeremiah 23 (KJV):24** Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.

He continues in the next paragraph.

9. How, then, is His judgment true, but because the Son is true? For this He said: “And if I judge, my judgment is true; because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.” Just as

if He had said, “My judgment is true,” because I am the Son of God. How dost Thou prove that Thou art the Son of God? “Because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.” **Blush, Sabellian; thou hearest the *Son*, thou hearest the *Father*. Father is Father, Son is Son. He said not, I am the Father, and I the same am the Son; but He saith, “I am not alone.” Why art Thou not alone? Because the Father is with me. “I am, and the Father that sent me;” thou hearest, “I am, and He that sent me.” Lest thou lose sight of the person, distinguish the persons. Distinguish by understanding, do not separate by faithlessness; lest again, fleeing as it were Charybdis, thou rush upon Scylla. For the whirlpool of the impiety of the Sabellians was swallowing thee, to say that the Father is the same who is Son: just now thou hast learned, “I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.”** Thou dost acknowledge that the Father is Father, and that the Son is Son; thou dost rightly acknowledge: but do not say the Father is greater, the Son is less; do not say, the Father is gold, the Son is silver. **There is one substance, one Godhead, one co-eternity, perfect equality, no unlikeness.** For if thou only believe that Christ is another, not the same person that the Father is, but yet imagine that in respect of His nature He is somewhat different from the Father, thou hast indeed escaped Charybdis, but thou hast been wrecked on the rocks of Scylla. Steer the middle course, avoid each of the two perilous sides. Father is Father, Son is Son. Thou sayest now, Father is Father, Son is Son: thou hast fortunately escaped the danger of the absorbing whirl; why wouldst thou go unto the other side to say, the Father is this, the Son that? **The Son is another person than the Father is, this thou sayest rightly; but that He is different in nature, thou sayest not rightly. Certainly the Son is another person, because He is not the same who is Father and the Father is another person, because He is not the same who is Son: nevertheless, they are not different in nature, but the selfsame is both Father and Son. What means the self-same? God is one. Thou hast heard, “Because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me:” hear how thou mayest believe Father and Son; hear the Son Himself, “I and the Father are one.” (John 10:30) He said not, I am the Father; or, I and the Father *is* one person; but when He says, “I and the Father are one,” hear both, both the *one, unum*, and the *are, sumus*, and thou shalt be delivered both from Charybdis and from Scylla.** In these two words, in that He said *one*, He delivers thee from Arius; in that He said *are*, He delivers thee from Sabellius. If *one*, therefore not diverse; if *are*, therefore both Father and Son. For He would not say *are* of one person; but, on the other hand, He would not say *one* of diverse. Hence the reason why He says, “my judgment is true,” is, that thou mayest hear it briefly, because I am the Son of God. But I would have thee in such wise believe that I am the Son of God, that thou mayest understand that the Father is with me: I am not Son in such manner as to have left Him; I am not in such manner here that I should not be with Him; nor is He in such manner there as not to be with me: I have taken to me the form of a servant, yet have I not lost the form of God; therefore He saith, “I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.”

**Commentary:** The Sabellian error was that they were saying that “**the Father is the same who is Son**”. They also said that the Son “**is different in nature**”.

Philip Schaff says that Sabellianism “maintained the Divine unity and strict deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, but denied the tri-personality except in the form of three modes of self-revelation.” **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 9, Prolegomena, The Life and Work of St. John Chrysostom, page 11.**



Augustine affirms the Scripture, as he refers to **John 10 (KJV):30** I and my Father are one.

The Godhead is composed of a trinity of three distinct persons, yet one God, with one nature. Augustine is clear, and in accordance with Scripture, in his understanding of the trinity.

## **Apollinarianism**

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate XLVII. Chapter X. 14–21, paragraph 9, page 263**

9. How, then, does the Lord lay down His life [soul]? Let us, brethren, inquire into this a little more carefully. The time is not so pressing as is usual on the Lord's day: we have leisure, and theirs will be the profit who have assembled today also to wait on the Word of God. "I lay down my life," He says. Who lays down? What lays He down? What is Christ? The Word and man. Not man as being flesh alone: but as man consists of flesh and soul, so, in Christ there is a complete humanity. For He would not have assumed the baser part, and left the better behind, seeing that the soul of man is certainly superior to the body. Since, then, there is entire manhood in Christ, what is Christ? The Word, I repeat, and man. What is the Word and man? The Word, soul, and flesh. Keep hold of that, for there has been no lack of heretics on this point also, expelled as they were some time ago from the Catholic truth, but still persisting, like thieves and robbers who enter not by the door, to lay their snares around the fold. **These heretics are termed Apollinarians, and have ventured to assert dogmatically that Christ is only the word and flesh, and contend that He did not assume a human soul.** And yet some of them could not deny that there was a soul in Christ. See their intolerable absurdity and madness. **They would have Him to possess an irrational soul, but deny Him a rational one. They allowed Him a mere animal, they deprived Him of a human, soul. But they took away Christ's reason by losing their own.** Let it be otherwise with us, who have been nourished and established in the Catholic faith. **Accordingly, on this occasion I would remind your Charity, that, as in former lectures, we have given you sufficient instruction against the Sabellians and Arians,—the Sabellians, who say, The Father is the same as the Son—the Arians, who say, The Father is one being, the Son is another, as if the Father and Son were not of the same substance—and also, provided you remember as you ought, against the Photinian heretics, who have asserted that Christ was mere man, and destitute of Godhead: and against the Manicheans, who maintain that He was God only without any true humanity: we may, on this occasion, in speaking about the soul, give you some instruction also in opposition to the Apollinarians, who say that our Lord Jesus Christ had no human soul, that is, a rational intelligent soul,—that soul, I mean, by which, as men, we differ from the brutes.**

**Commentary:** The Apollinarians were disciples of Apollinaris, bishop of Alexandria, who held that the body which Christ assumed had only a sensitive, and not a rational soul, and that His divine nature supplied the place of the latter. His doctrines were condemned by the Council of Alexandria, A.D. 362, and he himself was deposed by the Council of Rome, A.D. 378.

Augustine was battling the following heresies:



- 1.) “the Sabellians, who say, The Father is the same as the Son—and, “not only reject all the Scriptures of the Old Testament as of authority, but even receive those which belong to the New Testament in such a manner as that each man, by his own prerogative as it were, or rather by his own sacrilege, takes what he likes, and rejects what he does not like”
- 2.) the Arians, who say, The Father is one being, the Son is another, as if the Father and Son were not of the same substance—
- 3.) and also, provided you remember as you ought, against the Photinian heretics, who have asserted that Christ was mere man, and destitute of Godhead:
- 4.) and against the Manicheans, who maintain that He was God only without any true humanity:
- 5.) we may, on this occasion, in speaking about the soul, give you some instruction also in opposition to the Apollinarians, who say that our Lord Jesus Christ had no human soul, that is, a rational intelligent soul,—that soul, I mean, by which, as men, we differ from the brutes.”

## The Donatist Controversy

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 4,  
A Treatise Concerning the Correction of the Donatist, Book III, Chapter 9, paragraphs  
35-42, page 646-648**

Chapter 9.—35. As to the charge that they bring against us, that we covet and plunder their possessions, I would that they would become Catholics, and possess in peace and love with us, not only what they call theirs, but also what confessedly belongs to us. But they are so blinded with the desire of uttering calumnies, that they do not observe how inconsistent their statements are with one another. At any rate, they assert, and seem to make it a subject of most invidious complaint among themselves, that we constrain them to come in to our communion by the violent authority of the laws,—which we certainly should not do by any means, if we wished to gain possession of their property. What avaricious man ever wished for another to share his possessions? Who that was inflamed with the desire of empire, or elated by the pride of its possession, ever wished to have a partner? **Let them at any rate look on those very men who once belonged to them, but now are our brethren joined to us by the bond of fraternal affection, and see how they hold not only what they used to have, but also what was ours, which they did not have before; which yet, if we are living as poor in fellowship with poor, belongs to us and them alike; whilst, if we possess of our private means enough for our wants, it is no longer ours, inasmuch as we do not commit so infamous an act of usurpation as to claim for our own the property of the poor, for whom we are in some sense the trustees.**

36. Everything, therefore, that was held in the name of the churches of the party of Donatus, was ordered by the Christian emperors, in their pious laws, to pass to the Catholic Church, with the possession of the buildings themselves. Seeing, then, that there are with us poor members of those said churches who used to be maintained by these same paltry possessions, let them rather cease themselves to covet what belongs to others whilst they remain

outside, and so let them enter within the bond of unity, that we may all alike administer, not only the property which they call their own, but also with it what is asserted to be ours. **For it is written "All are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (1 Corinthians 3:22-23)** Under Him as our Head, let us all be one in His one body; and in all such matters as you speak of, let us follow the example which is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles: "They were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." (Acts 4:32) Let us love what we sing: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1) that so they may know, by their own experience, with what perfect truth their mother, the Catholic Church, calls out to them what the blessed apostle writes to the Corinthians: "I seek not yours, but you." (2 Corinthians 12:14)

**Commentary:** In paragraph 35 and 36 above, Augustine is encouraging the Donatists to surrender to the order of the Christian emperors, and become brethren in **"their mother, the Catholic Church"**. He states that all shall be shared equally.

We should note here also that the Church is never referred to as our **"mother"** in the Scriptures.

Chapter 9. —37. But if we consider what is said in the Book of Wisdom, "Therefore the righteous spoiled the ungodly;" (Wisdom 10:20) and also what is said in the Proverbs, "The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just;" (Proverbs 13:22) then we shall see that the question is not, who are in possession of the property of the heretics? But who are in the society of the just? **We know, indeed, that the Donatists arrogate to themselves such a store of justice, that they boast not only that they possess it, but that they also bestow it upon other men. For they say that anyone whom they have baptized is justified by them, after which there is nothing left for them but to say to the person who is baptized by them that he must needs believe on him who has administered the sacrament; for why should he not do so, when the apostle says, "To him that believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness?" (Romans 4:5) Let him believe, therefore, upon the man by whom he is baptized, if it be none else that justifies him, that his faith may be counted for righteousness. But I think that even they themselves would look with horror on themselves, if they ventured for a moment to entertain such thoughts as these. For there is none that is just and able to justify, save God alone. But the same might be said of them that the apostle says of the Jews, that "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." (Romans 10:3)**

**Commentary:** The Donatists are clearly in error here, saying **"to the person who is baptized by them that he must needs believe on him who has administered the sacrament"**, while misinterpreting Romans 4:5. It is, as Augustine says, **"For there is none that is just and able to justify, save God alone"**. It is God who justifies as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

The Donatists were **"ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness"**, and they were not submitting themselves unto the righteousness of God, as Augustine concludes referring to **Romans 10 (KJV):3** For they being ignorant of God's

righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

We now proceed to the next paragraph.

Chapter 9. —38. But far be it from us that any one of our number should call himself in such wise just, that he should either go about to establish his own righteousness, as though it were conferred upon him by himself, whereas it is said to him, "For what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4:7) or venture to boast himself as being without sin in this world, as the Donatists themselves declared in our conference that they were members of a Church which has already neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, (Ephesians 5:27)—not knowing that this is only fulfilled in those individuals who depart out of this body immediately after baptism, or after the forgiveness of sins, for which we make petition in our prayers; but that for the Church, as a whole, the time will not come when it shall be altogether without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, till the day when we shall hear the words, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin." (1 Corinthians 15:55-56)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "But far be it from us that any one of our number should call himself in such wise just, that he should either go about to establish his own righteousness, as though it were conferred upon him by himself, whereas it is said to him, "For what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4:7) ..."

He refers to **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):7** For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

He continues as he then says, "or venture to boast himself as being without sin in this world, as the Donatists themselves declared in our conference that they were members of a Church which has already neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, (Ephesians 5:27)

He is referring in context to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

The Donatists were clearly in error here. The Church will not be without blemish until it is raptured at the second coming of Christ as in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):16** For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

And in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Augustine is correct about the Donatists' false assertion that they can justify themselves or someone else by baptism, for it is God who justifies **Romans 8 (KJV):33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

And certainly the Donatists were not without spot or wrinkle as they claimed. Nor were

were the Donatists without sin as they claimed, for the apostle John himself taught as in **1 John 1 (KJV):8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Augustine then continues, as he asserts, “—not knowing that this is only fulfilled in those individuals who depart out of this body immediately after baptism, or after the forgiveness of sins, for which we make petition in our prayers;”

So he is saying that “immediately after baptism, or after the forgiveness of sins, for which we make petition in our prayers”, we are without sin, and have “neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing”.

However, when we die, our spirit will go to be with the Lord, and our bodies will sleep in the earth. So we will be without sin then. But sin dwells in our bodies as Paul says in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: **23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

So on earth, we have the old Adamic sin nature in our members, our flesh. As we walk in the light of the word of God, and confess our sin, we maintain our fellowship with the Lord.

Augustine concludes, “but that for the Church, as a whole, the time will not come when it shall be altogether without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, till the day when we shall hear the words, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin.” (1 Corinthians 15:55-56)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):50** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. **51** Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, **52** In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. **53** For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. **54** So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. **55** O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? **56** The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. **57** But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. **58** Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

This is referring to the resurrection. Then we shall be raised incorruptible, and without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

So the Donatists were in error about their assertion that “they were members of a Church which has already neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing”. But Augustine’s assertion that “this is only fulfilled in those individuals who depart out of this body immediately after baptism, or after the forgiveness of sins, for which we make petition in our prayers” reflects the belief of the Church in his time that you were regenerated, or born again, at baptism. Augustine and the Catholic Church did not fully understand the teaching about justification in the word of God.

We now proceed to the next chapter.

Chapter 9. —**39.** But in this life, when the corruptible body presseth down the soul, (Wisdom 9:15) if their Church is already of such a character as they maintain, they would not

utter unto God the prayer which our Lord has taught us to employ: "Forgive us our debts." (Matthew 6:12) For since all sins have been remitted in baptism, why does the Church make this petition, if already, even in this life, it has neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing? They would also have a fight to despise the warning of the Apostle John, when he cries out in his epistle, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:8-9) On account of this hope, the universal Church utters the petition, "Forgive us our debts," that when He sees that we are not vainglorious, but ready to confess our sins, He may cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and that so the Lord Jesus Christ may show to Himself in that day a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, which now He cleanses with the washing of water in the word: because, on the one hand, there is nothing that remains behind in baptism to hinder the forgiveness of every bygone sin (so long, that is, as baptism is not received to no effect without the Church, but is either administered within the Church, or, at least, if it has been already administered without, the recipient does not remain outside with it); and, on the other hand, whatever pollution of sin, of whatsoever kind, is contracted through the weakness of human nature by those who live here after baptism, is cleansed away in virtue of the same laver's efficacy. For neither is it of any avail for one who has not been baptized to say, "Forgive us our debts."

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he argues, "But in this life, when the corruptible body presseth down the soul, (Wisdom 9:15) if their Church is already of such a character as they maintain, they would not utter unto God the prayer which our Lord has taught us to employ: "Forgive us our debts." (Matthew 6:12)"

He refers to **Wisdom 9 (Septuagint):15** For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things.

And to **Matthew 6 (KJV):12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

He then continues, "For since all sins have been remitted in baptism, why does the Church make this petition, if already, even in this life, it has neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing?"

Augustine makes a good point. If all sin has been done away, and we have reached perfection in this life, we have no need of the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6:9-13.

He then continues, "They would also have a fight to despise the warning of the Apostle John, when he cries out in his epistle, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:8-9)"

He refers to **1 John 1 (KJV):8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He then explains, "On account of this hope, the universal Church utters the petition, "Forgive us our debts," that when He sees that we are not vainglorious, but ready to confess our sins, He may cleanse us from all unrighteousness, and that so the Lord Jesus Christ may show to Himself in that day a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, which now He cleanses with the washing of water in the word:"



He again refers in context to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

So we are cleansed by the washing of water by the word. The word of God is like water to our souls, and it makes us grow as we read in **Isaiah 55 (KJV):10** For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: 11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Paul was an apostle, and planted churches, but Apollos watered what Paul had planted as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):6** I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

Apollos was a teacher as we read in **Acts 18 (KJV):24** And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. 26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. 27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: 28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

After we are regenerated, or born again, we are progressively sanctified, or transformed, in our souls by the renewing of our mind as we have read before in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

This transformation by the renewing of our minds comes about by the word of God as Jesus reveals in **John 17 (KJV):17** Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

And Jesus spoke as in **John 15 (KJV):3** Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

And we read in **Psalms 119 (KJV):9** Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.

The Church that Jesus is building is in the process of a progressive sanctification as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they



lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

The Lord has given the ministries in verse 11 above for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. This is so that we will all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and no longer be children but may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

Augustine then continues, “because, on the one hand, there is nothing that remains behind in baptism to hinder the forgiveness of every bygone sin (so long, that is, as baptism is not received to no effect without the Church, but is either administered within the Church, or, at least, if it has been already administered without, the recipient does not remain outside with it); and, on the other hand, whatever pollution of sin, of whatsoever kind, is contracted through the weakness of human nature by those who live here after baptism, is cleansed away in virtue of the same laver’s efficacy. For neither is it of any avail for one who has not been baptized to say, “Forgive us our debts.”

Augustine considered baptism outside the universal Church as valid, “so long, that is, as baptism is not received to no effect without the Church”, and as long as “the recipient does not remain outside with it”, that is, outside of the Catholic Church. Augustine here makes our salvation dependent on our joining, and being a part of the universal Church, that is, the Catholic Church in his time.

He then says that any sins after baptism, are “cleansed away in virtue of the same laver’s efficacy”, that is, the laver of the universal, or Catholic Church. However, it is the blood of Jesus, and only the blood of Jesus, that cleanses us from sin as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

The word of God is the light we need that reveals sin in our lives. As we walk in the light of it, and confess our sins, we agree with the Lord, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.

And also, if we are not rightly baptized, according to Augustine, our salvation will be of no effect. If you are not baptized in the Catholic Church, or you are baptized outside of it, you must at some time join it for “whatever pollution of sin, of whatsoever kind, is contracted through the weakness of human nature by those who live here after baptism, is cleansed away in virtue of the same laver’s efficacy.”

Baptism is absolutely necessary according to Augustine, as he concludes, “For neither is it of any avail for one who has not been baptized to say, “Forgive us our debts.”

However, baptism is only a token that shows to the world that one has believed. It does not regenerate us, or save us. We will discuss baptism in depth in **Regeneration by Baptism**, coming up shortly.

We now proceed to the next paragraph.

Chapter 9. —40. Accordingly, He so now cleanses His Church by the washing of water in the word, that He may hereafter show it to Himself as not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such

thing,—altogether beautiful, that is to say, and in absolute perfection, when death shall be "swallowed up in victory." (1 Corinthians 15:54) **Now, therefore, in so far as the life is flourishing within us that proceeds from our being born of God, living by faith, so far we are righteous; but in so far as we drag along with us the traces of our mortal nature as derived from Adam, so far we cannot be free from sin. For there is truth both in the statement that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin," (1 John 3:9) and also in the former statement, that "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8) The Lord Jesus, therefore, is both righteous and able to justify; but we are justified freely by no other grace than His. (Romans 3:24) For there is nothing that justifieth save His body, which is the Church; and therefore, if the body of Christ bears off the spoils of the unrighteous, and the riches of the unrighteous are laid up in store as treasures for the body of Christ, the unrighteous ought not therefore to remain outside, but rather to enter within, that so they may be justified.**

**Commentary:** Augustine here begins as he says, "Accordingly, He so now cleanses His Church by the washing of water in the word, that He may hereafter show it to Himself as not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,—altogether beautiful, that is to say, and in absolute perfection, when death shall be "swallowed up in victory." (1 Corinthians 15:54)"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):54** So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

This will be at the resurrection of the just, when we shall be glorified, as we read in **Philippians 3 (KJV):21** Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

He then continues, "**Now, therefore, in so far as the life is flourishing within us that proceeds from our being born of God, living by faith, so far we are righteous; but in so far as we drag along with us the traces of our mortal nature as derived from Adam, so far we cannot be free from sin.**" For there is truth both in the statement that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin," (1 John 3:9) and also in the former statement, that "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8)"

He refers in context to **1 John 3 (KJV):9** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

And to **1 John 1 (KJV):8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Augustine understood that we have a "**mortal nature as derived from Adam**". This is why we must put off and put on as Paul commands in **Colossians 3 (KJV):8** But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

Our inner man is the "new man" Paul refers to in verse 10. The old man is the old Adamic sin nature in our flesh, by which we are mortal. The new man is our spirit which is born of the Spirit of God, as Jesus reveals in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

But our flesh is still mortal, having a sin nature, or “law of sin” in our members. This is why we delight in the law of God in our inner man, our spirit, but we still have a “law of sin” in our flesh as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Augustine then continues, “**The Lord Jesus, therefore, is both righteous and able to justify; but we are justified freely by no other grace than His. (Romans 3:24)**”

He refers in context to **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Augustine then asserts, “**For there is nothing that justifieth save His body, which is the Church; and therefore, if the body of Christ bears off the spoils of the unrighteous, and the riches of the unrighteous are laid up in store as treasures for the body of Christ, the unrighteous ought not therefore to remain outside, but rather to enter within, that so they may be justified.**”

First of all, the Church is His body, as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):22** And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

And He is the head of the Church. But it is His blood that justifies us as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):9** Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

Augustine’s argument ignores this. He is making our justification, and our salvation, dependent on submission to the universal Church, that is, to man.

When we believed in Jesus Christ, we were baptized into the body of Christ as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

And God set the members in a specific place in His body as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

And in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):27** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

When we believed in Jesus Christ, we were baptized into Christ, and into His death as we read in **Romans 6 (KJV):3** Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

And when we believe in Jesus Christ, we are justified as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):24** Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

The Church is not mentioned in this Scripture. We read also in **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

The words “being justified” are actually in the past tense in the Greek so that the verse should be translated as in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

And the word peace in Romans 5:1 in the Greek is εἰρήνη (pronounced eirēnē). This word comes from the verb eiro which means “to bind together that which has been separated.” **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume 1, Romans in the Greek New Testament, Page 77.** In other words, in Romans 5:1, Paul is saying that we have been set at one with God, and are at peace with Him after He has justified us, that is, after He has declared us righteous.

Since this justification was by faith, it happened when we believed in Jesus Christ. This is exactly what we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

And again in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

So God justifies us the moment we believe in Jesus Christ. It has nothing to do with baptism, whether it was done within the universal Church or without. It is simply our faith in Jesus Christ that God looks for in order to justify us. This justification when we believe in Jesus Christ gives us a standing of righteousness before God.

Since it has nothing to do with baptism, it has nothing to do with our membership in the Church. But we are made members of the Church when we believe as we read above in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

This baptism is a sovereign baptism done by the Spirit of the Lord, when we believe. It has nothing to do with water baptism. We are set in the body by the Lord as it pleased Him.

Let us now proceed to the next paragraph to preserve context.

Chapter 9. —41. Whence also we may be sure that what is written concerning the day of judgment, "Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labors," (Wisdom 5:1) is not to be taken in such a sense as that the Canaanite shall stand before the face of Israel, though Israel made no account of the labors of the Canaanite; but only as that Naboth shall stand before the face of Ahab, since Ahab made no account of the labors of Naboth, since the Canaanite was unrighteous, while Naboth was a righteous man. In the same way the heathen shall not stand before the face of the Christian, who made no account of his labors, when the temples of the idols were plundered and destroyed; but the Christian shall stand before the face of the heathen, who made no account of his labors, when the bodies of the martyrs were laid low in death. In the same way, therefore, **the heretic shall not stand in the face of the Catholic, who made no account of his labors, when the laws of the Catholic emperors were put in force; but the Catholic shall stand in the face of the heretic**, who made no account of his labors when the madness of the ungodly Circumcelliones was allowed to have its way. For **the passage of Scripture** decides the question in itself, seeing that it does not say, Then shall men stand, but "Then shall the righteous stand;" and they shall stand "in great boldness" because they stand in the power of a good conscience.

**Commentary:** He refers to **Wisdom 5 (KJV):1** Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours.

The book of Wisdom is an apocryphal book, and is not part of the canon. Evidently Augustine recognized it as Scripture for he refers to it as “the passage of Scripture” above.

Now Naboth owned a vineyard that Ahab wanted as we read in **1 Kings 21 (KJV):1** And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. 2 And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. 3 And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

So Ahab had Naboth stoned as we read in **1 Kings 21 (KJV):13** And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died. 14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead. 15 And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead. 16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

Now we notice how he says, “the heretic shall not stand in the face of the Catholic, who made no account of his labors, when the laws of the Catholic emperors were put in force; but the Catholic shall stand in the face of the heretic”. Augustine assumed that all Catholic doctrine was good doctrine, and everthing else was heresy.

We continue to read the next paragraph.

Chapter 9. —42. But in this world no one is righteous by his own righteousness,—that is, as though it were wrought by himself and for himself; but as the apostle says, "According as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." But then he goes on to add the following: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ." (Romans 12:3-5) And according to this doctrine, no one can be righteous so long as he is separated from the unity of this body. For in the same manner as if a limb be cut off from the body of a living man, it cannot any longer retain the spirit of life; so the man who is cut off from the body of Christ, who is righteous, can in no wise retain the spirit of righteousness, even if he retain the form of membership which he received when in the body. Let them therefore come into the framework of this body, and so possess their own labors, not through the lust of lordship, but through the godliness of using them aright. But we, as has been said before, cleanse our wills from the pollution of this concupiscence, even in the judgment of any enemy you please to name as judge, seeing that we use our utmost efforts in entreating the very men of whose labors we avail ourselves to enjoy with us, within the society of the Catholic Church, the fruits both of their labors and of our own.



**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But in this world no one is righteous by his own righteousness,—that is, as though it were wrought by himself and for himself; but as the apostle says, "According as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." But then he goes on to add the following: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ." (Romans 12:3-5)”

The Donatists were asserting that they were righteous of themselves, and without sin, and that their church was “without spot or wrinkle”, a reference to Ephesians 5:27. But this Scripture refers to the Church when it shall be presented to Christ as a glorified body of believers at the rapture.

Augustine refers to **Romans 12 (KJV):3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

He then asserts, “And according to this doctrine, no one can be righteous so long as he is separated from the unity of this body. For in the same manner as if a limb be cut off from the body of a living man, it cannot any longer retain the spirit of life; so the man who is cut off from the body of Christ, who is righteous, can in no wise retain the spirit of righteousness, even if he retain the form of membership which he received when in the body. Let them therefore come into the framework of this body, and so possess their own labors, not through the lust of lordship, but through the godliness of using them aright.”

However, the body of Christ is a spiritual body. We are members of this body in virtue of the fact that we have been regenerated, that is, born again. It is the new birth that makes us members of Christ, after which we are then baptized into the body of Christ as we read again in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Augustine then concludes, “But we, as has been said before, cleanse our wills from the pollution of this concupiscence, even in the judgment of any enemy you please to name as judge, seeing that we use our utmost efforts in entreating the very men of whose labors we avail ourselves to enjoy with us, within the society of the Catholic Church, the fruits both of their labors and of our own.”

Augustine is abiding in the teaching of the Church in his time. The body of Christ to him was “the society of the Catholic Church”. In his time, the body of Christ was the Catholic Church. If you did not belong to that body, or left “the framework of this body”, you were as a limb “cut off from the body of a living man”, which “cannot any longer retain the spirit of life”. Being “cut off from the body of Christ, who is righteous”, you could “in no wise retain the spirit of righteousness”.

Augustine is referring to Romans 12:3-5 when he says, “And according to this doctrine, no one can be righteous so long as he is separated from the unity of this body.”

But he is taking the Scripture out of context. The Scripture, in context, includes verses 6 through 8, and reads as in **Romans 12 (KJV):3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many,



are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

The measure of faith is given to each member of the body of Christ according to the function of that office, or ministry, which the member is to perform. The body of Christ is a spiritual body made up of born again believers. It has nothing to do with whether the Church has been accepted by the Empire, or Kings or rulers. Augustine's vision was of a Church united to the empire. To abide in the Church was to abide in the good graces of the empire. To leave the Church meant that you were no longer abiding in the good graces of the empire. This thinking clouded his vision when he read the New Testament.

When anyone accepts Christ, it is God who justifies them as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

That is, He puts His righteousness down to their account. It is not the righteousness of the Church, or some other righteousness, but God's very own righteousness as in **Romans 3 (KJV):**22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

We are not justified by anyone's labors, or even our own. It is God who justifies, and He puts His very own righteousness down to our account.

Now Augustine is dealing with a variety of questions in his time. He is trying to clarify what the Scriptures teach, but he is hindered by the Church's dogma in his time.

As we proceed to the next section, we will see that Augustine is adamantly in favor of infant baptism.

## **Regeneration by Baptism**

Regeneration by baptism is a dogma that was handed to Augustine by the Church of his time. It began very early on in the early Church and was a dogma in the time of Irenaeus who lived between 120 and 202 AD, approximately, and was a bishop in Lyons, France from 177 to 202 AD.

"His refutation of the Gnosis, written between 177 and 192, is the leading polemic work of the second century." **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff, Volume 2, Chapter XII, page 511-512.**

His refutation of the Gnosis heresy is the five book series which Irenaeus wrote entitled, **Adversus Heresies (Against Heresies).**

"He was sent by the Gallican confessors to the Roman bishop Eleutherus (who ruled A.D. 177–190), as a mediator in the Montanistic disputes. After the martyrdom of Pothinus he was elected bishop of Lyons (177), and labored there with zeal and success, by tongue and pen, for the restoration of the heavily visited church, for the spread of Christianity in Gaul, and for the

defence and development of its doctrines. He thus combined a vast missionary and literary activity. If we are to trust the account of Gregory of Tours, he converted almost the whole population of Lyons and sent notable missionaries to other parts of pagan France.” **History of the Christian Church, Philip P. Schaff , Volume II, Chapter XIII, Section 182, page 748-750.**

Irenaeus writes the following in **Book 1** of his series, **Adversus Heresies (Against Heresies)**:

#### **Ante-Nicene Fathers**

**Volume 1, Page 345, Irenaeus Against Heresies, Book 1: Chapter XXI.—The views of redemption entertained by these heretics.**

1. It happens that their tradition respecting redemption is invisible and incomprehensible, as being the mother of things which are incomprehensible and invisible; and on this account, since it is fluctuating, it is impossible simply and all at once to make known its nature, for every one of them hands it down just as his own inclination prompts. Thus there are as many schemes of “redemption” as there are teachers of these mystical opinions. And when we come to refute them, we shall show in its fitting-place, that this class of men have been instigated by Satan to a denial of that **baptism which is regeneration to God**, and thus to a renunciation of the whole [Christian] faith.

**Commentary:** The **”baptism which is regeneration to God”** is referring to the dogma of the Church in the time of Irenaeus.

This is further documented by Philip P. Schaff in the following:

“This ordinance [Baptism] was regarded in the ancient church as the sacrament of the new birth or regeneration, and as the solemn rite of initiation into the Christian Church, admitting to all her benefits and committing to all her obligations....Its effect consists in the forgiveness of sins and the communication of the Holy Spirit. Justin [Martyr] calls baptism “the water-bath for the forgiveness of sins and regeneration,” and “the bath of conversion and the knowledge of God.” It is often called also illumination, spiritual circumcision, anointing, sealing, gift of grace, symbol of redemption, death of sins, etc. Tertullian describes its effect thus: “When the soul comes to faith, and becomes transformed through regeneration by water and power from above, it discovers, after the veil of the old corruption is taken away, its whole light. It is received into the fellowship of the Holy Spirit; and the soul, which unites itself to the Holy Spirit, is followed by the body.” He already leans towards the notion of a magical operation of the baptismal water. Yet the subjective condition of repentance and faith was universally required. Baptism was not only an act of God, but at the same time the most solemn surrender of man to God, a vow for life and death, to live henceforth only to Christ and his people. The keeping of this vow was the condition of continuance in the church; the breaking of it must be followed either by repentance or excommunication.” **History of the Christian Church, by Philip P. Schaff, Volume 2, page 253.**

Tertullian lived between 155 and 240 AD, approximately. Now Schaff also says, "From John 3:5 and Mark 16:16, Tertullian and other fathers argued the necessity of baptism to salvation." **History of the Christian Church, by Philip P. Schaff, Volume 2, page 253-4.**

In addition, Schaff also says that the effect of baptism "was thought to extend only to sins committed before receiving it. Hence the frequent postponement of the sacrament [Procrastinatio baptismi], which Tertullian very earnestly recommends, though he censures it when accompanied with moral levity and presumption." **History of the Christian Church, by Philip P. Schaff, Volume 2, page 254.**

Schaff speaks of the ancient church's belief that baptism was the "sacrament of the new birth or regeneration." There is no doubt that this belief started very early on in the Church, as we note that the writing of Justin Martyr (c. 100 – 165 A.D.) preceded Irenaeus slightly. We will look at a writing of Justin Martyr shortly.

Irenaeus also says the following:

### **Ante-Nicene Fathers**

#### **Volume 1, Page 444-445, Irenaeus Against Heresies, Book 3: Chapter XVII**

2...For as a compacted lump of dough cannot be formed of dry wheat without fluid matter, nor can a loaf possess unity, so, in like manner, neither could we, being many, be made one in Christ Jesus without the water from heaven. And as dry earth does not bring forth unless it receive moisture, in like manner we also, being originally a dry tree, could never have brought forth fruit unto life without the voluntary rain from above. For our bodies have received unity among themselves by means of that laver which leads to incorruption; but our souls, by means of the Spirit."

For a full discussion of the writing of Irenaeus in his series **Adversus Heresies (Against Heresies)**, see my book, **A Commentary on Against Heresies by Irenaeus**, at <http://theriskofchrist.com/mainbook/commentary.pdf>.

Now let us look at the writing of Justin Martyr, who lived from 114 AD to 165 AD, slightly before Irenaeus.

### **Ante-Nicene Fathers**

#### **Volume 1, Page 183, The First Apology of Justin (born in 114 AD, martyred in 165 AD) Chapter LXI.—Christian baptism.**

I will also relate the manner in which we dedicated ourselves to God when we had been made new through Christ; lest, if we omit this, we seem to be unfair in the explanation we are making. **As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (John**

3:5) Now, that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into their mothers' wombs, is manifest to all. And how those who have sinned and repent shall escape their sins, is declared by Esaias the prophet, as I wrote above; he thus speaks: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from your souls; learn to do well; judge the fatherless, and plead for the widow: and come and let us reason together, saith the Lord. And though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white like wool; and though they be as crimson, I will make them white as snow. But if ye refuse and rebel, the sword shall devour you: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (Isaiah 1:16-20) And for this [rite] we have learned from the apostles this reason. Since at our birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice, by our parents coming together, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training; in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge, and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and has repented of his sins, the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe; he who leads to the laver the person that is to be washed calling him by this name alone. For no one can utter the name of the ineffable God; and if any one dare to say that there is a name, he raves with a hopeless madness. And this washing is called illumination, because they who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings. And in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus, he who is illuminated is washed.

**Commentary:** Justin speaks of the custom of becoming a catechumen before baptism, as he says above, "As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them." This also began very early on in the history of the Church.

Then immediately following, Justin speaks of the custom of baptism, as he says above, "Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. (John 3:5)"

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

This teaching of regeneration by baptism began very early on in the history of the Church. Justin continues as he then says, "Now, that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into their mothers' wombs, is manifest to all. And how those who have sinned and repent shall escape their sins, is declared by Esaias the prophet, as I wrote above; he thus speaks: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from your souls; learn to do well; judge the fatherless, and plead for the widow: and come and let us reason together, saith the Lord. And though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white like wool; and though they be as crimson, I will make them white as snow. But if ye refuse and rebel, the sword shall devour you: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (Isaiah 1:16-20)"

He refers to **Isaiah 1 (KJV):**16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; 17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. 18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. 19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: 20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

But washing began in the Old Testament as a reverence for the holiness of God as we read in **Exodus 19 (KJV):**9 And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the Lord. 10 And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, 11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

And then there were laws of cleanliness, beginning with the ordination of the priests in **Exodus 29 (KJV):**1 And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish, 2 And unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: of wheaten flour shalt thou make them. 3 And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams. 4 And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water.

All the laws of cleanliness, as they honored the holiness of God, kept the people from disease, but they could not sanctify them of sin as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

The “time of reformation” mentioned in verse 10 above came with Jesus dying on the cross for us, and entering into heaven for us as we continue to read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

So all of the divers washings of the Old Testament laws did not save them. It was their

faith that saved them, for without faith it is impossible to please Him as we read in **Hebrews 11:6** But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

It is when we believe that we pass from death to life as Jesus reveals in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Water baptism is only a token that we have believed. It is a figure of the cleansing of our sins when we believe.

So water baptism does not save us, but is only symbolic of what has taken place when we believe in Jesus Christ.

Justin says further, “Since at our birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice, by our parents coming together, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training; in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge, and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and has repented of his sins, the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe; he who leads to the laver the person that is to be washed calling him by this name alone.”

And Justin concludes, “And this washing is called illumination, because they who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings. And in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus, he who is illuminated is washed.”

So here we note in Justin’s writing that there were certain terms relating to baptism that came to be in common usage such as “regenerated”, “the washing with water”, “remission of sins formerly committed”, “the laver”. In the **Constitutions of the Holy Apostles** above under the Catechumens heading, previous to Justin, we read of “the laver of regeneration”, “baptism of regeneration”, and soon we shall read of “the sacred font of baptism”.

Now Justin compares the new birth to the fleshly birth from our parents which was without our choice. And he then says “...there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again...” But have you ever noticed in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

When we are born again, we are born not of the will of man, but of God. We will discuss this more fully as we proceed to read further in the writings of Augustine. We now turn to the writings of Augustine, who inherited the thinking of the early Church about baptism.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Nature and Grace, Chapter 9, page 124**

Chapter 9 [VIII.]—Even They Who Were Not Able to Be Justified are Condemned.

See what he has said. I, however, affirm that an infant born in a place where it was not possible for him to be admitted to the baptism of Christ, and being overtaken by death, was placed in such circumstances, that is to say, died without the **bath of regeneration**, because it



was not possible for him to be otherwise. He would therefore absolve him, and, in spite of the Lord's sentence, open to him the kingdom of heaven. The apostle, however, does not absolve him, when he says: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; by which death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Romans 5:12) **Rightly, therefore, by virtue of that condemnation which runs throughout the mass, is he not admitted into the kingdom of heaven, although he was not only not a Christian, but was unable to become one.**

**Commentary:** There is good reason to believe that the Lord's mercy would intervene in the case of children, as he did in **Deuteronomy 1 (KJV):34** And the Lord heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, 35 Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers. 36 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the Lord. 37 Also the Lord was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither. 38 But Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. 39 Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.

Just as the thief on the cross who was not baptized, but entered paradise with Jesus, so it may be with children who die before reaching the age of accountability.

But Augustine refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

It is true that all stand condemned if they have not believed in Jesus Christ as we read in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

But the "**bath of regeneration**" occurs not at water baptism, but when we believe. That is when we pass from death to life. But it is most likely that God's mercy will provide for salvation for children under the age of accountability. When we consider the fact that millions of abortions take place annually, and that our God is merciful, we can trust Him to make a way for these.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, Book I, Chapter 26, page 385**

Chapter 26 [XIII.]—The Seventh Calumny,—That Augustin Asserts that in Baptism All Sins are Not Remitted.

"They also say," says he, "that baptism does not give complete remission of sins, nor take away crimes, but that it shaves them off, so that the roots of all sins are retained in the evil flesh." Who but an unbeliever can affirm this against the Pelagians? **I say, therefore, that baptism gives remission of all sins, and takes away guilt, and does not shave them off; and "that the roots of all sins are" not "retained in the evil flesh, as if of shaved hair on the head, whence the sins may grow to be cut down again."** For it was I that found out that similitude, too, for them to use for the purposes of their calumny, as if I thought and said this.

**Commentary:** Augustine is clear here, “that baptism gives remission of all sins, and takes away guilt, and does not shave them off; and “that the roots of all sins are” not “retained in the evil flesh, as if of shaved hair on the head, whence the sins may grow to be cut down again.”

When we believe, God justifies us because of our faith. We then have a standing as righteous ones in God’s sight. He has also provided an advocate for any sin after we have been born again. The blood of Jesus not only enables us to be born again, but it also is the means of forgiveness after we have been born again. There will only ever be one sacrifice for sins. Jesus has paid it all.

We next read of a reference to regeneration by baptism in Augustine’s writings in the following where he discusses suicide.

## **The Issue of Suicide**

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book I, Chapter 20, page 14-15**

Chapter 20.—That Christians Have No Authority for Committing Suicide in Any Circumstances Whatever.

It is not without significance, that in no passage of the holy canonical books there can be found either divine precept or permission to take away our own life, whether for the sake of entering on the enjoyment of immortality, or of shunning, or ridding ourselves of anything whatever. Nay, the law, rightly interpreted, even prohibits suicide, where it says, “Thou shalt not kill.” This is proved especially by the omission of the words “thy neighbor,” which are inserted when false witness is forbidden: “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.” Nor yet should any one on this account suppose he has not broken this commandment if he has borne false witness only against himself. For the love of our neighbor is regulated by the love of ourselves, as it is written, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” If, then, he who makes false statements about himself is not less guilty of bearing false witness than if he had made them to the injury of his neighbor; although in the commandment prohibiting false witness only his neighbor is mentioned, and persons taking no pains to understand it might suppose that a man was allowed to be a false witness to his own hurt; how much greater reason have we to understand that a man may not kill himself, since in the commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” there is no limitation added nor any exception made in favor of any one, and least of all in favor of him on whom the command is laid! And so some attempt to extend this command even to beasts and cattle, as if it forbade us to take life from any creature. But if so, why not extend it also to the plants, and all that is rooted in and nourished by the earth? For though this class of creatures have no sensation, yet they also are said to live, and consequently they can die; and therefore, if violence be done them, can be killed. So, too, the apostle, when speaking of the seeds of such things as these, says, “That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die;” and in

the Psalm it is said, “He killed their vines with hail.” Must we therefore reckon it a breaking of this commandment, “Thou shalt not kill,” to pull a flower? Are we thus insanely to countenance the foolish error of the Manichæans? Putting aside, then, these ravings, if, when we say, Thou shalt not kill, we do not understand this of the plants, since they have no sensation, nor of the irrational animals that fly, swim, walk, or creep, since they are dissociated from us by their want of reason, and are therefore by the just appointment of the Creator subjected to us to kill or keep alive for our own uses; if so, then it remains that we understand that commandment simply of man. **The commandment is, “Thou shall not kill man;” therefore neither another nor yourself, for he who kills himself still kills nothing else than man.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “**It is not without significance, that in no passage of the holy canonical books there can be found either divine precept or permission to take away our own life, whether for the sake of entering on the enjoyment of immortality, or of shunning, or ridding ourselves of anything whatever. Nay, the law, rightly interpreted, even prohibits suicide, where it says, “Thou shalt not kill.”**”

He refers to **Exodus 20:13** Thou shalt not kill.

And Augustine is correct. We are not to kill ourselves, for we are not our own, and we are to glorify God as in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

And he rightly concludes, “**The commandment is, “Thou shall not kill man;” therefore neither another nor yourself, for he who kills himself still kills nothing else than man.**”

Let us continues to read his thoughts on suicide.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book I, Chapter 25, page 17**

Chapter 25.—That We Should Not Endeavor By Sin to Obviate Sin.

But, we are told, there is ground to fear that, when the body is subjected to the enemy's lust, the insidious pleasure of sense may entice the soul to consent to the sin, and steps must be taken to prevent so disastrous a result. And is not suicide the proper mode of preventing not only the enemy's sin, but the sin of the Christian so allured? Now, in the first place, the soul which is led by God and His wisdom, rather than by bodily concupiscence, will certainly never consent to the desire aroused in its own flesh by another's lust. **And, at all events, if it be true, as the truth plainly declares, that suicide is a detestable and damnable wickedness, who is such a fool as to say, Let us sin now, that we may obviate a possible future sin; let us now commit murder, lest we perhaps afterwards should commit adultery? If we are so controlled by iniquity that innocence is out of the question, and we can at best but make a choice of sins, is not a future and uncertain adultery preferable to a present and certain murder? Is it not better to commit a wickedness which penitence may heal, than a crime which leaves no place for healing**

**contrition?** I say this for the sake of those men or women who fear they may be enticed into consenting to their violator's lust, and think they should lay violent hands on themselves, and so prevent, not another's sin, but their own. But far be it from the mind of a Christian confiding in God, and resting in the hope of His aid; far be it, I say, from such a mind to yield a shameful consent to pleasures of the flesh, howsoever presented. And if that lustful disobedience, which still dwells in our mortal members, follows its own law irrespective of our will, surely its motions in the body of one who rebels against them are as blameless as its motions in the body of one who sleeps.

**Commentary:** Augustine argues against the sin of suicide, saying it is murder. He argues, **"Is it not better to commit a wickedness which penitence may heal, than a crime which leaves no place for healing contrition?"**

In Augustine's time, suicide was a **"detestable and damnable wickedness"** from which there was no forgiveness.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book I, Chapter 27, page 18**

Chapter 27.—Whether Voluntary Death Should Be Sought in Order to Avoid Sin.

There remains one reason for suicide which I mentioned before, and which is thought a sound one,—namely, to prevent one's falling into sin either through the blandishments of pleasure or the violence of pain. If this reason were a good one, then we should be impelled to exhort men at once to destroy themselves, as soon as they have been washed in the laver of regeneration, and have received the forgiveness of all sin. Then is the time to escape all future sin, when all past sin is blotted out. And if this escape be lawfully secured by suicide, why not then specially? Why does any baptized person hold his hand from taking his own life? Why does any person who is freed from the hazards of this life again expose himself to them, when he has power so easily to rid himself of them all, and when it is written, "He who loveth danger shall fall into it?" (Sirach 3:27) Why does he love, or at least face, so many serious dangers, by remaining in this life from which he may legitimately depart? But is any one so blinded and twisted in his moral nature, and so far astray from the truth, as to think that, though a man ought to make away with himself for fear of being led into sin by the oppression of one man, his master, he ought yet to live, and so expose himself to the hourly temptations of this world, both to all those evils which the oppression of one master involves, and to numberless other miseries in which this life inevitably implicates us? What reason, then, is there for our consuming time in those exhortations by which we seek to animate the baptized, either to virginal chastity, or vidual continence, or matrimonial fidelity, when we have so much more simple and compendious a method of deliverance from sin, by persuading those who are fresh from baptism to put an end to their lives, and so pass to their Lord pure and well-conditioned? If any one thinks that such persuasion should be attempted, I say not he is foolish, but mad. **With what face, then, can he say to any man, "Kill yourself, lest to your small sins you add a heinous sin, while you live under an unchaste master, whose conduct is that of a barbarian?"** How can he say this, if he cannot without wickedness say, "Kill yourself, now that you are washed from all your

sins, lest you fall again into similar or even aggravated sins, while you live in a world which has such power to allure by its unclean pleasures, to torment by its horrible cruelties, to overcome by its errors and terrors?” It is wicked to say this; it is therefore wicked to kill oneself. For if there could be any just cause of suicide, this were so. And since not even this is so, there is none.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he writes, “There remains one reason for suicide which I mentioned before, and which is thought a sound one,—namely, to prevent one’s falling into sin either through the blandishments of pleasure or the violence of pain. If this reason were a good one, then we should be impelled to exhort men at once to destroy themselves, as soon as they have been washed in the laver of regeneration, and have received the forgiveness of all sin. Then is the time to escape all future sin, when all past sin is blotted out. And if this escape be lawfully secured by suicide, why not then specially?”

Augustine then argues, “Why does he love, or at least face, so many serious dangers, by remaining in this life from which he may legitimately depart? But is any one so blinded and twisted in his moral nature, and so far astray from the truth, as to think that, though a man ought to make away with himself for fear of being led into sin by the oppression of one man, his master, he ought yet to live, and so expose himself to the hourly temptations of this world, both to all those evils which the oppression of one master involves, and to numberless other miseries in which this life inevitably implicates us? What reason, then, is there for our consuming time in those exhortations by which we seek to animate the baptized, either to virginal chastity, or vidual continence, or matrimonial fidelity, when we have so much more simple and compendious a method of deliverance from sin, by persuading those who are fresh from baptism to put an end to their lives, and so pass to their Lord pure and well-conditioned? If any one thinks that such persuasion should be attempted, I say not he is foolish, but mad.”

Augustine then reasons, “With what face, then, can he say to any man, “Kill yourself, lest to your small sins you add a heinous sin, while you live under an unchaste master, whose conduct is that of a barbarian?” How can he say this, if he cannot without wickedness say, “Kill yourself, now that you are washed from all your sins, lest you fall again into similar or even aggravated sins, while you live in a world which has such power to allure by its unclean pleasures, to torment by its horrible cruelties, to overcome by its errors and terrors?” It is wicked to say this; it is therefore wicked to kill oneself.”

And it is true that killing yourself is a sin, and a wicked way to end it all.

Augustine is arguing against suicide, as he concludes from his argument, “For if there could be any just cause of suicide, this were so. And since not even this is so, there is none.”

Now we can commend Augustine for ruling against suicide for any reason, but the Church in his time believed that you could lose your salvation if, after baptism, you committed a mortal sin. This belief started very early on in the Church’s dogma, as we read in the following writing of Irenaeus, in reference to 1 Corinthians, Chapter 15:

#### **Ante-Nicene Fathers**

**Volume 1, Book 5: Chapter IX, paragraphs 1-4 of his writing, Adversus Heresies (Against Heresies), page 534-535**



1. Among the other [truths] proclaimed by the apostle, there is also this one, “That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 15:50) This is [the passage] which is adduced by all the heretics in support of their folly, with an attempt to annoy us, and to point out that the handiwork of God is not saved. **They do not take this fact into consideration, that there are three things out of which, as I have shown, the complete man is composed — flesh, soul, and spirit. One of these does indeed preserve and fashion [the man]—this is the spirit; while as to another it is united and formed—that is the flesh; then [comes] that which is between these two—that is the soul, which sometimes indeed, when it follows the spirit, is raised up by it, but sometimes it sympathizes with the flesh, and falls into carnal lusts. Those then, as many as they be, who have not that which saves and forms [us] into life [eternal], shall be, and shall be called, [mere] flesh and blood; for these are they who have not the Spirit of God in themselves. Wherefore men of this stamp are spoken of by the Lord as “dead;” for, says He, “Let the dead bury their dead,” (Luke 9:60) because they have not the Spirit which quickens man.**

**Commentary:** Irenaeus refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):50** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. And to **Luke 9 (KJV):60** Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

Irenaeus here explains the thinking of the Church in his time which carried forward into the time of Augustine. That is, that **“the complete man is composed —flesh, soul, and spirit”**. The spirit **“does indeed preserve and fashion [the man] that is the flesh;”**

Irenaeus then explains his perception of these three parts as he says, **“One of these does indeed preserve and fashion [the man]—this is the spirit; while as to another it is united and formed—that is the flesh; then [comes] that which is between these two—that is the soul, which sometimes indeed, when it follows the spirit, is raised up by it, but sometimes it sympathizes with the flesh, and falls into carnal lusts.”**

So by “spirit” here we understand Irenaeus to mean Holy Spirit, as he then says, **“Those then, as many as they be, who have not that which saves and forms [us] into life [eternal], shall be, and shall be called, [mere] flesh and blood; for these are they who have not the Spirit of God in themselves.”**

We continue to read in his next paragraph.

2. On the other hand, as many as fear God and trust in His Son’s advent, and who through faith do establish the Spirit of God in their hearts,—such men as these shall be properly called both “pure,” and “spiritual,” and “those living to God,” because they possess the Spirit of the Father, who purifies man, and raises him up to the life of God. For as the Lord has testified that “the flesh is weak,” so [does He also say] that “the spirit is willing.” (Matthew 26:41)...

**Commentary:** Irenaeus is saying that those **“who through faith do establish the Spirit of God in their hearts,—such men as these shall be properly called both “pure,” and “spiritual,” and “those living to God,” because they possess the Spirit of the Father, who purifies man, and raises him up to the life of God”**.



That is, they have been born again. He then refers to **Matthew 26 (KJV):41** Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

By the “spirit” that “indeed is willing” in this verse, by the context of his writing, we must understand him to mean, the Holy Spirit.

We continue to read in his next paragraph.

3. The flesh, therefore, when destitute of the Spirit of God, is dead, not having life, and cannot possess the kingdom of God: [it is as] irrational blood, like water poured out upon the ground. And therefore he says, “As is the earthy, such are they that are earthy.” (referring to 1 Corinthians 15:48) **But where the Spirit of the Father is, there is a living man; [there is] the rational blood preserved by God for the avenging [of those that shed it]; [there is] the flesh possessed by the Spirit, forgetful indeed of what belongs to it, and adopting the quality of the Spirit, being made conformable to the Word of God.** And on this account he (the apostle) declares, “As we have borne the image of him who is of the earth, we shall also bear the image of Him who is from heaven.” (referring to 1 Corinthians 15:49) What, therefore, is the earthly? That which was fashioned. And what is the heavenly? The Spirit. **As therefore he says, when we were destitute of the celestial Spirit, we walked in former times in the oldness of the flesh, not obeying God; so now let us, receiving the Spirit, walk in newness of life, obeying God. Inasmuch, therefore, as without the Spirit of God we cannot be saved, the apostle exhorts us through faith and chaste conversation to preserve the Spirit of God, lest, having become non-participators of the Divine Spirit, we lose the kingdom of heaven; and he exclaims, that flesh in itself, and blood, cannot possess the kingdom of God.**

**Commentary:** Irenaeus refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):48** As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Paul here refers to the resurrection when we shall be glorified.

Irenaeus believed the apostle to be saying that we must **“through faith and chaste conversation to preserve the Spirit of God, lest, having become non-participators of the Divine Spirit, we lose the kingdom of heaven”**.

In this state, we would be **“[mere] flesh and blood”**, and those **“who have not the Spirit of God in themselves”**, as we read in paragraph 1 above.

And Irenaeus concludes in the following paragraph:

4...**In order that we may not lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses us, the apostle, exhorting us to the communion of the Spirit, has said, according to reason, in those words already quoted, “That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” (referring to 1 Corinthians 15:50) Just as if he were to say, “Do not err; for unless the Word of God dwell with, and the Spirit of the Father be in you, and if ye shall live frivolously and carelessly as if ye were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood, ye cannot inherit the kingdom of God.**

**Commentary:** He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):50** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

The thinking of Irenaeus is that since man before faith in Christ is dead spiritually, he

possesses only flesh and blood. He seems to say in paragraph 2 that, when any have faith in Christ, “**and who through faith do establish the Spirit of God in their hearts,**” the Holy Spirit enters the one who believes and gives him or her spiritual life, “**because they possess the Spirit of the Father, who purifies man, and raises him up to the life of God**”. But in paragraph 4 we read that, if the one who initially has faith does not maintain “**communion of the Spirit,**” but walks “**frivolously and carelessly**” as if he “**were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood,**” he could “**lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses**” him or her. His main point is that it is the presence of the Spirit of God that raises us from the dead. Therefore in paragraph 1 he says that “**as many as they be, who have not that which saves and forms [us] into life [eternal],**” that is the Holy Spirit, they “**shall be, and shall be called, [mere] flesh and blood; for these are they who have not the Spirit of God in themselves.**”

Irenaeus clearly misinterprets 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, for this chapter is about the resurrection, and what kind of body we will have at the resurrection. Irenaeus believed that man was composed of flesh, soul, and spirit, that is, the Spirit of God when he is born again by baptism. He did not understand that man also has a spirit, which is born of the Spirit of God when he believes in Jesus Christ, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

A full discussion of this can be found in **A Commentary on Against Heresies by Irenaeus, Chapter 7: Inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven**. You can access this at <http://theriskofchrist.com/mainbook/commentary.pdf>.

So Augustine thought that suicide would cause one to “**lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses**” him or her. That is, he thought suicide to be a mortal sin which would cause one to lose their salvation. We will discuss this further in this volume as we progress through the writings of Augustine. Now in the next section of Augustine’s writing, we read of his view of unbaptized persons who die confessing Christ.

## **The Unbaptized Who Confess Christ**

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XIII, Chapters 7-9, page 248-249**

Chapter 7.—Of the Death Which the Unbaptized (literally unregenerate) Suffer for the Confession of Christ.

For whatever unbaptized persons die confessing Christ, this confession is of the same efficacy for the remission of sins as if they were washed in the sacred font of baptism. For He who said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,” (John 3:5) made also an exception in their favor, in that other sentence where He no less absolutely said, “Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven;” (Matthew 10:32) and in another place, “Whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.” (Matthew 16:25) And this explains the verse, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” (Psalm 116:15) For what is more precious than a death by which a man’s sins are all forgiven, and his merits increased an hundredfold? For those who

have been baptized when they could no longer escape death, and have departed this life with all their sins blotted out have not equal merit with those who did not defer death, though it was in their power to do so, but preferred to end their life by confessing Christ, rather than by denying Him to secure an opportunity of baptism. And even had they denied Him under pressure of the fear of death, this too would have been forgiven them in that baptism, in which was remitted even the enormous wickedness of those who had slain Christ. But how abundant in these men must have been the grace of the Spirit, who breathes where He listeth, seeing that they so dearly loved Christ as to be unable to deny Him even in so sore an emergency, and with so sure a hope of pardon! Precious, therefore, is the death of the saints, to whom the grace of Christ has been applied with such gracious effects, that they do not hesitate to meet death themselves, if so be they might meet Him. And precious is it, also, because it has proved that what was originally ordained for the punishment of the sinner, has been used for the production of a richer harvest of righteousness. But not on this account should we look upon death as a good thing, for it is diverted to such useful purposes, not by any virtue of its own, but by the divine interference. Death was originally proposed as an object of dread, that sin might not be committed; now it must be undergone that sin may not be committed, or, if committed, be remitted, and the award of righteousness bestowed on him whose victory has earned it.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “For whatever unbaptized persons die confessing Christ, this confession is of the same efficacy for the remission of sins as if they were washed in the sacred font of baptism. For He who said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,” (John 3:5) made also an exception in their favor, in that other sentence where He no less absolutely said, “Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven;” (Matthew 10:32) and in another place, “Whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.” (Matthew 16:25)”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

And to **Matthew 10 (KJV):32** Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

And to **Matthew 16 (KJV):25** For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

We could add that the Scripture also says that whosoever believes will not perish in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

And the one who hears and believes has passed from death to life as in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Augustine agrees with the Scriptures here. He continues as he then says, “And this explains the verse, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” (Psalm 116:15)”

He refers to **Psalm 116 (KJV):15** Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

Augustine continues as he then asserts, “For what is more precious than a death by which a man’s sins are all forgiven, and his merits increased an hundredfold?”

But our sins are not forgiven by death, but by our faith in Jesus Christ. The Church did not understand this in Augustine's time.

Augustine then continues, as he argues, "For those who have been baptized when they could no longer escape death, and have departed this life with all their sins blotted out have not equal merit with those who did not defer death, though it was in their power to do so, but preferred to end their life by confessing Christ, rather than by denying Him to secure an opportunity of baptism."

We are saved by grace, and not by works as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

And we who have been saved by grace will all then be rewarded according to our works done in the body, whether good or bad.

Augustine here speaks of those who defer baptism until they are dying in order to insure their salvation, because of the danger of committing a mortal sin after baptism. This was a common practice in the time of Augustine. But he says that these "have not equal merit with those who did not defer death, though it was in their power to do so, but preferred to end their life by confessing Christ, rather than by denying Him to secure an opportunity of baptism."

In other words, the reward of the unbaptized who confessed Christ and had no time "to secure an opportunity of baptism" would exceed those who deferred baptism until they were about to die, because those who had no time "to secure an opportunity of baptism" would probably have been martyrs.

Augustine continues, and says, "And even had they denied Him under pressure of the fear of death, this too would have been forgiven them in that baptism, in which was remitted even the enormous wickedness of those who had slain Christ. But how abundant in these men must have been the grace of the Spirit, who breathes where He listeth, seeing that they so dearly loved Christ as to be unable to deny Him even in so sore an emergency, and with so sure a hope of pardon! Precious, therefore, is the death of the saints, to whom the grace of Christ has been applied with such gracious effects, that they do not hesitate to meet death themselves, if so be they might meet Him. And precious is it, also, because it has proved that what was originally ordained for the punishment of the sinner, has been used for the production of a richer harvest of righteousness. But not on this account should we look upon death as a good thing, for it is diverted to such useful purposes, not by any virtue of its own, but by the divine interference. Death was originally proposed as an object of dread, that sin might not be committed; now it must be undergone that sin may not be committed, or, if committed, be remitted, and the award of righteousness bestowed on him whose victory has earned it."

But the "righteousness of God" is put down to our account the moment we have truly believed in Jesus Christ. It is not earned by us at baptism or by martyrdom, though we will be rewarded for the good works we do after we have believed.

We continue to read in his next chapter.

Chapter 8.—That the Saints, by Suffering the First Death for the Truth's Sake, are Freed from the Second.

For if we look at the matter a little more carefully, we shall see that even when a man dies

faithfully and laudably for the truth's sake, it is still death he is avoiding. For he submits to some part of death, for the very purpose of avoiding the whole, and the second and eternal death over and above. (Revelation 2:11, 20:6, 20:14, 21:8) He submits to the separation of soul and body, lest the soul be separated both from God and from the body, and so the whole first death be completed, and the second death receive him everlastingly. Wherefore death is indeed, as I said, good to none while it is being actually suffered, and while it is subduing the dying to its power; but it is meritoriously endured for the sake of retaining or winning what *is* good. And regarding what happens after death, it is no absurdity to say that death is good to the good, and evil to the evil. For the disembodied spirits of the just are at rest; but those of the wicked suffer punishment till their bodies rise again,—those of the just to life everlasting, and of the others to death eternal, which is called the second death. (Revelation 2:11, 20:6, 20:14, 21:8)

**Commentary:** He mentions the second death here. He understood that death was the separation of the soul, or the spirit, from the body, for he considered the soul to be composed of spirit.

And the Scripture says in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):8** We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

At death we go to be present with the Lord, and we will come with Him to be resurrected when He comes again, as we read in **Jude 1 (KJV):14** And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

Augustine also understood that the wicked suffer eternal death, that is, the second death revealed in **Revelation 2 (KJV):11** He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

And in **Revelation 20 (KJV):6** Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

And in **Revelation 20 (KJV):14** And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

And in **Revelation 21 (KJV):8** But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

When one dies “faithfully and laudably for the truth's sake”, he avoids the second death, as Augustine has said.

Chapter 9.—Whether We Should Say that The Moment of Death, in Which Sensation Ceases, Occurs in the Experience of the Dying or in that of the Dead.

The point of time in which the souls of the good and evil are separated from the body, are we to say it is after death, or in death rather? If it is after death, then it is not death which is good or evil, since death is done with and past, but it is the life which the soul has now entered on. Death was an evil when it was present, that is to say, when it was being suffered by the dying; for to them it brought with it a severe and grievous experience, which the good make a good use of. But when death is past, how can that which no longer is be either good or evil? Still further, if we examine the matter more closely, we shall see that even that sore and



grievous pain which the dying experience is not death itself. For so long as they have any sensation, they are certainly still alive; and, if still alive, must rather be said to be in a state previous to death than in death. For when death actually comes, it robs us of all bodily sensation, which, while death is only approaching is painful. **And thus it is difficult to explain how we speak of those who are not yet dead, but are agonized in their last and mortal extremity, as being in the article of death. Yet what else can we call them than dying persons?** For when death which was imminent shall have actually come, we can no longer call them dying but dead. No one, therefore, is dying unless living; since even he who is in the last extremity of life, and, as we say, giving up the ghost, yet lives. **The same person is therefore at once dying and living, but drawing near to death, departing from life; yet in life, because his spirit yet abides in the body; not yet in death, because not yet has his spirit forsaken the body.** But if, when it has forsaken it, the man is not even then in death, but after death, who shall say when he is in death? On the one hand, no one can be called dying, if a man cannot be dying and living at the same time; and as long as the soul is in the body, we cannot deny that he is living. On the other hand, if the man who is approaching death be rather called dying, I know not who is living.

**Commentary:** Augustine's polemic is evident here again, as he begins and argues, **"The point of time in which the souls of the good and evil are separated from the body, are we to say it is after death, or in death rather? If it is after death, then it is not death which is good or evil, since death is done with and past, but it is the life which the soul has now entered on."**

To Augustine and the Church in his time, the soul was composed of spirit, so the words were interchangeable. So at one time it is the souls that are separated from the body, and in another time, it is the spirits of the dying that are separated from the body, which is at death of course.

But he does admit, **"And thus it is difficult to explain how we speak of those who are not yet dead, but are agonized in their last and mortal extremity, as being in the article of death. Yet what else can we call them than dying persons?"**

But all who are alive in Christ will got to be with the Lord after the death of our bodies.

## **The Resurrection of the Body**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God  
Book XXII, Chapter 4, page 481**

Chapter 4.—Against the Wise Men of the World, Who Fancy that the Earthly Bodies of Men Cannot Be Transferred to a Heavenly Habitation.

But men who use their learning and intellectual ability to resist the force of that great authority which, in fulfillment of what was so long before predicted, has converted all races of men to faith and hope in its promises, seem to themselves to argue acutely against the resurrection of the body while they cite what Cicero mentions in the third book *De Republica*. For when he was asserting the apotheosis of Hercules and Romulus, he says: "Whose bodies were not taken up into heaven; for nature would not permit a body of earth to



exist anywhere except upon earth.” This, forsooth, is the profound reasoning of the wise men, whose thoughts God knows that they are vain. **For if we were only souls, that is, spirits without any body, and if we dwelt in heaven and had no knowledge of earthly animals, and were told that we should be bound to earthly bodies by some wonderful bond of union, and should animate them, should we not much more vigorously refuse to believe this, and maintain that nature would not permit an incorporeal substance to be held by a corporeal bond? And yet the earth is full of living spirits, to which terrestrial bodies are bound, and with which they are in a wonderful way implicated. If, then, the same God who has created such beings wills this also, what is to hinder the earthly body from being raised to a heavenly body, since a spirit, which is more excellent than all bodies, and consequently than even a heavenly body, has been tied to an earthly body?** If so small an earthly particle has been able to hold in union with itself something better than a heavenly body, so as to receive sensation and life, will heaven disdain to receive, or at least to retain, this sentient and living particle, which derives its life and sensation from a substance more excellent than any heavenly body? If this does not happen now, it is because the time is not yet come which has been determined by Him who has already done a much more marvelous thing than that which these men refuse to believe. For why do we not more intensely wonder that incorporeal souls, which are of higher rank than heavenly bodies, are bound to earthly bodies, rather than that bodies, although earthly, are exalted to an abode which, though heavenly, is yet corporeal, except because we have been accustomed to see this, and indeed are this, while we are not as yet that other marvel, nor have as yet ever seen it? Certainly, if we consult sober reason, the more wonderful of the two divine works is found to be to attach somehow corporeal things to incorporeal, and not to connect earthly things with heavenly, which, though diverse, are yet both of them corporeal.

**Commentary:** Note that Augustine says, **“For if we were only souls, that is, spirits without any body...”**

Augustine thought that the soul was composed of spirit, so that they referred to the same thing.

But he argues successfully about the resurrection of the body as he says, **“For if we were only souls, that is, spirits without any body, and if we dwelt in heaven and had no knowledge of earthly animals, and were told that we should be bound to earthly bodies by some wonderful bond of union, and should animate them, should we not much more vigorously refuse to believe this, and maintain that nature would not permit an incorporeal substance to be held by a corporeal bond?”**

And we would have to answer, yes.

Yet he answers, **“And yet the earth is full of living spirits, to which terrestrial bodies are bound, and with which they are in a wonderful way implicated. If, then, the same God who has created such beings wills this also, what is to hinder the earthly body from being raised to a heavenly body, since a spirit, which is more excellent than all bodies, and consequently than even a heavenly body, has been tied to an earthly body?”**

Augustine believed in the resurrection of the body.

## The Nature of God and of Man

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3, On Continence, Paragraph 18, page 386

18. All we therefore, who believe in the Living and True God, Whose Nature, being in the highest sense good and incapable of change, neither doth any evil, nor suffers any evil, from Whom is every good, even that which admits of decrease, and Who admits not at all of decrease in His own Good, Which is Himself, when we hear the Apostle saying, "Walk in the Spirit, and perform ye not the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: For these are opposed one to another, that ye do not what ye would." (Galatians 5:16-17) Far be it from us to believe, what the madness of the Manichees believes, that there are here shown two natures or principles contrary one to another at strife, the one nature of good, the other of evil. Altogether these two are both good; both the Spirit is a good, and the flesh a good: and man, who is composed of both, one ruling, the other obeying, is assuredly a good, but a good capable of change, which yet could not be made save by a Good incapable of change, by Whom was created every good, whether small or great; but how small soever, yet made by What is Great; and how great soever, yet no way to be compared with the greatness of the Maker. **But in this nature of man, that is good, and well formed and ordered by One That is Good, there is now war, since there is not yet health. Let the sickness be healed, there is peace. But that sickness fault hath deserved, not nature hath had. And this fault indeed through the laver of regeneration the grace of God hath already remitted unto the faithful; but under the hands of the same Physician nature as yet striveth with its sickness.** But in such a conflict victory will be entire soundness; and that, soundness not for a time, but for ever: wherein not only this sickness is to come to an end, but also none to arise after it. Wherefore the just man addresseth his soul and saith, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His returns: Who becometh propitious to all thy iniquities, Who healeth all thy sicknesses." (Psalm 103:2-3) He becometh propitious to our iniquities, when He pardons sins: He heals sicknesses when He restrains evil desires. He becometh propitious unto iniquities by the grant of forgiveness: **He heals sicknesses, by the grant of continence. The one was done in Baptism to persons confessing; the other is done in the strife to persons contending; wherein through His help we are to overcome our disease. Even now the one is done, when we are heard, saying, "Forgive us our debts;" (Matthew 6:12-13) but the other, when we are heard, saying, "Lead us not into temptation. For every one is tempted," saith the Apostle James, "being drawn away and enticed by his own lust." (James 1:14) And against this fault there is sought the help of medicine from Him, Who can heal all such sicknesses, not by the removal of a nature that is alien from us, but in the renewal of our own nature. Whence also the above mentioned Apostle saith not, "Every one is tempted" by lust, but added, "by his own:" that he who hears this may understand, how he ought to cry, "I said, Lord, have mercy upon me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee." (Psalm 41:4) For it would not have needed healing, had it not corrupted itself by sinning, so that its own flesh should lust against it, that is, itself should be opposed to itself, on that side, wherein in the flesh it was made sick.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “All we therefore, who believe in the Living and True God, Whose Nature, being in the highest sense good and incapable of change, neither doth any evil, nor suffers any evil, from Whom is every good, even that which admits of decrease, and Who admits not at all of decrease in His own Good, Which is Himself, when we hear the Apostle saying, “Walk in the Spirit, and perform ye not the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: For these are opposed one to another, that ye do not what ye would.” (Galatians 5:16-17)”

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):**16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

He continues as he says, “Far be it from us to believe, what the madness of the Manichees believes, that there are here shown two natures or principles contrary one to another at strife, the one nature of good, the other of evil.”

He then argues against the Manichess, and says, “Altogether these two are both good; both the Spirit is a good, and the flesh a good: and man, who is composed of both, one ruling, the other obeying, is assuredly a good, but a good capable of change, which yet could not be made save by a Good incapable of change, by Whom was created every good, whether small or great; but how small soever, yet made by What is Great; and how great soever, yet no way to be compared with the greatness of the Maker. **But in this nature of man, that is good, and well formed and ordered by One That is Good, there is now war, since there is not yet health. Let the sickness be healed, there is peace. But that sickness fault hath deserved, not nature hath had. And this fault indeed through the laver of regeneration the grace of God hath already remitted unto the faithful; but under the hands of the same Physician nature as yet striveth with its sickness.**”

We get the impression here that Augustine is saying that the flesh is good, but has a “sickness”.

He then continues, “But in such a conflict victory will be entire soundness; and that, soundness not for a time, but for ever: wherein not only this sickness is to come to an end, but also none to arise after it. Wherefore the just man addresseth his soul and saith, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His returns: Who becometh propitious to all thy iniquities, Who healeth all thy sicknesses.” (Psalm 103:2-3)”

He refers to **Psalm 103 (KJV):**2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: 3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;

He then continues, and explains, “He becometh propitious to our iniquities, when He pardons sins: He heals sicknesses when He restrains evil desires. He becometh propitious unto iniquities by the grant of forgiveness: **He heals sicknesses, by the grant of continence. The one was done in Baptism to persons confessing; the other is done in the strife to persons contending; wherein through His help we are to overcome our disease.**”

So he is saying that our iniquities are forgiven at Baptism, and our disease of evil desires is healed as we contend **“wherein through His help we are to overcome our disease.”**

He continues, and explains further, “Even now the one is done, when we are heard, saying, “Forgive us our debts;” (Matthew 6:12-13) but the other, when we are heard, saying, “Lead us not into temptation. For every one is tempted,” saith the Apostle James, “being drawn

away and enticed by his own lust.” (James 1:14)”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

And in context to **James 1 (KJV):13** Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

So even now, according to Augustine, when we pray, “**Forgive us our debts**”, our iniquities are forgiven, and our disease of evil desires is healed as “**we are heard, saying, “Lead us not into temptation.”**”

He then asserts, “**And against this fault there is sought the help of medicine from Him, Who can heal all such sicknesses, not by the removal of a nature that is alien from us, but in the renewal of our own nature.**”

Augustine does not understand here that our flesh has a nature to sin, inherited from Adam. This is revealed in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

This nature to sin is in our flesh. Paul explains this in **Romans 7 (KJV):14** For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Where does sin dwell in me? Paul explains as we continue in **Romans 7 (KJV):18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

The law of sin is in my members, that is, in my flesh. Paul then continues, **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

With the flesh we serve the law of sin, which is in our members. But after we have been born again, God has given us victory over our flesh, so that obeying its lusts is not something we have to do. We now have a choice as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):11** But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

But, again, Augustine thought that God “can heal all such sicknesses, not by the removal of a nature that is alien from us, but in the renewal of our own nature.”

Augustine did not understand that we still have a nature to sin in our flesh that we inherited from Adam, nor did the Church in his time. When Adam sinned, his flesh became mortal, and the “law of sin” was then present in his flesh.

He continues as he then says, “Whence also the above mentioned Apostle saith not, “Every one is tempted” by lust, but added, “by his own:” that he who hears this may understand, how he ought to cry, “I said, Lord, have mercy upon me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.” (Psalm 41:4) For it would not have needed healing, had it not corrupted itself by sinning, so that its own flesh should lust against it, that is, itself should be opposed to itself, on that side, wherein in the flesh it was made sick.”

In Augustine’s thinking, the flesh is made sick by sinning, and is healed as we contend against it as we cry out, as in **Psalm 41 (KJV):4** I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.

So our own fleshly nature is renewed in this way, according to Augustine.

However, the Scriptures teach that we are delivered from this body of death in **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? **25** I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

It is through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now Paul then explains in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. **2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. **3** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: **4** That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Where is this “law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” that “hath made me free from the law of sin and death”? Jesus said whatever is born of the Spirit of God is spirit in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. **8** The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Being born of the Spirit of God, we have His life in our spirits. Not only so, but we also have a new divine nature in our spirit as a result of being born of the Spirit of God as Peter reveals in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

This is why we delight in the law of God after the inward man as Paul revealed in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

The inward man is our spirit. And the Spirit of God bears witness with our spirit in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Our soul is different from our spirit as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing



asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In our spirit we have consciousness of God. In our soul we have consciousness of this world. It is in our soul, which is composed of our mind, will, emotions, the center of which is our heart, and our conscience, where we must be sanctified. This happens as we present ourselves as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV)**:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Our minds are renewed as we read, hear, and study the word of God. As we walk in the light of the word of God, we are transformed or changed. Our souls are being cleansed of old ways of thinking, and of hurt feelings. Our conscience is being given right standards to judge by.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3, On Continence, Paragraph 22, page 388**

22. I say not, therefore, with what error, but with what utter madness, do the Manichees attribute our flesh to some, I know not what, fabled “race of darkness,” which they will have hath had its own nature without any beginning ever evil: whereas the true teacher exhorts men to love their own wives by the pattern of their own flesh, and exhorts them unto this very thing by the pattern also of Christ and the Church. Lastly, we must call to mind the whole place itself of the Epistle of the Apostle, relating greatly unto the matter in hand. “Husbands,” saith he, “love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, **cleansing it by the laver of the water in the word**: that He might set forth unto Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it may be holy and unspotted. So,” saith he, “husbands also ought to love their own wives, as their own bodies. Whoso loveth his own wife, loveth himself.” (Ephesians 5:25-28) Then he added, what we have already made mention of, “For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it, and cherisheth it; as also Christ the Church.” (Ephesians 5:29) What saith the madness of most impure impiety in answer to these things? What say ye in answer to these things, ye Manichees; ye who wish to bring in upon us, as if out of the Epistles of the Apostles, two natures without beginning, one of good, the other of evil: and will not listen to the Epistles of the Apostles, that they may correct you from that sacrilegious perverseness? As ye read, “The flesh lusteth against the spirit,” (Galatians 5:17) and, “There dwelleth not in my flesh any good;” (Romans 7:18) so read ye, “No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ the Church.” (Ephesians 5:29) As ye read, “I see another law in my members, opposed to the law of my mind;” (Romans 7:23) so read ye, “As Christ loved the Church, so also ought men to love their own wives, as their own bodies.” Be not ye crafty in the former witnesses of Holy Scripture, and deaf in this latter, and ye shall be correct in both. For, if ye receive the latter as right is, ye will endeavor to understand the former also as truth is.



**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “I say not, therefore, with what error, but with what utter madness, do the Manichees attribute our flesh to some, I know not what, fabled “race of darkness,” which they will have hath had its own nature without any beginning ever evil: whereas the true teacher exhorts men to love their own wives by the pattern of their own flesh, and exhorts them unto this very thing by the pattern also of Christ and the Church.”

Augustine does not deny original sin, but he will not have it that the flesh has a sinful nature. He was once a Manichee, and when he became a Christian, he renounced the error of the Manichees. However, in his zeal to defend the faith, he has exceeded what is written in the word of God. That man was created good, there can be no doubt for we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV):**26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. 29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. 30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. 31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. But when man sinned, he became dead in trespasses in sins as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

And man was by nature a child of “wrath”. Man died spiritually, and man dies physically as we read in **1 Corinthian 15 (KJV):**22 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

And in our bodies is the “law of sin”, as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):**25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Augustine then argues, “Lastly, we must call to mind the whole place itself of the Epistle of the Apostle, relating greatly unto the matter in hand. “Husbands,” saith he, “love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, **cleansing it by the laver of the water in the word:** that He might set forth unto Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it may be holy and unspotted. So,” saith he, “husbands also ought to love their own wives, as their own bodies. Whoso loveth his own wife, loveth himself.” (Ephesians 5:25-28) Then he added, what we have already made mention of, “For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it, and cherisheth it; as also Christ the Church.” (Ephesians 5:29)”

He refers to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):**25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved

the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

Augustine misquotes verse 26, as he says, “**cleansing it by the laver of the water in the word**”. This may seem trivial, but when we add words to Scripture we obscure the meaning of the original text. When this becomes a habit, we can go down rabbit trails in our doctrine.

Augustine then argues, “What saith the madness of most impure impiety in answer to these things? What say ye in answer to these things, ye Manichees; ye who wish to bring in upon us, as if out of the Epistles of the Apostles, two natures without beginning, one of good, the other of evil: and will not listen to the Epistles of the Apostles, that they may correct you from that sacrilegious perverseness? As ye read, “The flesh lusteth against the spirit,” (Galatians 5:17) and, “There dwelleth not in my flesh any good;” (Romans 7:18) so read ye, “No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ the Church.” (Ephesians 5:29) As ye read, “I see another law in my members, opposed to the law of my mind;” (Romans 7:23) so read ye, “As Christ loved the Church, so also ought men to love their own wives, as their own bodies.” Be not ye crafty in the former witnesses of Holy Scripture, and deaf in this latter, and ye shall be correct in both. For, if ye receive the latter as right is, ye will endeavor to understand the former also as truth is.”

It is true that no one ever hated his own flesh. And it is likewise true that we nourish and cherish it. And so Paul in Ephesians is explaining how men ought to love their wives as their own bodies. But let us read in context what Paul wrote before in **Ephesians 5 (KJV):22** Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word...

Paul is noting an analogy between Christ and the Church, and husbands and wives. And in verse 23 above he says that “Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body”. Why does the body need to be saved? The answer is because the body of Christ is composed of its members, which are the believers. And these members have sinful flesh. And although our redemption is accomplished in part in our spirits when we are born again, it will be completed with the redemption of our body as Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (KJV):22** For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

It is not that the Manichees are correct, but that, in Augustine’s zeal to defend the Church, he does not have a correct understanding of the fallen Adamic nature in our flesh according to the word of God.

According to the Scripture, man has a fallen nature because of Adam’s sin. When Adam sinned, he brought death on the human race as we read again in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):21** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

And death is not only physical but spiritual as we read before in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

So before we accepted Christ, we were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God had mercy on us as we continue in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Now Jesus explains to Nicodemus where this new birth took place in **John 3 (KJV):4** Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

This new birth of the Spirit takes place in our spirit, as He says in verse 6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Being born of the Holy Spirit we have a new nature, which Peter reveals in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):3** According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

When we were born again, we became partakers of the divine nature, having been born of the Spirit of God. This did not change our flesh. Our bodies are still doomed to die. This proves we still have the old Adamic sin nature in our flesh. Paul explains in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):49** And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Our bodies are yet to be redeemed as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):23** And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

So our bodies will be redeemed at the resurrection, but we are now the sons of God as the

apostle John reveals in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

When He shall appear we shall be like him. This will take place at the resurrection.

Augustine continues to argue against the Manichees as he then says, “As ye read, “The flesh lusteth against the spirit,” (Galatians 5:17) and, “There dwelleth not in my flesh any good;” (Romans 7:18) so read ye, “No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ the Church.” (Ephesians 5:29)

It is not that we hate our bodies. But Paul explains that there is another law in my members, as Augustine continues, and says, “As ye read, “I see another law in my members, opposed to the law of my mind;” (Romans 7:23) so read ye, “As Christ loved the Church, so also ought men to love their own wives, as their own bodies.”

We love our bodies and nourish and cherish them, but we also must understand that we are not what we shall be. Our bodies are doomed to die, being descendants of Adam. And Augustine does not quote the Scripture in context as we now read in **Romans 7 (KJV):17** Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

Paul specifically says that in his flesh dwelleth no good thing. We continue in **Romans 7 (KJV):20** Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Paul then calls it a “law in my members”. In other words, this is the way it works in my members. Paul then says it is “the body of this death” as we continue in **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

So this is not a sickness, but a nature in our flesh to sin.

We love ourselves, but we must understand that our bodies have not been redeemed yet. Knowing this, we put off the lusts of our flesh as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):22** That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Augustine then concludes, “Be not ye crafty in the former witnesses of Holy Scripture, and deaf in this latter, and ye shall be correct in both. For, if ye receive the latter as right is, ye will endeavor to understand the former also as truth is.”

The Manichees were clearly in error, coming from an Iranian false prophet, Mani. “Manichaeism taught an elaborate dualistic cosmology describing the struggle between a good, spiritual world of light, and an evil, material world of darkness. Through an ongoing process that takes place in human history, light is gradually removed from the world of matter and returned to the world of light, whence it came. Its beliefs were based on local Mesopotamian religious movements and Gnosticism.”

## Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings

### On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book 2, Chapter 11, page 48-49

Chapter 11 [IX.]—An Objection of the Pelagians: Why Does Not a Righteous Man Beget a Righteous Man?

In vain, then, do some of them argue: “If a sinner begets a sinner, so that the guilt of original sin must be done away in his infant son by his receiving baptism, in like manner ought a righteous man to beget a righteous son.” **Just as if a man begat children in the flesh by reason of his righteousness, and not because he is moved thereto by the concupiscence which is in his members, and the law of sin is applied by the law of his mind to the purpose of procreation. His begetting children, therefore, shows that he still retains the old nature among the children of this world; it does not arise from the fact of his promotion to newness of life among the children of God.** For “the children of this world beget and are begotten.” (Luke 20:34) Hence also what is born of them is like them; for “that which is born of the flesh is flesh.” (John 3:6) Only the children of God, however, are righteous; but in so far as they are the children of God, they do not carnally beget, because it is of the Spirit, and not of the flesh, that they are themselves begotten. But as many of them as become parents, beget children from the circumstance that they have not yet put off the entire remains of their old nature in exchange for the perfect renovation which awaits them. It follows, therefore, that every son who is born in this old and infirm condition of his father’s nature, must needs himself partake of the same old and infirm condition. In order, then, that he may be begotten again, he must also himself be renewed by the Spirit through the remission of sin; and if this change does not take place in him, his righteous father will be of no use to him. For it is by the Spirit that he is righteous, but it is not by the Spirit that he begat his son. On the other hand, if this change does accrue to him, he will not be damaged by an unrighteous father: for it is by the grace of the Spirit that he has passed into the hope of the eternal newness; whereas it is owing to his carnal mind that his father has wholly remained in the old nature.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he quotes the Pelagians, “In vain, then, do some of them argue: “If a sinner begets a sinner, so that the guilt of original sin must be done away in his infant son by his receiving baptism, in like manner ought a righteous man to beget a righteous son.”

Augustine continues as he then argues, **“Just as if a man begat children in the flesh by reason of his righteousness, and not because he is moved thereto by the concupiscence which is in his members, and the law of sin is applied by the law of his mind to the purpose of procreation.”**

To Augustine, the sole purpose of sex in marriage was for the purpose of procreation. Any sex without this in mind was thought to be sinful, but a venial sin and not a damnable one. But even though he allowed sex in marriage for the purpose of procreation, he still thought that it was the concupiscence which is in his members, and which he defines as strong sexual desire, or lust, that brought about the begetting of children.

So he then says, “His begetting children, therefore, shows that he still retains the old nature among the children of this world; it does not arise from the fact of his promotion to newness of life among the children of God.”

It is interesting that he here affirms that “the old nature among the children of this world” is retained. But as we saw in the previous section, he believed this to be purged with Baptism.

He then continues, “For “the children of this world beget and are begotten.” (Luke 20:34) Hence also what is born of them is like them; for “that which is born of the flesh is flesh.” (John 3:6)”

He refers to **Luke 20 (KJV):34** And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

And to **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

And Augustine then continues, “Only the children of God, however, are righteous; but in so far as they are the children of God, they do not carnally beget, because it is of the Spirit, and not of the flesh, that they are themselves begotten.”

Augustine is saying that the children of God do not carnally beget spiritual children, “because it is of the Spirit, and not of the flesh, that they are themselves begotten”.

He continues as he then asserts, “But as many of them as become parents, beget children from the circumstance that they have not yet put off the entire remains of their old nature in exchange for the perfect renovation which awaits them.”

So Augustine allowed sex in marriage for the procreation of children, but he still thought that even this procreation was “from the circumstance that they have not yet put off the entire remains of their old nature in exchange for the perfect renovation which awaits them,” which would be at the resurrection.

Augustine repented of his former promiscuous lifestyle, but it is apparent that this impacted his understanding of marriage.

He continues as he then says, “It follows, therefore, that every son who is born in this old and infirm condition of his father’s nature, must needs himself partake of the same old and infirm condition.”

And he is correct. Everyone born since Adam and Eve will “partake of the same old and infirm condition”.

He then explains, “In order, then, that he may be begotten again, he must also himself be renewed by the Spirit through the remission of sin; and if this change does not take place in him, his righteous father will be of no use to him. For it is by the Spirit that he is righteous, but it is not by the Spirit that he begat his son. On the other hand, if this change does accrue to him, he will not be damaged by an unrighteous father: for it is by the grace of the Spirit that he has passed into the hope of the eternal newness; whereas it is owing to his carnal mind that his father has wholly remained in the old nature.”

We can agree with Augustine here.

## The Sign of Baptism



Chapter 24.—32. *And if any one seek for divine authority in this matter, though what is held by the whole Church, and that not as instituted by Councils, but as a matter of invariable custom, is rightly held to have been handed down by apostolical authority, still we can form a true conjecture of the value of the sacrament of baptism in the case of infants, from the parallel of circumcision, which was received by God's earlier people, and before receiving which Abraham was justified, as Cornelius also was enriched with the gift of the Holy Spirit before he was baptized.* Yet the apostle says of Abraham himself, that "he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith," having already believed in his heart, so that "it was counted unto him for righteousness." (Romans 4:11) Why, therefore, was it commanded him that he should circumcise every male child in order on the eighth day, (Genesis 17:9-14) though it could not yet believe with the heart, that it should be counted unto it for righteousness, because the sacrament in itself was of great avail? And this was made manifest by the message of an angel in the case of Moses' son; for when he was carried by his mother, being yet uncircumcised, it was required, by manifest present peril, that he should be circumcised, (Exodus 4:24-26) and when this was done, the danger of death was removed. *As therefore in Abraham the justification of faith came first, and circumcision was added afterwards as the seal of faith; so in Cornelius the spiritual sanctification came first in the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the sacrament of regeneration was added afterwards in the laver of baptism.* And as in Isaac, who was circumcised on the eighth day after his birth, the seal of this righteousness of faith was given first, and afterwards, as he imitated the faith of his father, the righteousness itself followed as he grew up, of which the seal had been given before when he was an infant; so in infants, who are baptized, the sacrament of regeneration is given first, and if they maintain a Christian piety, conversion also in the heart will follow, of which the mysterious sign had gone before in the outward body. And as in the thief the gracious goodness of the Almighty supplied what had been wanting in the sacrament of baptism, because it had been missing not from pride or contempt, but from want of opportunity; so in infants who die baptized, we must believe that the same grace of the Almighty supplies the want, that, not from perversity of will, but from insufficiency of age, they can neither believe with the heart unto righteousness, nor make confession with the mouth unto salvation. Therefore, when others take the vows for them, that the celebration of the sacrament may be complete in their behalf, it is unquestionably of avail for their dedication to God, because they cannot answer for themselves. But if another were to answer for one who could answer for himself, it would not be of the same avail. In accordance with which rule, we find in the gospel what strikes every one as natural when he reads it, "He is of age, he shall speak for himself." (John 9:21)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, *"And if any one seek for divine authority in this matter, though what is held by the whole Church, and that not as instituted by Councils, but as a matter of invariable custom, is rightly held to have been handed down by apostolical authority, still we can form a true conjecture of the value of the sacrament of baptism in the case of infants, from the parallel of circumcision, which was received by God's earlier people, and before receiving which Abraham was justified, as Cornelius also was enriched with the gift of the Holy Spirit before he was baptized."*

Augustine seems to hold “invariable custom” as something that is “is rightly held to have been handed down by apostolical authority”.

He also calls baptism a “sacrament” when the word is not used in Scripture.

Augustine then continues, “Yet the apostle says of Abraham himself, that "he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith," having already believed in his heart, so that "it was counted unto him for righteousness." (Romans 4:11)”

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):11** And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

But “the sign of circumcision” was not what was “counted unto him for righteousness”, as Augustine seems to imply. It was his faith that was counted for righteousness, as we read in context in **Romans 4 (KJV):1** What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? **2** For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. **3** For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

In verse 3 we read that “Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness”.

We continue in **Romans 4 (KJV):4** Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. **5** But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

And in verse 5, we read that “his faith is counted for righteousness”. We continue in **Romans 4 (KJV):6** Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, **7** Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. **8** Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. **9** Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. **10** How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

Again in verse 9 we read that it was “faith” that “was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness”. And in verse 10 we see that Abraham had this faith when he was uncircumcised.

Paul is explaining the righteousness of faith on the circumcised and the uncircumcised. It was faith that was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness, as in verse 9 above. Paul proves that circumcision is only a sign as we continue in **Romans 4 (KJV):11** And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

The word “sign” in this verse is translation of the Greek word **σημεῖον** (pronounced sēmeion) meaning a sign, mark, indication, token. **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. IV, page 29.**

The word “seal” in the Greek is **σφραγίς** (pronounced sphragis), and means “a signet as fencing in or protecting from misappropriation); by implication, the stamp impressed (as a mark

of privacy, or genuineness), literally or figuratively; seal.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 4973.**

Circumcision was a sign, or a seal, confirming Abraham as one who had genuine faith, and therefore had obtained righteousness. It did not save Abraham. We continue to read in **Romans 4 (KJV):**12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. 13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Abraham obtained righteousness through faith, and not by the law of circumcision. Paul’s whole point is that the law of circumcision did not save anyone. It was only a token, a sign, or a seal showing to the world that Abraham had the righteousness of faith. We continue to read in **Romans 4 (KJV):**14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. 16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, 17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. 18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. 19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb: 20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

It was imputed to Abraham for righteousness because he was fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. Abraham believed God as in **Genesis 15 (KJV):**6 And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

And it is imputed to us also because of our believing “on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead”, in verse 24 above, and “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification,” in verse 25 above.

Circumcision was an outward sign to the world that Abraham believed God. Baptism is also an outward sign of an inward work of faith. We are baptized because we believe. We will talk more about what the Scripture says about baptism, but first, more from Augustine.

Now Augustine continues, “Why, therefore, was it commanded him that he should circumcise every male child in order on the eighth day, (Genesis 17:9-14) though it could not yet believe with the heart, that it should be counted unto it for righteousness, because the sacrament in itself was of great avail?”

Augustine makes a parallel between baptism and circumcision. And so circumcision is a sacrament also. But circumcision is a sign that you are a member of the covenant as we read in **Genesis 17 (KJV):**9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore,

thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. 10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. 11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. 12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. 13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

But Augustine continues, “And this was made manifest by the message of an angel in the case of Moses’ son; for when he was carried by his mother, being yet uncircumcised, it was required, by manifest present peril, that he should be circumcised, (Exodus 4:24-26) and when this was done, the danger of death was removed.”

He refers in context to **Exodus 4 (KJV)**: 19 And the Lord said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life. 20 And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the rod of God in his hand. 21 And the Lord said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go. 22 And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn: 23 And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn. 24 And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him. 25 Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me.

Zipporah was a Midianite, whom Moses met in Midian, and took to be his wife. In order to be a creditable voice to the Israelites, Moses’ son had to be circumcised, for all the Israelites were circumcised because of Abraham. This began as a token of the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 17:9-14 as we read above.

Augustine then continues, as he then asserts, “**As therefore in Abraham the justification of faith came first, and circumcision was added afterwards as the seal of faith; so in Cornelius the spiritual sanctification came first in the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the sacrament of regeneration was added afterwards in the laver of baptism.**”

Again, the word “sacrament” is also not found in the New Testament. Abraham was justified by faith, and it is by faith in Jesus Christ that we are born again. So justification comes after faith, and is a result of our being born again. So with the house of Cornelius, they believed Peter’s message as we read in **Acts 10 (KJV)**: 34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. 36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) 37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: 40 Him God raised up the third day,

and shewed him openly; 41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. 42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. 43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. 44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Speaking in tongues is an evidence of having been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Those in the house of Cornelius could not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit until they were born again. God was convicting Peter that the Gospel was for the Gentiles also. So when Peter preached the Gospel, those present believed and were born again. They also received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

But Augustine continues, “And as in Isaac, who was circumcised on the eighth day after his birth, the seal of this righteousness of faith was given first, and afterwards, as he imitated the faith of his father, the righteousness itself followed as he grew up, of which the seal had been given before when he was an infant; so in infants, who are baptized, the sacrament of regeneration is given first, and if they maintain a Christian piety, conversion also in the heart will follow, of which the mysterious sign had gone before in the outward body.”

Circumcision was only a token of the Abrahamic covenant. It did not regenerate Abraham or his sons. Likewise, baptism is only a token of the New Covenant. It does not regenerate or save us. It is only an outward sign of an inward work. In the case of infants who were circumcised, this occurred in a time when a nation of people was forming. This was according to God’s plan whereby a Messiah would be born of a specific genealogy.

But Augustine still continues, “And as in the thief the gracious goodness of the Almighty supplied what had been wanting in the sacrament of baptism, because it had been missing not from pride or contempt, but from want of opportunity;”

The thief on the cross had faith as evidenced by his calling Jesus, “Lord”, in **Luke 23 (KJV)**:42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

Augustine then continues, “so in infants who die baptized, we must believe that the same grace of the Almighty supplies the want, that, not from perversity of will, but from insufficiency of age, they can neither believe with the heart unto righteousness, nor make confession with the mouth unto salvation. Therefore, when others take the vows for them, that the celebration of the sacrament may be complete in their behalf, it is unquestionably of avail for their dedication to God, because they cannot answer for themselves. But if another were to answer for one who could answer for himself, it would not be of the same avail. In accordance with which rule, we find in the gospel what strikes every one as natural when he reads it, “He is of age, he shall speak for himself.” (John 9:21)”

He refers to **John 9 (KJV)**:21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself.



This Scripture refers to the blind man that Jesus healed, and speaks of the age of accountability. But there is only one mediator between God and men as we read in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

No one else can take the vows for us. We can dedicate our children to God, but our baptizing them does not regenerate them. But as we said before in the section, **Regeneration by Baptism**, there is good reason to believe that the Lord's mercy would intervene in the case of children, as he did in **Deuteronomy 1 (KJV):39** Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.

Just as the thief on the cross who was not baptized, but entered paradise with Jesus, so it will be with children who die before reaching the age of accountability.

In the beginning of this section he starts by saying, **“And if any one seek for divine authority in this matter, though what is held by the whole Church, and that not as instituted by Councils, but as a matter of invariable custom, is rightly held to have been handed down by apostolical authority...”** Why does he not mention the authority of the Scriptures when seeking for divine authority? It sounds like he is more dependent on **“what is held by the whole Church”**, and **“as a matter of invariable custom, is rightly held to have been handed down by apostolical authority”**, in his thinking about baptism rather than the authority of Scripture. This is just something to keep in mind as we progress.

In the next section he again mentions **“being washed by the sacred and divine laver”**, referring to the baptism of heretics, as we continue to read in his writings.

#### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 4, On Baptism, Against the Donatists, Book VI, Chapter 29, paragraphs 55-56, page 492-493**

Chapter 29.—55. Cassius of Macomades said: **“Since there cannot be two baptisms, he who grants baptism unto heretics takes it away from himself. I therefore declare my judgment that heretics, those objects for our tears, those masses of corruption, should be baptized when they begin to come to the Church, and that so being washed by the sacred and divine laver, and enlightened with the light of life, they may be received into the Church,—as being now made not enemies, but peaceful; not strangers, but of the household of the faith of the Lord; not bastards, but sons of God; partaking not of error, but of salvation,—with the exception of those who, being believers transplanted from the Church, had gone over to heresy, and that these should be restored by the laying on of hands.”**

**Commentary:** Cassius of Macomades wanted unbaptized heretics to be **“washed by the sacred and divine laver, and enlightened with the light of life”** so that they **“may be received into the Church”**. But believers who had gone over to heresy **“should be restored by the laying on of hands.”**

56. Another might say: Since there cannot be two baptisms, he who grants baptism to the unrighteous takes it away from himself. But even our opponents would join us in resisting such a man when he says that we grant baptism to the unrighteous, which is not of the unrighteous, like their unrighteousness, but of Christ, of whom is righteousness, and whose sacrament, even



among the unrighteous, is not unrighteous. What, therefore, they would join us in saying of the unrighteous, that let them say to themselves of heretics. And therefore he should rather have said as follows: **I therefore give my judgment that heretics, those objects for our tears, those masses of corruption, should not be baptized when they begin to come to the Church, if they already have the baptism of Christ, but should be corrected from their error.** For we may similarly say of the unrighteous, of whom the heretics are a part: **I therefore give my judgment that the unrighteous, those objects for our tears, and masses of corruption, if they have been already baptized, should not be baptized again when they begin to come to the Church, that is, to that rock outside which are all who hear the words of Christ and do them not; but being already washed with the sacred and divine laver, and now further enlightened with the light of truth, should be received into the Church no longer as enemies but as peaceful, for the unrighteous have no peace; no longer as strangers, but of the household of the faith of the Lord, for to the unrighteous it is said, "How then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?" (Jeremiah 2:21) no longer as bastards, but the sons of God, for the unrighteous are the sons of the devil, partaking not of error but of salvation, for unrighteousness cannot save.** And by the Church I mean that rock, that dove, that garden enclosed and fountain sealed, which is recognized only in the wheat, not in the chaff, whether that be scattered far apart by the wind, or appear to be mingled with the corn even till the last winnowing. **In vain, therefore, did Cassius add, "With the exception of those who, being believers transplanted from the Church, had gone over to heresy."** For if even they themselves had lost baptism by seceding, to themselves also let it be restored; but if they had not lost it, let what was given by them receive due recognition.

**Commentary:** Augustine then overrules Cassius of Macomades in paragraph 56, as he then says, "Another might say: Since there cannot be two baptisms, he who grants baptism to the unrighteous takes it away from himself. But even our opponents would join us in resisting such a man when he says that we grant baptism to the unrighteous, which is not of the unrighteous, like their unrighteousness, but of Christ, of whom is righteousness, and whose sacrament, even among the unrighteous, is not unrighteous."

So, according to Augustine, once someone is baptized, he is not unrighteous. Augustine then continues, "What, therefore, they would join us in saying of the unrighteous, that let them say to themselves of heretics. And therefore he should rather have said as follows: **I therefore give my judgment that heretics, those objects for our tears, those masses of corruption, should not be baptized when they begin to come to the Church, if they already have the baptism of Christ, but should be corrected from their error.**"

Augustine continues as he says, "For we may similarly say of the unrighteous, of whom the heretics are a part: **I therefore give my judgment that the unrighteous, those objects for our tears, and masses of corruption, if they have been already baptized, should not be baptized again when they begin to come to the Church, that is, to that rock outside which are all who hear the words of Christ and do them not;**"

So he says that outside of the Church, which is "that rock", are "all who hear the words of Christ and do them not;"

He then continues as he says, "**but being already washed with the sacred and divine laver, and now further enlightened with the light of truth, should be received into the Church no**

longer as enemies but as peaceful, for the unrighteous have no peace; no longer as strangers, but of the household of the faith of the Lord, for to the unrighteous it is said, "How then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?" (Jeremiah 2:21) no longer as bastards, but the sons of God, for the unrighteous are the sons of the devil, partaking not of error but of salvation, for unrighteousness cannot save."

He refers to **Jeremiah 2 (KJV):21** Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?

Israel had gone into apostasy. So they were unrighteous. So Augustine is saying that once you have been baptized, you are washed. And if one goes into error, after they have been "further enlightened with the light of truth", they "should be received into the Church no longer as enemies but as peaceful".

Augustine then continues, "And by the Church I mean that rock, that dove, that garden enclosed and fountain sealed, which is recognized only in the wheat, not in the chaff, whether that be scattered far apart by the wind, or appear to be mingled with the corn even till the last winnowing."

Augustine recognized the Church to be the wheat, and not the chaff. And the chaff might be "be scattered far apart by the wind, or appear to be mingled with the corn even till the last winnowing."

He refers to **Matthew 13 (KJV):24** Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Augustine thus concludes, "In vain, therefore, did Cassius add, "With the exception of those who, being believers transplanted from the Church, had gone over to heresy." For if even they themselves had lost baptism by seceding, to themselves also let it be restored; but if they had not lost it, let what was given by them receive due recognition. "

So he would correct the errors of those, be they heretics or believers, who had gone over to heresy and had fallen into error, by only the laying on of hands, and not rebaptism.

We now read of "the sanctification of the laver" as we continue to read of baptism in his writings. All of these references help us put together a real understanding of what he means by regeneration by baptism.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 4,  
On Baptism, Against the Donatists, Book VI, Chapter 33-34, paragraphs 63-66, page 494-495**

Chapter 33.—63. Another Felix of Uthina said: "No one can doubt, most holy brethren in the priesthood, that human presumption has not so much power as the adorable and venerable

majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ. Remembering then the danger, we ought not only to observe this ourselves, but to confirm it by our general consent, that all heretics who come to the bosom of our mother the Church be baptized, that the heretical mind, which has been polluted by long-continued corruption, “**may be reformed when cleansed by the sanctification of the laver.**”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Another Felix of Uthina said: “No one can doubt, most holy brethren in the priesthood, that human presumption has not so much power as the adorable and venerable majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ. Remembering then the danger, we ought not only to observe this ourselves, but to confirm it by our general consent, that all heretics who come to the bosom of our mother the Church be baptized, that the heretical mind, which has been polluted by long-continued corruption, “**may be reformed when cleansed by the sanctification of the laver.**”

Note that the priesthood was now firmly implanted in the ministry of the Church in the time of Augustine.

64. Perhaps the man who has placed the strength of his case for the baptizing of heretics in the cleansing away of the long-continued corruption, would spare those who, having fallen headlong into some heresy, had remained in it a brief space, and presently being corrected, had passed from thence to the Catholic Church. **Furthermore, he has himself failed to observe that it might be said that all unrighteous persons who come to that rock, in which is understood the Church, should be baptized, so that the unrighteous mind, which was building outside the rock upon the sand by hearing the words of Christ and not doing them, might be reformed when cleansed by the sanctification of the laver; and yet this is not done if they have been baptized already, even if it be proved that such was their character when they were baptized, that is, that they “renounced the world in words and not in deeds.”**

**Commentary:** Now in paragraph 64, Augustine does not advocate the rebaptism of heretics if they had already been “**cleansed by the sanctification of the laver**”, for he argues that not just heretics but “**all unrighteous persons who come to that rock, in which is understood the Church, should be baptized, so that the unrighteous mind, which was building outside the rock upon the sand by hearing the words of Christ and not doing them, might be reformed when cleansed by the sanctification of the laver;**”

And he then concludes, “**and yet this is not done if they have been baptized already, even if it be proved that such was their character when they were baptized, that is, that they “renounced the world in words and not in deeds.”**”

Chapter 34.—65. Quietus of Burug said: “We who live by faith ought with believing observance to obey what has been before foretold for our instruction. For it is written in Solomon, ‘He that is washed by one dead, what availeth his washing?’ (Ecclesiasticus 34:25) Which assuredly he says of those who are washed by heretics, and of those who wash. **For if they who are baptized among them receive eternal life through the remission of their sins, why do they come to the Church? But if no salvation is received from a dead person, and they therefore, acknowledging their former error, return with penance to the truth, they ought to be sanctified with the one life**

giving baptism which is in the Catholic Church."

**Commentary:** Here Augustine quotes one Quietus who is advocating for rebaptism if the first baptism was administered by heretics.

He refers to the apocryphal book, **Ecclesiasticus 34 (KJV):25** He that washeth himself after the touching of a dead body, if he touch it again, what availeth his washing?

However, he misquotes the verse. The verse is not about baptism, but about one of the laws of cleanliness. Augustine then comments in the next paragraph.

Chapter 34.—66. What it is to be baptized by the dead, we have already, without prejudice to the more careful consideration of the same Scripture, sufficiently declared before. But I would ask why it is that they wish heretics alone to be considered dead, when Paul the apostle has said generally of sin, "The wages of sin is death;" (Romans 6:23) and again, "To be carnally minded is death." (Romans 8:6) And when he says that a widow that liveth in pleasure is dead, (1 Timothy 5:6) how are they not dead "who renounce the world in words and not in deeds"? What, therefore, is the profit of washing in him who is baptized by them, except, indeed, that if he himself also is of the same character, he has the laver indeed, but it does not profit him to salvation? But if he by whom he is baptized is such, but the man who is baptized is turned to the Lord with no false heart, he is not baptized by that dead person, but by that living One of whom it is said, "The same is He which baptizeth." (John 1:33) **But to what he says of heretics, that if they who are baptized among them receive eternal life through the remission of their sins, why do they come to the Church? We answer: They come for this reason, that although they have received the baptism of Christ up to the point of the celebration of the sacrament, yet they cannot attain to life eternal save through the charity of unity; just as neither would those envious and malicious ones attain to life eternal, who would not have their sins forgiven them, even if they entertained hatred only against those from whom they suffered wrong; since the Truth said, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," (Matthew 6:15) how much less when they were hating those towards whom they were rewarding evil for good? (Psalm 35:12) And yet these men, though "renouncing the world in words and not in deeds," would not be baptized again, if they should afterwards be corrected, but they would be made holy by the one living baptism. And this is indeed in the Catholic Church, but not in it alone, as neither is it in the saints alone who are built upon the rock, and of whom that one dove is composed. (Canticles 6:9)**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "What it is to be baptized by the dead, we have already, without prejudice to the more careful consideration of the same Scripture, sufficiently declared before. But I would ask why it is that they wish heretics alone to be considered dead, when Paul the apostle has said generally of sin, "The wages of sin is death;" (Romans 6:23) and again, "To be carnally minded is death." (Romans 8:6) And when he says that a widow that liveth in pleasure is dead, (1 Timothy 5:6) how are they not dead "who renounce the world in words and not in deeds"?

He refers to **Romans 6 (KJV):23** For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And to **Romans 8 (KJV):6** For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

And in context to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):5** Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. 6 But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

It is interesting that he did not mention **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

Before accepting Christ we are dead in our trespasses and sins.

Augustine them comments, "What, therefore, is the profit of washing in him who is baptized by them, except, indeed, that if he himself also is of the same character, he has the laver indeed, but it does not profit him to salvation? But if he by whom he is baptized is such, but the man who is baptized is turned to the Lord with no false heart, he is not baptized by that dead person, but by that living One of whom it is said, "The same is He which baptizeth." (John 1:33)

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):33** And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

But this verse refers to the Baptism with the Holy Spirit which happens after one is born again. But Augustine makes a good point. If the "the man who is baptized is turned to the Lord with no false heart, he is not baptized by that dead person, but by that living One of whom it is said, "The same is He which baptizeth." (John 1:33)."

In other words, the one who is baptized had believed in his heart that Jesus Christ is Lord. So he was born again. So Augustine believed the baptism to be valid, even though performed by an unbeliever. He does not understand that it is by the faith of the man who was baptized that he was born again, and not by the baptism itself.

Augustine continues as he then asserts, "But to what he says of heretics, that if they who are baptized among them receive eternal life through the remission of their sins, why do they come to the Church? We answer: They come for this reason, that although they have received the baptism of Christ up to the point of the celebration of the sacrament, yet they cannot attain to life eternal save through the charity of unity;"

Augustine here makes it a requirement to belong to the Catholic Church, or at least join it "through the charity of unity", in order to "attain to life eternal". He does not understand the doctrine of Baptisms. When we believe in Jesus Christ, and we are born again, we are sovereignly baptized into the body of Christ as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

And we were set in a particular place in the body by the Lord as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

And the Church is the body of Christ, as we read in **Colossians 1 (KJV):24** Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:



Eternal life is given to all who believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God as John reveals in **1 John 5 (KJV)**:12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Our salvation is not dependent on a church, or on baptism, or anyone for that matter, but on Jesus Christ.

Augustine then continues, “just as neither would those envious and malicious ones attain to life eternal, who would not have their sins forgiven them, even if they entertained hatred only against those from whom they suffered wrong; since the Truth said, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," (Matthew 6:15) how much less when they were hating those towards whom they were rewarding evil for good? (Psalm 35:12)”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV)**:15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

And to **Psalm 35 (KJV)**:12 They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul.

We don't attain to eternal life by our good deeds. We receive eternal life when we believe in Jesus Christ. But our fellowship with the Lord will depend on our walking in the light. Once we know what to do, and we do not do it, then we will have to confess our sin in order to be forgiven. And that may include forgiving others who have trespassed against us. But we do not lose our salvation once we have made a genuine surrender to the Lord in faith, and we have been born again. After we are born again, we have a standing with the Lord as sons and daughters. We do not have to be born again, again, if we sin. We just need to confess our sins to maintain our fellowship with the Lord. And He will discipline us as a good father would.

Now Augustine seems to be against rebaptism of any sort, as he concludes, “And yet these men, though "renouncing the world in words and not in deeds," would not be baptized again, if they should afterwards be corrected, but they would be made holy by the one living baptism. And this is indeed in the Catholic Church, but not in it alone, as neither is it in the saints alone who are built upon the rock, and of whom that one dove is composed.”

He still misses what being baptized in water really means. We will get to this shortly.

#### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 4,**

#### **In Answer to the Letters of Petilian, the Donatist, Book I, Chapter 1, paragraph 1-2, page 519-520**

The Three Books of Augustin, Bishop of Hippo in answer to The Letters of Petilian, the Donatist, Bishop of circa.

Written c. 400 A.D., some say 398 A.D., but Augustin places it some time after the treatise on Baptism: *Retract.* Bk. ii. xxv. From the same, we gather the following points as to the origin of this treatise: Before A. had finished his books on the Trinity and his word for word commentary on Genesis, a reply to a letter which Petilian had addressed to his followers, only a small part of which however had come into A.'s hands, demanded immediate preparation. This constitutes Book First. Subsequently the whole document was obtained, and he was engaged in preparing the second Book, c. 401; but even before the full treatise of Petilian had been secured, the latter had obtained A.'s first book, and afterwards put an epistle abusive of A. in circulation.



The answer to this latter is Book Third, c. 402. Petilian was originally an advocate. The opponents charged him with having become a Donatist by compulsion, with assuming the title of Paraclete, and with endeavoring to prevent all access on their part to his writings.

## Book I.

Written in the form of a letter addressed to the Catholics, in which the first portion of the letter which Petilian had written to his adherents is examined and refuted.

Augustin, to the well-beloved brethren that belong to the care of our charge, greeting in the Lord:

Chapter 1.—1. Ye know that we have often wished to bring forward into open notoriety, and to confute, not so much from our own arguments as from theirs, the sacrilegious error of the Donatist heretics; whence it came to pass that we wrote letters even to some of their leaders,—not indeed for purposes of communion with them, for of that they had already in times past rendered themselves unworthy by dissenting from the Church; nor yet in terms of reproach, but of a conciliatory character, with the view that, having discussed the question with us which caused them to break off from **the holy communion of the whole world**, they might, on consideration of the truth, be willing to be corrected, and might not defend the headstrong perversity of their predecessors with a yet more foolish obstinacy, but might be reunited to the **Catholic stock**, so as to bring forth the fruits of charity. But as it is written, "With those who have hated peace I am more peaceful," (Psalm 120:7) so they rejected my letters, just as they hate the very name of peace, in whose interests they were written. Now, however, as I was in the church of Constantina, Absentius being present, with my colleague Fortunatus, his bishop, the brethren brought before my notice a letter, which they said that a bishop of the said schism had addressed to his presbyters, as was set forth in the superscription of the letter itself. When I had read it, I was so amazed to find that in his very first words he cut away the very roots of the whole claims of his party to communion, that I was unwilling to believe that it could be the letter of a man who, if fame speaks truly, is especially conspicuous among them for learning and eloquence. But some of those who were present when I read it, being acquainted with the polish and embellishment of his composition, gradually persuaded me that it was undoubtedly his address. I thought, however, that whoever the author might be, it required refutation, lest the writer should seem to himself, in the company of the inexperienced, to have written something of weight against the **Catholic Church**.

2. **The first point, then, that he lays down in his letter is the statement, "that we find fault with them for the repetition of baptism, while we ourselves pollute our souls with a laver stained with guilt."** But to what profit is it that I should reproduce all his insulting terms? For, since it is one thing to strengthen proofs, another thing to meddle with abusive words by way of refutation, let us rather turn our attention to the mode in which he has sought to prove that we do not possess baptism, and that therefore they do not require the repetition of what was already present, but confer what hitherto was wanting. For he says: "What we look for is the conscience of the giver to cleanse that of the recipient." But supposing the conscience of the giver is concealed from view, and perhaps defiled with sin, how will it be able to cleanse the conscience of the recipient, if, as he says, "what we look for is the conscience of the giver to cleanse that of the recipient?" For if he should say that it makes no matter to the recipient what amount of evil

may lie concealed from view in the conscience of the giver, perhaps that ignorance may have such a degree of efficacy as this, that a man cannot be defiled by the guilt of the conscience of him from whom he receives baptism, so long as he is unaware of it. Let it then be granted that the guilty conscience of his neighbor cannot defile a man so long as he is unaware of it, but is it therefore clear that it can further cleanse him from his own guilt?

**Commentary:** To be a part of the Catholic Church in Augustine's time was to be a part of "the holy communion of the whole world". Augustine esteemed the Church to be ruling with Christ in the millennium. To be a part of the Catholic Church was to be united to the "Catholic Stock".

In the following section he recognizes baptism in other Episcopal Sees, that is, which are outside of the Catholic Sees. A See is a church where a throne of the bishop resides. Sees outside of the Catholic Sees could still be recognized as valid if they could trace their lineage back to an apostle.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 4,  
In Answer to the Letters of Petilian, the Donatist, Book I, Chapter 11, paragraph 12, page 523-524**

Chapter 11.—12. Of these I would ask, whether by coming to their see they were restored to life, or whether they are still dead there? For if still they are none the less corpses, then the laver cannot in any way profit those who are baptized by such dead men. But if they have been restored to life, yet how can the laver profit those whom they baptized before outside, while they were lying without life, if the passage, "He who is baptized by the dead, of what profit is his baptism to him," is to be understood in the way in which they think? For those whom Prætextatus and Felicianus baptized while they were yet in communion with Maximianus are now retained among them, sharing in their communion, without being again baptized, together with the same men who baptized them—I mean Felicianus and Prætextatus: taking occasion by which fact, if it were not that they cherish the beginning of their own obstinacy, instead of considering the certain end of their spiritual salvation, they would certainly be bound to vigilance, and ought to recover the soundness of their senses, so as to breathe again in Catholic peace; if only, laying aside the swelling of their pride, and overcoming the madness of their stubbornness, they would take heed and see what monstrous sacrilege it is to curse the baptism of the foreign churches, which we have learned from the sacred books were planted in primitive times, and to receive the baptism of the followers of Maximianus, whom they have condemned with their own lips.

**Commentary:** Keep the names Prætextatus and Felicianus, and Maximianus in mind. They were leaders in the Donatist movement which believed in the rebaptism of the lapsed. Augustine calls them out as he says, "For those whom Prætextatus and Felicianus baptized while they were yet in communion with Maximianus are now retained among them, sharing in their communion, without being again baptized, together with the same men who baptized them—I mean Felicianus and Prætextatus."

Maximianus started a breakaway movement from the Donatists, and Felicianus and

Prætextatus joined him, and baptized converts under him. But apparently Felicianus and Prætextatus returned to the Donatists and were not rebaptized. Their converts who returned with them were also not rebaptized.

In the next section Augustine recognizes any baptism given “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 4,**

**In Answer to the Letters of Petilian, the Donatist, Book II, Chapter 2, paragraph 4-5, page 530**

Chapter 2.—4. Petilianus said: "Those who have polluted their souls with a guilty laver, under the name of baptism, reproach us with baptizing twice,—than whose obscenity, indeed, any kind of filth is more cleanly, seeing that through a perversion of cleanliness they have come to be made fouler by their washing."

5. Augustin answered: We are neither made fouler by our washing, nor cleaner by yours. But when the water of baptism is given to any one in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, it is neither ours nor yours, but His of whom it was said to John, "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." (John 1:33)

**Commentary:** Augustine here confuses the baptism with the Holy Ghost with water baptism. This is made more clear when we read John the Baptist’s words in **Matthew 3 (KJV):11** I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

John the Baptist baptized with water unto repentance. But John’s baptism was only pointing to the one who was to come after him as Paul reveals in **Acts 19 (KJV):1** And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

Water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus is what is valid in the New Testament now that Jesus has come. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is a different baptism from water baptism. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is an empowering of the Holy Spirit for gifts of the Spirit and for ministry, for when Paul laid hands on them after they were baptized, the Holy Spirit came on them and “they spake with tongues, and prophesied”, in verse 6 above.

Augustine did not understand that baptism does not save us, and that there was more than one baptism mentioned in the Scriptures.

In the next section we will read of Prætextatus and Felicianus, and Maximianus. In **Wikipedia** it explains the following:

“Felicianus of Musti (also known as Felician or Felixianus) was a bishop of Musti in Numidia, Roman North Africa, involved in the Donatist controversy of the 4th century. He is known to history through the writings of Augustine of Hippo Regius.

Felicianus was a member of the Donatists, an excommunicated movement which was critical of the Roman Catholic Church following the effects of the edict of Milan, when Christianity was becoming closely aligned with the Roman government. Felicianus joined and became a leader within a breakaway group of Donatists called the Maximianists, who took a more puritanic line than the Donatists.

According to some Catholic sources, the Donatists tried unsuccessfully to remove Felicianus from his see, and then used the imperial law courts to compel him to return. Whether this is true or Felicianus was just uncomfortable with the extremism of Maximianist theology is unknown, but Felicianus and another Maximianist leader, Praetextatus of Assur, did return to the Donatist party with their respective congregations. None were rebaptised, which was claimed by their opponents as hypocrisy.

Rebaptism of the lapsed was a core belief of the Donatists. Augustine wrote a strenuous condemnation of Felicianus of Musti in one of his letters and singled out Felicianus as an example of inconsistency in the Donatist movement. The return of Felicianus was a pivotal moment in the demise of the Maximianist movement and the return of many congregations to the Donatists. It was also one of three components to Augustine's attack on the Donatists.” See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felicianus\\_of\\_Musti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Felicianus_of_Musti)

Augustine recognizes “**the sacrament of the holy laver**” in the following section.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 4,  
In Answer to the Letters of Petilian, the Donatist, Book III, Chapter 40, paragraph 46,  
page 615-616**

Chapter 40.—46. For if the baptism which Prætextatus and Felicianus administered in the communion of Maximianus was their own, why was it received by you in those whom they baptized as though it were the baptism of Christ? But if it is truly the baptism of Christ, as indeed it is, and yet could not profit those who had received it with the guilt of schism, what do you say that you could have granted to those whom you have received into your body with the same baptism, except that, now that the offense of their accursed division is wiped out by the bond of peace, they should not be compelled to receive **the sacrament of the holy laver** as though they had it not, but that, as what they had was before for their destruction, so it should now begin to be of profit to them? Or if this is not granted to them in your communion, because it could not possibly be that it should be granted to schismatics among schismatics, it is at any rate granted to you in the Catholic communion, not that you should receive baptism as though it were lacking in you, but that the baptism which you have actually received should be of profit to you. **For all the sacraments of Christ, if not combined with the love which belongs to the unity of Christ, are possessed not unto salvation, but unto judgment.** But since it is not a true verdict, but your verdict, "that through the baptism of certain *traditors* the baptism of Christ has

perished from the world in general," it is with good reason that you cannot find any answer to make respecting the recognition of the baptism of the followers of Maximianus.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "For if the baptism which Prætextatus and Felicianus administered in the communion of Maximianus was their own, why was it received by you in those whom they baptized as though it were the baptism of Christ?"

Augustine chides the Donatists for not rebaptizing those who were baptized "in the communion of Maximianus".

He continues, "But if it is truly the baptism of Christ, as indeed it is, and yet could not profit those who had received it with the guilt of schism, what do you say that you could have granted to those whom you have received into your body with the same baptism, except that, now that the offense of their accursed division is wiped out by the bond of peace, they should not be compelled to receive **the sacrament of the holy laver** as though they had it not, but that, as what they had was before for their destruction, so it should now begin to be of profit to them?"

Augustine argues with the Donatists as to why they count the baptism received by those in schism as of profit to them. Why, he asks, don't they rebaptize them?

Augustine continues as he then argues, "Or if this is not granted to them in your communion, because it could not possibly be that it should be granted to schismatics among schismatics, it is at any rate granted to you in the Catholic communion, not that you should receive baptism as though it were lacking in you, but that the baptism which you have actually received should be of profit to you."

Here Augustine is saying that the baptism that the schismatics have received is valid within the Catholic communion, but outside the communion it is not valid. So they who are outside the Catholic communion do not have to be rebaptized when they join the Catholic communion.

Augustine then concludes, "**For all the sacraments of Christ, if not combined with the love which belongs to the unity of Christ, are possessed not unto salvation, but unto judgment.** But since it is not a true verdict, but your verdict, "that through the baptism of certain *traditors* the baptism of Christ has perished from the world in general," it is with good reason that you cannot find any answer to make respecting the recognition of the baptism of the followers of Maximianus."

The word "*traditors*" is Latin for traitors.

## Summary

The gist of Augustine's thinking on baptism is that he thought baptism, just like circumcision, was a sacrament. Merriam-Webster says that the word "sacrament" is "a Christian rite (such as baptism or the Eucharist) that is believed to have been ordained by Christ and that is held to be a means of divine grace or to be a sign or symbol of a spiritual reality".

Augustine also thought circumcision to be a sacrament. As proof of this, he mentions the "case of Moses' son" in **Exodus 4 (KJV):24** And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that



the Lord met him, and sought to kill him. 25 Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. 26 So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.

He does this to show the “manifest present peril, that he should be circumcised”, and “when this was done, the danger of death was removed”. And so the “sacrament” of “circumcision” is of the utmost importance. And so Augustine says, as we read before, “Yet the apostle says of Abraham himself, that “he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith,” having already believed in his heart, so that “it was counted unto him for righteousness.” (Romans 4:11) Why, therefore, was it commanded him that he should circumcise every male child in order on the eighth day, (Genesis 17:9-14) though it could not yet believe with the heart, that it should be counted unto it for righteousness, because the sacrament in itself was of great avail?”

Augustine makes it sound as if “the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith”, was all important. Believing in one’s heart counts, but if one is not sealed by circumcision, there is a “danger of death”. And so now, in order for you to have the “seal of the righteousness of the faith”, you have to be baptized in order to have that counted for righteousness. Augustine is relying on “**invariable custom**”, which “**is rightly held to have been handed down by apostolical authority**”, that is “**held by the whole Church**”. In Augustine’s thinking, this invariable custom had been held for almost 400 years, and so it was inviolate.

He did not see that baptism was only a token to show that one had believed, and was born again, and had joined the fellowship of believers.

He used terms such as “**the sacrament of the holy laver**”, “**being washed by the sacred and divine laver**”, and “**the one life giving baptism which is in the Catholic Church**”. The emphasis on ritual in the Church is evident at this time. The Church did not understand that it is faith that the Lord gives, which, when it is received, He gives birth to the spirit of the one who has this faith, and He justifies them, and puts His righteousness down to their account. The ritual is only a sign that this has happened in the one who has believed.

## **Infant Baptism**

**A Treatise on the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, and on the Baptism of Infants  
by Aurelius Augustin, Bishop of Hippo;  
In Three Books, Addressed to Marcellinus, a.d. 412.**

### **Book I.**

In which he refutes those who maintain, that Adam must have died even if he had never sinned; and that nothing of his sin has been transmitted to his posterity by natural descent. He also shows, that death has not accrued to man by any necessity of his nature, but as the penalty of sin; He then proceeds to prove that in Adam’s sin his entire offspring is implicated, showing that infants are baptized for the express purpose of receiving the remission of original sin.

<https://ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf105/npnf105.x.iii.html>

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings**

## On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book 1, Chapter 38, page 29-30

### Chapter 38.—What “Lighteth” Means.

But why, after saying, “which lighteth every man,” should he add, “that cometh into the world,” (John 1:9)—the clause which has suggested the opinion that He enlightens the minds of newly-born babes while the birth of their bodies from their mother’s womb is still a recent thing? The words, no doubt, are so placed in the Greek, that they may be understood to express that the light itself “cometh into the world.” If, nevertheless, the clause must be taken as expressing the man who cometh into this world, I suppose that it is either a simple phrase, like many others one finds in the Scriptures, which may be removed without impairing the general sense; or else, if it is to be regarded as a distinctive addition, it was perhaps inserted in order to distinguish spiritual illumination from that bodily one which enlightens the eyes of the flesh either by means of the luminaries of the sky, or by the lights of ordinary fire. So that he mentioned the inner man as coming into the world, because the outward man is of a corporeal nature, just as this world itself; as if he said, “Which lighteth every man that cometh into the body,” in accordance with that which is written: “I obtained a good spirit, and I came in a body undefiled.” (Wisdom 8:19-20) Or again, the passage, “Which lighteth every one that cometh into the world,”—if it was added for the sake of expressing some distinction,—might perhaps mean: Which lighteth every inner man, because the inner man, when he becomes truly wise, is enlightened only by Him who is the true Light. Or, once more, if the intention was to designate reason herself, which causes the human soul to be called rational (and this reason, although as yet quiet and as it were asleep, for all that lies hidden in infants, innate and, so to speak, implanted), by the term *illumination*, as if it were the creation of an inner eye, then it cannot be denied that it is made when the soul is created; and there is no absurdity in supposing this to take place when the human being comes into the world. But yet, although his eye is now created, he himself must needs remain in darkness, if he does not believe in Him who said: “I am come a Light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.” (John 12:46) And that this takes place in the case of infants, through the sacrament of baptism, is not doubted by mother Church, which uses for them the heart and mouth of a mother, that they may be imbued with the sacred mysteries, seeing that they cannot as yet with their own heart “believe unto righteousness,” nor with their own mouth make “confession unto salvation.” (Romans 10:10) There is not indeed a man among the faithful, who would hesitate to call such infants *believers* merely from the circumstance that such a designation is derived from the act of believing; for although incapable of such an act themselves, yet others are sponsors for them in the sacraments.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But why, after saying, “which lighteth every man,” should he add, “that cometh into the world,” (John 1:9)—the clause which has suggested the opinion that He enlightens the minds of newly-born babes while the birth of their bodies from their mother’s womb is still a recent thing? The words, no doubt, are so placed in the Greek, that they may be understood to express that the light itself “cometh into the world.” If, nevertheless, the clause must be taken as expressing the man who cometh into this world, I suppose that it is either a simple phrase, like many others one finds in the Scriptures, which may

be removed without impairing the general sense; or else, if it is to be regarded as a distinctive addition, it was perhaps inserted in order to distinguish spiritual illumination from that bodily one which enlightens the eyes of the flesh either by means of the luminaries of the sky, or by the lights of ordinary fire.”

The words in John 1:9 in the Greek are in the order below:

Ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον  
That was the light the true the one which lights every man that comes into the world

So his conclusion, “the clause must be taken as expressing the man who cometh into this world” is correct, though he himself does not seem to accept it. But he also concludes correctly, that the clause is there “to distinguish spiritual illumination from that bodily one which enlightens the eyes of the flesh either by means of the luminaries of the sky, or by the lights of ordinary fire.”

Augustine then continues and says, “So that he mentioned the inner man as coming into the world, because the outward man is of a corporeal nature, just as this world itself;”

He means the inner man of the spirit. This would correspond to the life mentioned in verse 4, as in **John 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

He then continues, “as if he said, “Which lighteth every man that cometh into the body,” in accordance with that which is written: “I obtained a good spirit, and I came in a body undefiled.” (Wisdom 8:19-20)”

He refers to **Wisdom 8 (KJV):19** For I was a witty child, and had a good spirit. 20 Yea rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled.

He continues, “Or again, the passage, “Which lighteth every one that cometh into the world,”—if it was added for the sake of expressing some distinction,—might perhaps mean: Which lighteth every inner man, because the inner man, when he becomes truly wise, is enlightened only by Him who is the true Light.”

He refers in context to **John 1 (KJV):5** And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Augustine is correct. He, Jesus, lights the inner man of the spirit when He is received by faith. This is what we read in **Proverbs 20 (KJV):27** The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

Augustine then continues his polemic, “Or, once more, if the intention was to designate reason herself, which causes the human soul to be called rational (and this reason, although as

yet quiet and as it were asleep, for all that lies hidden in infants, innate and, so to speak, implanted), by the term *illumination*, as if it were the creation of an inner eye, then it cannot be denied that it is made when the soul is created; and there is no absurdity in supposing this to take place when the human being comes into the world.”

And this is just as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):7** And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

The word “breath” in Hebrew is נֶשְׁמָה (pronounced n<sup>o</sup>shâmâh, nesh-aw-maw’); from H5395; a puff, i.e. wind, angry or vital breath, divine inspiration, intellect. or (concretely) an animal:—blast, (that) breath(-eth), inspiration, soul, spirit.

When the breath of life, or spirit, is united with the body, it becomes a “living soul”.

Augustine then continues, “But yet, although his eye is now created, he himself must needs remain in darkness, if he does not believe in Him who said: “I am come a Light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.” (John 12:46)”

He refers correctly to **John 12 (KJV):46** I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

He then continues, “And that this takes place in the case of infants, through the sacrament of baptism, is not doubted by mother Church, which uses for them the heart and mouth of a mother, that they may be imbued with the sacred mysteries, seeing that they cannot as yet with their own heart “believe unto righteousness,” nor with their own mouth make “confession unto salvation.” (Romans 10:10)”

He refers here to **Romans 10 (KJV):10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Is the Church our mother, “which uses for them the heart and mouth of a mother”? His misunderstanding of baptism is causing him to exceed what is written in regards to infants. Baptism does not save the infant or the adult. It is simple faith in Jesus Christ that gives us new birth. In the case of infants, we understand his compassion for those who might pass away before the age of accountability. But our God is a God of mercy as we read in **Hosea 14 (NASB):3** “Assyria will not save us, We will not ride on horses; Nor will we say again, ‘Our god,’ To the work of our hands; For in You the orphan finds mercy.”

And in **Deuteronomy 1 (KJV):39** Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.

Augustine concludes, “There is not indeed a man among the faithful, who would hesitate to call such infants *believers* merely from the circumstance that such a designation is derived from the act of believing; for although incapable of such an act themselves, yet others are sponsors for them in the sacraments.”

We can pray for our children, and we can teach them the ways of the Lord, but we cannot be “sponsors for them”, or have faith for them. Before the age of accountability, they are in God’s hands. When they reach the age of accountability, they must believe of their own will, as we continue in **John 1 (KJV):10** He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe

on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

However, in speaking of infants, Augustine asserts the teaching of “mother Church” which evidently “uses for them the heart and mouth of a mother, that they may be imbued with the sacred mysteries, seeing that they cannot as yet with their own heart “believe unto righteousness,” nor with their own mouth make “confession unto salvation.” (Romans 10:10)”

Augustine is merely defending the doctrine of the Catholic Church in his time. But he is using the Scripture in a way that takes it out of context to prove his point. We will understand more about his thinking about infant baptism as we proceed to the next section.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book 1, Chapter 40, page 30-31**

Chapter 40 [XXVII.]—A Collection of Scripture Testimonies. From the Gospels.

This reasoning will carry more weight, after I have collected the mass of Scripture testimonies which I have undertaken to adduce. We have already quoted: “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” (Luke 5:32) To the same purport [the Lord] says, on entering the home of Zaccheus: “Today is salvation come to this house, for so much as he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:9-10) The same truth is declared in the parable of the lost sheep and the ninety and nine which were left until the missing one was sought and found; (Luke 15:4) as it is also in the parable of the lost one among the ten silver coins. (Luke 15:8) Whence, as He said, “it behooved that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:47) Mark likewise, at the end of his Gospel, tells us how that the Lord said: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:15-16) **Now, who can be unaware that, in the case of infants, being baptized is to believe, and not being baptized is not to believe?** From the Gospel of John we have already adduced some passages. However, I must also request your attention to the following: John Baptist says of Christ, “Behold the Lamb of God, Behold Him which taketh away the sin of the world;” (John 1:29) and He too says of Himself, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.” (John 10:27-28) Now, inasmuch as infants are only able to become His sheep by baptism, it must needs come to pass that they perish if they are not baptized, because they will not have that eternal life which He gives to His sheep. So in another passage He says: “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “This reasoning will carry more weight, after I have collected the mass of Scripture testimonies which I have undertaken to adduce. We have already quoted: “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” (Luke 5:32)”

He refers to **Luke 5 (KJV):32** I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.



He then continues, “To the same purport [the Lord] says, on entering the home of Zaccheus: “Today is salvation come to this house, for so much as he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:9-10)”

He refers here in context to **Luke 19 (KJV):8** And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. 9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

He continues as he says, “The same truth is declared in the parable of the lost sheep and the ninety and nine which were left until the missing one was sought and found; (Luke 15:4) as it is also in the parable of the lost one among the ten silver coins. (Luke 15:8)”

He is referring to the fact that the Lord Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners. He refers here in context to **Luke 15 (KJV):4** What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? 5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. 7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

And to **Luke 15 (KJV):8** Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? 9 And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. 10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

And Augustine continues, and says, “Whence, as He said, “it behooved that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:47)”

Here he refers to **Luke 24 (KJV):47** And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

He continues, “Mark likewise, at the end of his Gospel, tells us how that the Lord said: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” (Mark 16:15-16)

And he refers here to **Mark 16 (KJV):15** And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Now Augustine gets to his point, as he then says, “**Now, who can be unaware that, in the case of infants, being baptized is to believe, and not being baptized is not to believe?**”

This totally depends on what we believe about baptism. If we believe, as Augustine, that you are regenerated, or born again, when you are baptized, then it follows that infants are born again when they are baptized. However, this is not according to Scripture.

But Augustine continues, “From the Gospel of John we have already adduced some passages. However, I must also request your attention to the following: John Baptist says of Christ, “Behold the Lamb of God, Behold Him which taketh away the sin of the world;” (John 1:29) and He too says of Himself, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow

me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.” (John 10:27-28)”

He is referring to **John 1 (KJV):29** The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

And to **John 10 (KJV):27** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Nothing is said of baptism in these verses. Yet he concludes, “Now, inasmuch as infants are only able to become His sheep by baptism, it must needs come to pass that they perish if they are not baptized, because they will not have that eternal life which He gives to His sheep. So in another passage He says: “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6)

He refers here to **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Augustine’s proposal that, “**in the case of infants, being baptized is to believe, and not being baptized is not to believe**”, makes the salvation of infants dependent on others. What about infants who are not baptized? Our salvation is not dependent on man.

There is another explanation for infants of which Augustine seems to be unaware. We read in context of Moses’ words in **Deuteronomy 1 (KJV):34** And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, 35 Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers. 36 Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD. 37 Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither. 38 But Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. 39 Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.

In Moses’ time, the Lord did not hold the children of the parents responsible for the disobedience of the parents in the wilderness. When the parents came out of Egypt, they refused to go up and take the land of Palestine that the Lord had commanded them to take. So they had to wander in the wilderness for 40 years. But the Lord in Deuteronomy promised Moses that the children would go in to take the land, and that they would not be held responsible for their parents’ actions. The reason the children were not held responsible is because they “had no knowledge between good and evil”, as in verse 39 above. This could also explain what will happen to all infants and children when they die before they have a “knowledge between good and evil”. That is, they would go straight to heaven.

God only knows, but Jesus died for the sins of the whole world as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

## **Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings**

### **On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book 1, Chapter 23-24, page 23-24**

Chapter 23 [XVIII.]—He Refutes Those Who Allege that Infants are Baptized Not for the

## Remission of Sins, But for the Obtaining of the Kingdom of Heaven.

But those persons raise a question, and appear to adduce an argument deserving of consideration and discussion, who say that newborn infants receive baptism not for the remission of sin, but that, since their procreation is not spiritual, they may be created in Christ, and become partakers of the kingdom of heaven, and by the same means children and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. And yet, when you ask them, whether those that are not baptized, and are not made joint-heirs with Christ and partakers of the kingdom of heaven, have at any rate the blessing of eternal life in the resurrection of the dead, they are extremely perplexed, and find no way out of their difficulty. **For what Christian is there who would allow it to be said, that any one could attain to eternal salvation without being born again in Christ,—[a result] which He meant to be effected through baptism, at the very time when such a sacrament was purposely instituted for regenerating in the hope of eternal salvation? Whence the apostle says: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the laver of regeneration.” (Titus 3:5) This salvation, however, he says, consists in hope, while we live here below, where he says, “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” (Romans 8:24-25) Who then could be so bold as to affirm, that without the regeneration of which the apostle speaks, infants could attain to eternal salvation, as if Christ died not for them? For “Christ died for the ungodly.” (Romans 5:6) As for them, however, who (as is manifest) never did an ungodly act in all their own life, if also they are not bound by any bond of sin in their original nature, how did He die for them, who died for *the ungodly*? If they were hurt by no malady of original sin, how is it they are carried to the Physician Christ, for the express purpose of receiving the sacrament of eternal salvation, by the pious anxiety of those who run to Him? Why rather is it not said to them in the Church: Take hence these innocents: “they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick;”—Christ “came not to call the righteous, but sinners?” (Luke 5:31-32) There never has been heard, there never is heard, there never will be heard in the Church, such a fiction concerning Christ.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But those persons raise a question, and appear to adduce an argument deserving of consideration and discussion, who say that newborn infants receive baptism not for the remission of sin, but that, since their procreation is not spiritual, they may be created in Christ, and become partakers of the kingdom of heaven, and by the same means children and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. And yet, when you ask them, whether those that are not baptized, and are not made joint-heirs with Christ and partakers of the kingdom of heaven, have at any rate the blessing of eternal life in the resurrection of the dead, they are extremely perplexed, and find no way out of their difficulty.”

Evidently he is speaking to those who believe that baptism is not necessary to salvation. He continues, **“For what Christian is there who would allow it to be said, that any one could attain to eternal salvation without being born again in Christ,—[a result] which He meant to be effected through baptism, at the very time when such a sacrament was purposely instituted for regenerating in the hope of eternal salvation?”**

He then adds, “Whence the apostle says: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the laver of regeneration.” (Titus 3:5)”

He refers to **Titus 3 (Douay Rheims):5** Not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost.

However, the word translated “laver” in the Greek is λουτρόν (pronounced lü-tro'n), from G3068; a bath, i.e. (figuratively), baptism:—washing. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 3067**

This Greek word comes from the Greek word λούω (pronounced lü'-ō), a primary verb; to bathe (the whole person); **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 3068.**

So a better translation is as in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Augustine relied on the Latin Vulgate here. The Catholic Church was greatly influenced by the traditions of those who had gone before.

He continues, “This salvation, however, he says, consists in hope, while we live here below, where he says, “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” (Romans 8:24-25)”

He refers here to **Romans 8 (KJV):24** For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

He continues, “Who then could be so bold as to affirm, that without the regeneration of which the apostle speaks, infants could attain to eternal salvation, as if Christ died not for them? For “Christ died for the ungodly.” (Romans 5:6)”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):6** For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Infants could “attain to eternal salvation”, but not through baptism, but by God’s mercy.

Augustine then continues, as he asserts, “As for them, however, who (as is manifest) never did an ungodly act in all their own life, if also they are not bound by any bond of sin in their original nature, how did He die for them, who died for *the ungodly*? If they were hurt by no malady of original sin, how is it they are carried to the Physician Christ, for the express purpose of receiving the sacrament of eternal salvation, by the pious anxiety of those who run to Him?”

But we can only save ourselves by believing in Jesus Christ. The fact that “the pious anxiety of those who run to Him” is responsible for them being “carried to the Physician Christ, for the express purpose of receiving the sacrament of eternal salvation”, which was baptism according to Augustine and the Catholic Church in his time, does not change the Scripture which says that the one who hears and believes has passed from death to life as Jesus taught in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Augustine then continues, “Why rather is it not said to them in the Church: Take hence these innocents: “they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick;”—Christ

“came not to call the righteous, but sinners?” (Luke 5:31-32)”

He refers here to **Luke 5 (KJV):31** And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. 32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

And he concludes, “There never has been heard, there never is heard, there never will be heard in the Church, such a fiction concerning Christ.”

However, we must let go of our traditions when they do not agree with the word of God.

#### Chapter 24 [XIX.]—Infants Saved as Sinners.

And let no one suppose that infants ought to be brought to baptism, on the ground that, as they are not sinners, so they are not righteous; how then do some remind us that the Lord commends this tender age as meritorious; saying, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven?” (Matthew 19:14) For if this [“of such”] is not said because of likeness in humility (since humility makes [us] children), but because of the laudable life of children, then of course infants must be righteous persons; otherwise, it could not be correctly said, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven,” for heaven can only belong to the righteous. But perhaps, after all, it is not a right opinion of the meaning of the Lord’s words, to make Him commend the life of infants when He says, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven;” inasmuch as *that* may be their true sense, which makes Christ adduce the tender age of infancy as a likeness of humility. Even so, however, perhaps we must revert to the tenet which I mentioned just now, that infants ought to be baptized, because, although they are not sinners, they are yet not righteous. But when He had said: “I came not to call the righteous,” as if responding to this, Whom, then, didst Thou come to call? Immediately He goes on to say: “—but sinners to repentance.” Therefore it follows, that, however righteous they may be, if also they are not sinners, He came not to call them, who said of Himself: “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” They therefore seem, not vainly only, but even wickedly to rush to the baptism of Him who does not invite them,—an opinion which God forbid that we should entertain. He calls them, then, as a Physician who is not needed for those that are whole, but for those that are sick; and who came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. **Now, inasmuch as infants are not held bound by any sins of their own actual life, it is the guilt of original sin which is healed in them by the grace of Him who saves them by the laver of regeneration.**

**Commentary:** Augustine continues his argument here, as he says, “And let no one suppose that infants ought to be brought to baptism, on the ground that, as they are not sinners, so they are not righteous; how then do some remind us that the Lord commends this tender age as meritorious; saying, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven?” (Matthew 19:14)”

He refers to **Matthew 19 (KJV):14** But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

He then continues, “For if this [“of such”] is not said because of likeness in humility (since humility makes [us] children), but because of the laudable life of children, then of course



infants must be righteous persons; otherwise, it could not be correctly said, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven,” for heaven can only belong to the righteous.”

But the true meaning of the verse is “because of likeness in humility (since humility makes [us] children)”. Jesus is not teaching that only children are in heaven, but that those in heaven are all like children in that they are humble before their heavenly Father.

We can agree with Augustine here. Jesus is saying that the humble are like little children, and of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Augustine then continues, “But perhaps, after all, it is not a right opinion of the meaning of the Lord’s words, to make Him commend the life of infants when He says, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven,” inasmuch as *that* may be their true sense, which makes Christ adduce the tender age of infancy as a likeness of humility.”

Children are humble, and also innocent. Of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Augustine continues, as he then argues, “Even so, however, perhaps we must revert to the tenet which I mentioned just now, that infants ought to be baptized, because, although they are not sinners, they are yet not righteous. But when He had said: “I came not to call the righteous,” as if responding to this, Whom, then, didst Thou come to call? Immediately He goes on to say: “—but sinners to repentance.” Therefore it follows, that, however righteous they may be, if also they are not sinners, He came not to call them, who said of Himself: “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” They therefore seem, not vainly only, but even wickedly to rush to the baptism of Him who does not invite them,—an opinion which God forbid that we should entertain.”

And he concludes, “He calls them, then, as a Physician who is not needed for those that are whole, but for those that are sick; and who came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. **Now, inasmuch as infants are not held bound by any sins of their own actual life, it is the guilt of original sin which is healed in them by the grace of Him who saves them by the laver of regeneration.**”

Infants do have original sin, being born of descendants of Adam, as in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):**21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

But no one is saved by baptism. And no one is saved by the faith of someone else. We are saved when we believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord.

## **Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings**

### **On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book 1, Chapter 26, page 25**

Chapter 26 [XX.]—No One, Except He Be Baptized, Rightly Comes to the Table of the Lord.

Now they take alarm from the statement of the Lord, when He says, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;” (John 3:3) because in His own explanation of the passage He affirms, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5) And so they try to ascribe to unbaptized infants, by the merit of their innocence, the gift of salvation and eternal life, but at the same time, owing to their being unbaptized, to exclude them from the kingdom of heaven. But how novel and astonishing is such an assumption, as if there could possibly be salvation and eternal life without heirship

with Christ, without the kingdom of heaven! Of course they have their refuge, whither to escape and hide themselves, because the Lord does not say, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot have life, but—“he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” If indeed He had said the other, there could have risen not a moment’s doubt. **Well, then, let us remove the doubt; let us now listen to the Lord, and not to men’s notions and conjectures; let us, I say, hear what the Lord says—not indeed concerning the sacrament of the laver, but concerning the sacrament of His own holy table, to which none but a baptized person has a right to approach: “Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye shall have no life in you.” (John 6:53) What do we want more? What answer to this can be adduced, unless it be by that obstinacy which ever resists the constancy of manifest truth?**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Now they take alarm from the statement of the Lord, when He says, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;” (John 3:3) because in His own explanation of the passage He affirms, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5)

He refers again, in context, to **John 3 (KJV):3** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Augustine then explains, “And so they try to ascribe to unbaptized infants, by the merit of their innocence, the gift of salvation and eternal life, but at the same time, owing to their being unbaptized, to exclude them from the kingdom of heaven.”

He is speaking to those who say that the unbaptized infants have eternal life, but because they have not been born of water, as it were, that is, they have not been baptized, they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Augustine then explains, “But how novel and astonishing is such an assumption, as if there could possibly be salvation and eternal life without heirship with Christ, without the kingdom of heaven! Of course they have their refuge, whither to escape and hide themselves, because the Lord does not say, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot have life, but—“he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” If indeed He had said the other, there could have risen not a moment’s doubt.”

Augustine did not understand that when Jesus said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”, He was speaking of the fleshly birth of water surrounding the fetus, and the spiritual birth, which is of the Spirit of God, for in the very next verse He says as in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

So his argument is really without substance. He then continues, **“Well, then, let us remove the doubt; let us now listen to the Lord, and not to men’s notions and conjectures; let us, I say, hear what the Lord says—not indeed concerning the sacrament of the laver, but concerning the sacrament of His own holy table, to which none but a baptized person has a right to approach: “Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye shall have no life in you.” (John 6:53) What do we want more? What answer to this can be adduced, unless it be by that obstinacy which ever resists the constancy of manifest truth?”**

In the time of his writing, no one was allowed to partake of Communion if they were not baptized. And likewise, in Augustine's time, it was thought that, with the invocation of the priest, the bread and wine were changed into the body and blood of Christ. This was a tradition that was inherited from the Church in the time of Irenaeus, who was a bishop of Lyons, France from about 177 to 202 AD. Irenaeus states that it is the invocation of God which changes the bread and wine into a heavenly reality as we read in **Adversus Heresies, Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 5**, where he says, "For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity."

Now Augustine is basing his argument on what we read in context in **John 6 (KJV):51** I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. 52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. 60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

In verse 63 Jesus explains that it is the spirit that quickeneth, or gives life. He was telling them that his flesh is real meat, and his blood is real drink. That is, it is spiritual bread and spiritual drink that gives spiritual life, that is, eternal life. So his words are "are spirit, and they are life". He is not talking about eating physical flesh and blood, but when we receive His words, and we "eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood", we receive life in our spirits, and we are born again.

The Church in Augustine's time was bound by the tradition of their fathers. So they thought that the bread and wine at the Lord's table were transformed into the actual body and blood of the Lord. You had to partake of this to have spiritual life. But Jesus spoke as in **Luke 22 (KJV):15** And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: 16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. 17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: 18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. 19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

Jesus is our Passover. He is the Lamb that was sacrificed for us, and in our place. When we take Communion, we do it in remembrance of what He has done for us. He is not sacrificed again for us. He was once offered to bear the sin of many as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):27** Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

And in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):7** But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

And in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):28** So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

When we believe in Jesus, and we are born again, we have eternal life. We don't get more eternal life when we partake of Communion. We remember that we have eternal life by what Jesus did once for us on the cross. It is a giving of thanks for what He has done for us, and what we have received by faith in Him.

And how can an infant partake of the Lord's Supper? Based on Augustine's argument, someone would have to bring the infant to be baptized, and then take them to the Lord's Supper for Communion, which the infant could not receive, and then they would have to take Communion for them. All of this is based on the ritual of tradition that had been passed down by the fathers before Augustine, but which has no basis in Scripture.

## **Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings**

### **On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book 1, Chapter 28-29, page 25-26**

Chapter 28.—Baptized Infants, of the Faithful; Unbaptized, of the Lost.

Hence also that other statement: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; while he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:35-36) Now in which of these classes must we place infants—amongst those who believe on the Son, or amongst those who believe not the Son? In neither, say some, because, as they are not yet able to believe, so must they not be deemed unbelievers. **This, however, the rule of the Church does not indicate, for it joins baptized infants to the number of the faithful.** Now if they who are baptized are, by virtue of the excellence and administration of so great a sacrament, nevertheless reckoned in the number of the faithful, although by their own heart and mouth they do not literally perform what appertains to the action of faith and confession; surely they who have lacked the sacrament must be classed amongst those who do not believe on the Son, and therefore, if they shall depart this life without this grace, they will have to encounter what is written concerning such—they shall not have life, but the wrath of God abideth on them. Whence could this result to those who clearly have no sins of their own, if they are not held to be obnoxious to original sin?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "Hence also that other statement: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; while he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:35-36)"

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):35** The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. 36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Augustine then says, “Now in which of these classes must we place infants—amongst those who believe on the Son, or amongst those who believe not the Son? In neither, say some, because, as they are not yet able to believe, so must they not be deemed unbelievers.

Augustine then notes, “**This, however, the rule of the Church does not indicate, for it joins baptized infants to the number of the faithful.**”

And this statement agrees with all that Augustine has said before. But the “**rule of the Church**” is not Scripture, and Augustine is basing part of his argument on it.

He continues, “Now if they who are baptized are, by virtue of the excellence and administration of so great a sacrament, nevertheless reckoned in the number of the faithful, although by their own heart and mouth they do not literally perform what appertains to the action of faith and confession; surely they who have lacked the sacrament must be classed amongst those who do not believe on the Son, and therefore, if they shall depart this life without this grace, they will have to encounter what is written concerning such—they shall not have life, but the wrath of God abideth on them.”

This is logical if one believes that we are regenerated by baptism. But the Scripture is clear that baptism is only a token, or a sign that one has believed. He then concludes, “Whence could this result to those who clearly have no sins of their own, if they are not held to be obnoxious to original sin?”

So infants must be baptized in his thinking, because of original sin.

Chapter 29 [XXI.]—It is an Inscrutable Mystery Why Some are Saved, and Others Not.

Now there is much significance in that He does not say, “The wrath of God *shall come* upon him,” but “*abideth* on him.” For from this wrath (in which we are all involved under sin, and of which the apostle says, “For we too were once by nature the children of wrath, even as others” Ephesians 2:3) nothing delivers us but the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. The reason why this grace comes upon one man and not on another may be hidden, but it cannot be unjust. For “is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.” (Romans 9:14) But we must first bend our necks to the authority of the Holy Scriptures, in order that we may each arrive at knowledge and understanding through faith. For it is not said in vain, “Thy judgments are a great deep.” (Psalm 36:6) The profundity of this “deep” the apostle, as if with a feeling of dread, notices in that exclamation: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!” He had indeed previously pointed out the meaning of this marvelous depth, when he said: “For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.” (Romans 11:32) Then struck, as it were, with a horrible fear of this deep: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor, or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and in Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.” (Romans 11:33-36) How utterly insignificant, then, is our faculty for discussing the justice of God’s judgments, and for the consideration of His gratuitous grace, which, as men



have no prevenient merits for deserving it, cannot be partial or unrighteous, and which does not disturb us when it is bestowed upon unworthy men, as much as when it is denied to those who are equally unworthy!

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, “Now there is much significance in that He does not say, “The wrath of God *shall come* upon him,” but “*abideth* on him.” For from this wrath (in which we are all involved under sin, and of which the apostle says, “For we too were once by nature the children of wrath, even as others” Ephesians 2:3) nothing delivers us but the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. The reason why this grace comes upon one man and not on another may be hidden, but it cannot be unjust. For “is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.” (Romans 9:14) But we must first bend our necks to the authority of the Holy Scriptures, in order that we may each arrive at knowledge and understanding through faith. For it is not said in vain, “Thy judgments are a great deep.” (Psalm 36:6)

He refers to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

And to **Romans 9 (KJV):14** What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

And to **Psalm 36 (KJV):6** Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O Lord, thou preservest man and beast.

And we can agree with him here, as he says, “**we must first bend our necks to the authority of the Holy Scriptures, in order that we may each arrive at knowledge and understanding through faith**”.

And we could add **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

And we could also add **John 3 (KJV):36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Augustine then continues as he says, “The profundity of this “deep” the apostle, as if with a feeling of dread, notices in that exclamation: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!””

He refers here to **Romans 11 (KJV):33** O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

He continues as he says, “He had indeed previously pointed out the meaning of this marvelous depth, when he said: “For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.” (Romans 11:32)”

He refers here to **Romans 11 (KJV):32** For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

He then continues, “Then struck, as it were, with a horrible fear of this deep: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counselor, or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and in Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.” (Romans 11:33-36)”

Here he refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):33** O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

He then concludes, “How utterly insignificant, then, is our faculty for discussing the justice of God’s judgments, and for the consideration of His gratuitous grace, which, as men have no prevenient merits for deserving it, cannot be partial or unrighteous, and which does not disturb us when it is bestowed upon unworthy men, as much as when it is denied to those who are equally unworthy!”

Augustine has correctly stated here what the Scriptures teach. So some are saved, and some are not. How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

## **Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings**

### **On the Soul and Its Origin, Book II, Chapter 14, page 337**

Chapter 14 [X.]—**Victor Sends Those Infants Who Die Unbaptized to Paradise and the Heavenly Mansions, But Not to the Kingdom of Heaven.**

But I beg you mark how bold he is, who is displeased with hesitancy, which prefers to be cautious rather than over knowing in a question so profound as this: “I would be bold to say”—such are his words—“that they can attain to the forgiveness of their original sins, yet not so as to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. Just as in the case of the thief on the cross, who confessed but was not baptized, the Lord did not give him the kingdom of heaven, but paradise: (Luke 23:43) the words remaining accordingly in full force, ‘Except a man be born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ (John 3:5) This is especially true, inasmuch as the Lord acknowledges that in His Father’s house are many mansions, (John 14:2) by which are indicated the many different merits of those who dwell in them; so that in these abodes the unbaptized is brought to forgiveness, and the baptized to the reward which by grace has been prepared for him.” You observe how the man keeps paradise and the mansions of the Father’s house distinct from the kingdom of heaven, so that even unbaptized persons may have an abundant provision in places of eternal happiness. Nor does he see, when he says all this, that he is so unwilling to distinguish the future abode of a baptized infant from the kingdom of heaven as to have no fear in keeping distinct therefrom the very house of God the Father, or the several parts thereof. For the Lord Jesus did not say: In all the created universe, or in any portion of that universe, but, “In my Father’s house, are many mansions.” But in what way shall an unbaptized person live in the house of God the Father, when he cannot possibly have God for his Father, except he be born again? He should not be so ungrateful to God, who has vouchsafed to deliver him from the sect of the Donatists or Rogatists, as to aim at dividing the house of God the Father, and to put one portion of it outside the kingdom of heaven, where the unbaptized may be able to dwell. And on what terms does he himself presume that he is to enter into the kingdom of heaven, when from that kingdom he excludes the house of the King Himself, in what part soever He pleases? From the case, however, of the thief who, when crucified at the Lord’s side, put his hope in the Lord who was

crucified with him, and from the case of Dinocrates, the brother of St. Perpetua, he argues that even to the unbaptized may be given the remission of sins and an abode with the blessed; as if any one unbelief in whom would be a sin, had shown him that the thief and Dinocrates had not been baptized. Concerning these cases, however, I have more fully explained my views in the book which I wrote to our brother Renatus. This your loving self will be able to ascertain if you will condescend to read the book; for I am sure our brother will not find it in his heart to refuse you, if you ask him the loan of it.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But I beg you mark how bold he is, who is displeased with hesitancy, which prefers to be cautious rather than over knowing in a question so profound as this: “I would be bold to say”—such are his words—“that they can attain to the forgiveness of their original sins, yet not so as to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. Just as in the case of the thief on the cross, who confessed but was not baptized, the Lord did not give him the kingdom of heaven, but paradise: (Luke 23:43) the words remaining accordingly in full force, ‘Except a man be born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ (John 3:5) This is especially true, inasmuch as the Lord acknowledges that in His Father’s house are many mansions, (John 14:2) by which are indicated the many different merits of those who dwell in them; so that in these abodes the unbaptized is brought to forgiveness, and the baptized to the reward which by grace has been prepared for him.”

Augustine quotes Victor here, who refers to **Luke 23 (KJV):43** And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

And to **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

And to **John 14 (KJV):2** In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

It was not known to the Church in Augustine’s time what “paradise” referred to in the context that Jesus used it in Luke 23:43. First we must understand that the body of Jesus spent three actual days and nights in the tomb, and His spirit went to “paradise” immediately, for Jesus said, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise”. Then we must understand that the righteous dead, before Jesus’ death on the cross, went to Abraham’s bosom as we read in **Luke 16 (KJV):19** There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

All the Old Testament saints went to Sheol when they died as Jacob reveals in **Genesis 42 (KJV):38** But Jacob said, “My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm should befall him on the journey you are taking, then you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow.”

And David reveals in **Psalms 16 (KJV):10** For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

The word translated “hell” in this verse in the Hebrew is **שְׁאוֹל** (pronounced sheh·ōle', that is, Sheol). Sheol, or Hades in the Greek, or Hell in English, was divided into two parts. Hell was the lower part where the unrighteous went at death, and Abraham’s bosom was the upper part, where the righteous dead went at death, before Christ died on the cross.

We continue to read in **Luke 16 (KJV):24** And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. **25** But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. **26** And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

There was a great gulf between these two areas, “so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence”.

We continue to read in **Luke 16 (KJV):27** Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: **28** For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. **29** Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. **30** And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. **31** And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

So when Jesus referred to “paradise” in Luke 23:43, he was referring to Abraham’s bosom. The thief on the cross, because of his faith, was born again, and would join Jesus in this lower paradise, for Jesus said, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise”, in Luke 23:43. Jesus would then lead “captivity captive” from there, and ascend with them to heaven as Paul reveals in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):8** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. **9** (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? **10** He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

So Jesus descended first to Abraham’s bosom, the lower paradise, and then led the spirits of the righteous dead to heaven, or the upper paradise.

But Augustine continues as he then says, “You observe how the man keeps paradise and the mansions of the Father’s house distinct from the kingdom of heaven, so that even unbaptized persons may have an abundant provision in places of eternal happiness.”

Augustine is correct in his observation that what Victor says is nonsense. But he does not understand from the Scriptures why he is in error.

So he continues, as he then argues, “Nor does he see, when he says all this, that he is so unwilling to distinguish the future abode of a baptized infant from the kingdom of heaven as to have no fear in keeping distinct therefrom the very house of God the Father, or the several parts thereof. For the Lord Jesus did not say: In all the created universe, or in any portion of that universe, but, “In my Father’s house, are many mansions.””

Augustine makes a good point here. Jesus told the thief on the cross that today he would be with Him in paradise. The house of God is not divided so that part of it is in the kingdom of heaven and the other part is not.

He then continues, “But in what way shall an unbaptized person live in the house of God the Father, when he cannot possibly have God for his Father, except he be born again? He

should not be so ungrateful to God, who has vouchsafed to deliver him from the sect of the Donatists or Rogatists, as to aim at dividing the house of God the Father, and to put one portion of it outside the kingdom of heaven, where the unbaptized may be able to dwell.”

Again he argues well. The Scripture in John, chapter 14, does not divide the House of God so that some part of it is outside the Kingdom of Heaven.

He then continues, “And on what terms does he himself presume that he is to enter into the kingdom of heaven, when from that kingdom he excludes the house of the King Himself, in what part soever He pleases? From the case, however, of the thief who, when crucified at the Lord’s side, put his hope in the Lord who was crucified with him, and from the case of Dinocrates, the brother of St. Perpetua, he argues that even to the unbaptized may be given the remission of sins and an abode with the blessed; as if any one unbelief in whom would be a sin, had shown him that the thief and Dinocrates had not been baptized. Concerning these cases, however, I have more fully explained my views in the book which I wrote to our brother Rhenatus. This your loving self will be able to ascertain if you will condescend to read the book; for I am sure our brother will not find it in his heart to refuse you, if you ask him the loan of it.

Baptism is not a requirement in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. What is required is a simple faith in Jesus Christ, and confession of Him as Lord. And in the case of infants who pass before the age of accountability, God knows those who are His.

## Summary

The Church in Augustine’s time baptized infants because they believed that the faith of others would avail for those who were not yet accountable for knowing good and evil. The instance at the house of Cornelius in Acts, chapter 10, proves that people are born again when they believe, for they received the Holy Spirit just as the apostles. You don’t receive the Holy Spirit unless you have been born again. It is easier to believe that God is merciful than to believe in baptismal regeneration.

## The Wedding Garment

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermons on New Testament Lessons,**

**Sermon XL. [XC. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel, Matt. xxii. 2, etc., about the marriage of the king’s son; against the Donatists, on charity. Delivered at Carthage in the Restituta., paragraphs 5-9, page 393-396**

5. What is it then? I would not that ye all who approach the Lord’s Table which is in this life, should be with the many who are to be shut out, but with the few who are to be reserved. And how shall ye be able to attain to this? Take “the wedding garment.” Ye will say, “Explain this ‘wedding garment’ to us.” Without a doubt, that is the garment which none but the good have, who are to be left at the feast, reserved unto that other feast to which no bad man approaches, who are to be brought safely thither by the grace of the Lord; these have “the



wedding garment.” Let us then, my Brethren, seek for those among the faithful who have something which bad men have not, and this will be “the wedding garment.” If we speak of sacraments, ye see how that these are common to the bad and good. Is it Baptism? **Without Baptism it is true no one attaineth to God; but not every one that hath Baptism attaineth to Him.** I cannot therefore understand Baptism, the Sacrament itself that is, to be “the wedding garment;” for this garment I see in the good, I see in the bad. Peradventure it is the Altar, or That which is received at the Altar. But no; we see that many eat, and “eat and drink judgment to themselves.” What is it then? Is it fasting? The wicked fast also. Is it running together to the Church? The wicked run thither also. Lastly, is it miracles? Not only do the good and bad perform them, but sometimes the good perform them not. See, among the ancient people Pharaoh’s magicians wrought miracles, the Israelites did not; among the Israelites, Moses only and Aaron wrought them; the rest did not, but saw, and feared, and believed. (Exodus 7) Were the magicians of Pharaoh who did miracles, better men than the people of Israel who could not do them, and yet that people were the people of God. In the Church itself, hear the Apostle, “Are all prophets? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues?” (1 Corinthians 12:29)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, **“What is it then? I would not that ye all who approach the Lord’s Table which is in this life, should be with the many who are to be shut out, but with the few who are to be reserved. And how shall ye be able to attain to this? Take “the wedding garment.”** Ye will say, “Explain this ‘wedding garment’ to us.” Without a doubt, that is the garment which none but the good have, who are to be left at the feast, reserved unto that other feast to which no bad man approaches, who are to be brought safely thither by the grace of the Lord; these have “the wedding garment.””

He is referring to **Matthew 22 (KJV):** 1 And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, 2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, 3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. 5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: 6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. 7 But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. 9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. 10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. 11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

Augustine continues, “Let us then, my Brethren, seek for those among the faithful who have something which bad men have not, and this will be “the wedding garment.” If we speak

of sacraments, ye see how that these are common to the bad and good. Is it Baptism? **Without Baptism it is true no one attaineth to God; but not every one that hath Baptism attaineth to Him.**”

It was Augustine’s belief, and the Catholic Church in his time, that one could not be saved without Baptism. But it is by grace that we are saved through faith as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):**8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

That is, it is not the result of anything we do. We simply receive Him as we read in **John 1 (KJV):**12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Augustine continues, “I cannot therefore understand Baptism, the Sacrament itself that is, to be “the wedding garment,” for this garment I see in the good, I see in the bad. Peradventure it is the Altar, or That which is received at the Altar. But no; we see that many eat, and “eat and drink judgment to themselves.” What is it then? Is it fasting? The wicked fast also. Is it running together to the Church? The wicked run thither also. Lastly, is it miracles? Not only do the good and bad perform them, but sometimes the good perform them not. See, among the ancient people Pharaoh’s magicians wrought miracles, the Israelites did not; among the Israelites, Moses only and Aaron wrought them; the rest did not, but saw, and feared, and believed. (Exodus 7)”

He refers in part to **Exodus 7 (KJV):**8 And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 9 When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent. 10 And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. 11 Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. 12 For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. 13 And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.

Augustine continues, “Were the magicians of Pharaoh who did miracles, better men than the people of Israel who could not do them, and yet that people were the people of God. In the Church itself, hear the Apostle, “Are all prophets? Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues?” (1 Corinthians 12:29)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

6. What is that “wedding garment” then? This is the wedding garment: “Now the end of the commandment,” says the Apostle, “is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” (1 Timothy 1:5) This is “the wedding garment.” Not charity of any kind whatever; for very often they who are partakers together of an evil conscience seem to love one

another. They who commit robberies together, who love the hurtful arts of sorceries, and the stage together, who join together in the shout of the chariot race, or the wild beast fight; these very often love one another; but in these there is no “charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. The wedding garment” is such charity as this. “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of Angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal.” (1 Corinthians 13:1) Tongues have come in alone, and it is said to them, “How came ye in hither not having a wedding garment?” “Though,” said he, “I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.” See, these are the miracles of men who very often have not “the wedding garment.” “Though,” he says, “I have all these, and have not Christ, I am nothing.” Is then “the gift of prophecy” nothing? is then “the knowledge of mysteries” (Sacramentorum) nothing? It is not that these are nothing; but “I,” if I have them, “and have not charity, am nothing.” How many good things profit nothing without this one good thing! If then I have not charity, though I bestow alms freely upon the poor, though I have come to the confession of Christ’s Name even unto blood and fire, these things may be done even through the love of glory, and so are vain. Because then they may be done even from the love of glory, and so be vain, and not through the rich charity of a godly affection, he names them all also in express terms, and do thou give ear to them; “though I distribute all my goods for the use of the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” (1 Corinthians 13:3) This then is “the wedding garment.” Question yourselves; if ye have it, ye may be without fear in the Feast of the Lord. In one and the same man there exist two things, charity and desire. Let charity be born in thee, if it be yet unborn, and if it be born, be it nourished, fostered, increased. But as to that desire, though in this life it cannot be utterly extinguished; “for if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;” (1 John 1:8) but in so far as desire is in us, so far we are not without sin: let charity increase, desire decrease; that the one, that is, charity, may one day be perfected, and desire be consumed. Put on “the wedding garment:” you I address, who as yet have it not. Ye are already within, already do ye approach to the Feast, and still have ye not yet the garment to do honour to the Bridegroom; “Ye are yet seeking your own things, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.” (Philippians 2:21) For “the wedding garment” is taken in honour of the union, the union, that is, of the Bridegroom to the Bride. Ye know the Bridegroom; it is Christ. Ye know the Bride; it is the Church. Pay honour to the Bride, pay honour to the Bridegroom. If ye pay due honour to them both, ye will be their children. Therefore in this make progress. Love the Lord, and so learn to love yourselves; that when by loving the Lord ye shall have loved yourselves, ye may securely love your neighbour as yourselves. For when I find a man that does not love himself, how shall I commit his neighbour whom he should love as himself to him? And who is there, you will say, who does not love himself? Who is there? See, “He that loveth iniquity hateth his own soul.” (Psalm 11:5) Does he love himself, who loves his body, and hates his soul to his own hurt, to the hurt of both his body and soul? And who loves his own soul? He that loveth God with all his heart and with all his mind. To such an one I would at once entrust his neighbour. “Love your neighbour as yourselves.”

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he asserts, “What is that “wedding garment” then?

This is the wedding garment: “Now the end of the commandment,” says the Apostle, “is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” (1 Timothy 1:5)”

He refers to **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):5** Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

He continues, “This is “the wedding garment.” Not charity of any kind whatever; for very often they who are partakers together of an evil conscience seem to love one another. They who commit robberies together, who love the hurtful arts of sorceries, and the stage together, who join together in the shout of the chariot race, or the wild beast fight; these very often love one another; but in these there is no “charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.”

He then explains, “The “wedding garment” is such charity as this. “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of Angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal.” (1 Corinthians 13:1)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):1** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

He continues, “Tongues have come in alone, and it is said to them, “How came ye in hither not having a wedding garment?” “Though,” said he, “I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):2** And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

He continues, “See, these are the miracles of men who very often have not “the wedding garment.” “Though,” he says, “I have all these, and have not Christ, I am nothing.” Is then “the gift of prophecy” nothing? Is then “the knowledge of mysteries” (Sacramentorum) nothing? It is not that these are nothing; but “I,” if I have them, “and have not charity, am nothing.” How many good things profit nothing without this one good thing!”

Charity is a translation of the Greek word, **ἀγάπη** (pronounced ä-gä'-pā). The same Greek word is translated “love” in **Galatians 5 (KJV):22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

So love is a fruit of the Spirit. That is, one cannot have this love, this fruit of the Spirit, unless one is born again. Love is not something we do to be saved. Love is something that grows as fruit when we have faith.

Augustine continues, “If then I have not charity, though I bestow alms freely upon the poor, though I have come to the confession of Christ’s Name even unto blood and fire, these things may be done even through the love of glory, and so are vain. Because then they may be done even from the love of glory, and so be vain, and not through the rich charity of a godly affection, he names them all also in express terms, and do thou give ear to them; “though I distribute all my goods for the use of the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” (1 Corinthians 13:3)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):3** And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

He then concludes, “This then is “the wedding garment.” Question yourselves; if ye have

it, ye may be without fear in the Feast of the Lord. In one and the same man there exist two things, charity and desire. Let charity be born in thee, if it be yet unborn, and if it be born, be it nourished, fostered, increased. But as to that desire, though in this life it cannot be utterly extinguished; “for if we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us;” (1 John 1:8) but in so far as desire is in us, so far we are not without sin: let charity increase, desire decrease; that the one, that is, charity, may one day be perfected, and desire be consumed.”

He refers to **1 John 1 (KJV):8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

By “desire”, he is referring to the Adamic sin nature in our flesh. This nature to sin in our flesh is with us until we die, but it is not something we have to yield to. Let us remember that we have been set free from this law of sin and death in our flesh as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Augustine seems to intimate that “so far as desire is in us, so far we are not without sin”. What he should have said was, “so far as we yield to this desire, so far we are not without sin”. But we do not have to yield to it. We have the Spirit of God dwelling in us as Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (KJV):11** But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

And we are more than conquerors as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):37** Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Augustine continues, “Put on “the wedding garment:” you I address, who as yet have it not. Ye are already within, already do ye approach to the Feast, and still have ye not yet the garment to do honour to the Bridegroom; “Ye are yet seeking your own things, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s.” (Philippians 2:21)”

He refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):21** For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

He continues, “For “the wedding garment” is taken in honour of the union, the union, that is, of the Bridegroom to the Bride. Ye know the Bridegroom; it is Christ. Ye know the Bride; it is the Church. Pay honour to the Bride, pay honour to the Bridegroom. If ye pay due honour to them both, ye will be their children.”

Augustine is making “love”, which is a fruit of the Spirit, to be a requirement in order to be a child of God. Love is something that grows as spiritual fruit in our lives because we have spiritual life. He does not understand the meaning of “the wedding garment”.

He continues, “Therefore in this make progress. Love the Lord, and so learn to love yourselves; that when by loving the Lord ye shall have loved yourselves, ye may securely love your neighbour as yourselves. For when I find a man that does not love himself, how shall I commit his neighbour whom he should love as himself to him? And who is there, you will say, who does not love himself? Who is there? See, “He that loveth iniquity hateth his own soul.” (Psalm 11:5)”



He refers to **Psalm 11 (Septuagint):5** The Lord tries the righteous and the ungodly: and he that loves unrighteousness hates his own soul.

He concludes, “Does he love himself, who loves his body, and hates his soul to his own hurt, to the hurt of both his body and soul? And who loves his own soul? He that loveth God with all his heart and with all his mind. To such an one I would at once entrust his neighbour. “Love your neighbour as yourselves.””

But Augustine did not understand what the “wedding garment” in the parable of Jesus represents. Let us read again in **Matthew 22 (KJV):8** Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. 9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. 10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. 11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: 12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

The wedding was first announced to the Jews, who “were not worthy”. So The Lord sent His servants “into the highways” and bid them to come to the marriage. They did so and “gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good”. So there were then guests at the wedding. But one did not have a “wedding garment”. The result was that he was bound “hand and foot”, and they “cast him into outer darkness”, where “there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”.

So where is this “outer darkness” where “there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”?

We read in **Luke 13 (KJV):23** Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, 24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. 25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: 26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. 27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. 28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

When we “shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God”, we will be resurrected. “Outer darkness” then refers to hell.

So what is the “wedding garment”? The “wedding garment” is righteousness which we get by faith in Jesus Christ as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his

righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

When we are justified by faith, “the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ” is “unto all and upon all them that believe” in verse 22 above. That is, the righteous of God is put down to our account. We then have a standing before God as sons and daughters.

This garment of righteousness is also spoken of in **Revelation 19 (KJV):7** Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

It is not our own righteousness, but the righteousness of God that has been put down to our account when we believed in Jesus Christ. This is the only righteousness that is acceptable to God. Love is a fruit of the Spirit, and grows as we walk in the light of the word of God.

Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

7. One may say, “Who is my neighbour?” Every man is your neighbour. Had we not all the same two parents? Animals of every species are neighbours one to the other, the dove to the dove, the leopard to the leopard, the asp to the asp, the sheep to the sheep, and is not man neighbour to man? Call to mind the ordering of the creation. God spake, the waters brought forth swimming creatures, great whales, fish, birds, and such like things. Did all the birds come of one bird? Did all vultures come of one vulture? Did all doves come of one dove? Did all snakes come of one snake? Or all gilt-heads of one gilt-head? Or all sheep of one sheep? No, the earth assuredly brought forth all these kinds together. But when it came to man, the earth did not bring forth man. One father was made for us; not even two, father and mother: one father, I say, was made for us, not even two, father and mother; but out of the one father came the one mother; the one father came from none, but was made by God, and the one mother came out of him. Mark then the nature of our race: we flowed out of one fountain; and because that one was turned to bitterness, we all became from a good, a wild olive tree. And so grace came also. One begat us unto sin and death, yet as one race, yet as neighbours one to another, yet as not merely like, but related to each other. There came *One* against *one*; against the one who scattered, One who gathereth. **Thus against the one who slayeth, is the One who maketh alive. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22) Now as whosoever is born of the first, dieth; so whosoever believeth in Christ is made alive. Provided, that is, that he have “the wedding garment,” and be invited as one who is to remain, and not to be cast out.**

**Commentary:** To summarize, Augustine says, **“Thus against the one who slayeth, is the One who maketh alive. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22)”**

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

He concludes, “Now as whosoever is born of the first, dieth; so whosoever believeth in Christ is made alive. Provided, that is, that he have “the wedding garment,” and be invited as one who is to remain, and not to be cast out.”

The “first” was Adam. And he says that the one who believes in Christ is made alive, “Provided, that is, that he have “the wedding garment,” by which he means charity, and he is “invited as one who is to remain, and not to be cast out”, that is, one who is chosen.

Augustine believed in the predestination of the saints. But the wedding garment is the righteousness of God, which is ours when we believe in Jesus Christ. If we have truly believed, love will grow in our lives as a fruit of the Spirit.

Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

8. So then, my Brethren, have charity. I have explained it to be this garment, this “wedding garment.” Faith is praised, it is plain, it is praised: but what kind of faith this is, the Apostle distinguishes. For certain who boasted of faith, and had not a good conversation, the Apostle James rebukes and says, “Thou believest there is one God, thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble.” (James 2:19) Call to mind with me whereupon Peter was praised, whereupon called blessed. Was it because he said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”? (Matthew 16:16) He who pronounced Him blessed, regarded not the sound of the words, but the affection of the heart. For would ye know that Peter’s blessedness lay not in these words? The devils also said the same. “We know Thee who Thou art, the Son of God.” (Matthew 8:29, Mark 1:24) Peter confessed Him to be “the Son of God;” the devils confessed Him to be “the Son of God.” “Distinguish, my lord, distinguish between the two.” I do make a plain distinction. Peter spake in love, the devils from fear. And again Peter says, “I am with Thee, even unto death.” (Matthew 26:35) The devils say, “What have we to do with Thee?” So then thou who art come to the feast, glory not of faith only. Distinguish well the nature of this faith; and then in thee is recognised “the wedding garment.” Let the Apostle make the distinction, let him teach us; “neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith.” (Galatians 5:6) Tell us, what faith? Do not even the devils believe and tremble? I will tell thee, he says, and listen, I will now draw the distinction, “But faith which worketh by love.” What faith, then, and of what kind? “That which worketh by love.” “Though I have all knowledge,” he says, “and all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.” Have faith with love; for love without faith ye cannot have. This I warn, this I exhort, this in the name of the Lord I teach you, Beloved, that ye have faith with love; for ye may possibly have faith without love. I do not exhort you to have faith, but love. For ye cannot have love without faith; the love I mean of God and your neighbour; whence can it come without faith? How doth he love God, who doth not believe on God? How doth the fool love God, “who saith in his heart, there is no God”? (Psalm 53:1) Possible it is that ye may believe that Christ hath come and not love Christ. But it is not possible that ye should love Christ, and yet say that Christ hath not come.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “So then, my Brethren, have charity. I have explained it to be this garment, this “wedding garment.” Faith is praised, it is plain, it is praised: but what kind of faith this is, the Apostle distinguishes. For certain who boasted of faith, and had not a good conversation, the Apostle James rebukes and says, “Thou believest there is one

God, thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble.” (James 2:19)”

He refers to **James 2 (KJV):19** Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

He continues, “Call to mind with me whereupon Peter was praised, whereupon called blessed. Was it because he said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”? (Matthew 16:16) He who pronounced Him blessed, regarded not the sound of the words, but the affection of the heart.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 16 (KJV):13** When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? 14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Augustine continues, “For would ye know that Peter’s blessedness lay not in these words? The devils also said the same. “We know Thee who Thou art, the Son of God.” (Matthew 8:29, Mark 1:24)”

He refers to **Matthew 8 (KJV):29** And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

And to **Mark 1 (KJV):24** Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

He continues, “Peter confessed Him to be “the Son of God;” the devils confessed Him to be “the Son of God.” “Distinguish, my lord, distinguish between the two.” I do make a plain distinction. Peter spake in love, the devils from fear.”

But Peter spoke in faith. The devils were already under condemnation, and were not given a second chance.

Augustine continues, “And again Peter says, “I am with Thee, even unto death.” (Matthew 26:35)”

He refers to **Matthew 26 (KJV):25** Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

He continues, “The devils say, “What have we to do with Thee?” So then thou who art come to the feast, glory not of faith only. Distinguish well the nature of this faith; and then in thee is recognised “the wedding garment.” Let the Apostle make the distinction, let him teach us; “neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith.” (Galatians 5:6)”

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):6** For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

He continues, “Tell us, what faith? Do not even the devils believe and tremble? I will tell thee, he says, and listen, I will now draw the distinction, “But faith which worketh by love.” What faith, then, and of what kind? “That which worketh by love.” “Though I have all knowledge,” he says, “and all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.””

He refers to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):2** And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

He continues, “Have faith with love; for love without faith ye cannot have. This I warn, this I exhort, this in the name of the Lord I teach you, Beloved, that ye have faith with love; for ye may possibly have faith without love. I do not exhort you to have faith, but love. For ye cannot have love without faith; the love I mean of God and your neighbour; whence can it come without faith? How doth he love God, who doth not believe on God? How doth the fool love God, “who saith in his heart, there is no God”? (Psalm 53:1)”

He refers to **Psalm 53 (KJV):1** The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good.

He concludes, “Possible it is that ye may believe that Christ hath come and not love Christ. But it is not possible that ye should love Christ, and yet say that Christ hath not come.”

Love is a fruit of the Spirit. If we do not have the Spirit, we will not have the fruit of the Spirit. But if we have been born again, we have the Spirit. And the fruit of the Spirit will grow in our life as we walk in the Spirit, and abide in the word of God.

But we must commend Augustine in that there is a faith of the heart, for with the heart man believes as Paul reveals in **Romans 10 (KJV):10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Augustine is encouraging us to have a real faith, which works by love from the heart. But the “wedding garment” is the righteousness of God that is put down to our account when we believe in Jesus Christ, and as a result, God justifies us. He continues in the next paragraph.

9. So then, have faith with love. This is the “wedding garment.” Ye who love Christ, love one another, love your friends, love your enemies. Let not this be hard to you. What then do ye lose thereby, when ye gain so much? What? Dost thou ask of God as some great favour, that thine enemy may die? This is not “the wedding garment.” Turn thy thoughts to the Bridegroom Himself hanging upon the Cross for thee, and praying to His Father for His enemies; “Father,” saith He, “forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34) Thou hast seen the Bridegroom speaking thus; see too the friend of the Bridegroom, a guest “with the wedding garment.” Look at the blessed Stephen, how he rebukes the Jews as though in rage and resentment, “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye have resisted the Holy Ghost. Which of the Prophets have not your fathers killed?” (Acts 7:51-52) Thou hast heard how severe he is with his tongue. And at once thou art prepared to speak against any one; and I would it were against him who offendeth God, and not who offendeth thee. One offendeth God, and thou dost not rebuke him; he offendeth thee, and thou criest out; where is that “wedding garment”? Ye have heard therefore how Stephen was severe; now hear how he loved. He offended those whom he was rebuking, and was stoned by them. And as he was being overwhelmed and bruised to death by the hands of his furious persecutors on every side, and the blows of the stones, he first said, “Lord Jesus Christ, receive my spirit.” (Acts 7:59) Then after he had prayed for himself standing, he bent the knee for them who were stoning him, and said, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge; let me die in my body, but let not these die in their souls. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” (Acts 7:60) After these words he added no more; he spake them and departed; his last prayer was for his enemies. Learn ye hereby to have “the wedding garment.” **So do thou too bend the knee, and beat thy forehead against the ground, and as thou art about to approach the Table of the Lord, the Feast of the Holy Scriptures, do not say, “O that mine enemy might die! Lord, if I have deserved ought of Thee, slay mine enemy.”**



Because if so be that thou sayest so, dost thou not fear lest He should answer thee, “If I should choose to slay thine enemy, I should first slay thee. What! Dost thou glory because thou hast now come invited hither? Think only what thou wast but a little while ago. Hast thou not blasphemed Me? Hast thou not derided Me? Didst thou not wish to wipe out My Name from off the earth? Yet now thou dost applaud thyself because thou hast come invited hither! If I had slain thee when thou wast Mine enemy, how could I have made thee My friend? Why, by thy wicked prayers dost thou teach Me to do, what I did not in thine own case?” Yea rather God saith to thee, “Let me teach thee to imitate Me. When I was hanging on the Cross, I said, ‘Forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ (Luke 23:34) This lesson I taught My brave soldier. Be thou My recruit against the devil. In no other way wilt thou fight at all unconquerably, unless thou dost pray for thine enemies. Yet by all means ask this, yea ask this very thing, ask that thou mayest persecute thine enemy; but ask it with discernment; distinguish well what thou askest. See, a man is thine enemy; answer me, what is it in him which is at enmity with thee? Is it in this, that he is a man, that he is at enmity with thee? No. What then? That he is evil. In that he is a man, in that he is that I made him, he is not at enmity with thee.” He saith to thee, “I did not make man evil; he became evil by disobedience, who obeyed the devil rather than God. What he has made himself, is at enmity with thee; in that he is evil, he is thine enemy; not in that he is a man. For I hear the word “man,” and “evil;” the one is the name of nature, the other of sin; the sin I cure; and the nature I preserve.” And so thy God saith to thee, “See, I do avenge thee, I do slay thine enemy; I take away that which makes him evil, I preserve that which constitutes him a man: now if I shall have made him a good man, have I not slain thine enemy, and made him thy friend?” So ask on what thou art asking, not that the men may perish, but that these their enmities may perish. For if thou pray for this, that the man may die; it is the prayer of one wicked man against another; and when thou dost say, “Slay the wicked one,” God answereth thee, “Which of you?”

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “So then, have faith with love. This is the “wedding garment.” Ye who love Christ, love one another, love your friends, love your enemies. Let not this be hard to you. What then do ye lose thereby, when ye gain so much? What? Dost thou ask of God as some great favour, that thine enemy may die? This is not “the wedding garment.” Turn thy thoughts to the Bridegroom Himself hanging upon the Cross for thee, and praying to His Father for His enemies; “Father,” saith He, “forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34)”

He refers to **Luke 23 (KJV):34** Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

He continues, “Thou hast seen the Bridegroom speaking thus; see too the friend of the Bridegroom, a guest “with the wedding garment.” Look at the blessed Stephen, how he rebukes the Jews as though in rage and resentment, “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye have resisted the Holy Ghost. Which of the Prophets have not your fathers killed?” (Acts 7:51-52)”

He refers to **Acts 7 (KJV):51** Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. **52** Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

Stephen spoke the truth. Augustine continues, “Thou hast heard how severe he is with his tongue. And at once thou art prepared to speak against any one; and I would it were against him who offendeth God, and not who offendeth thee. One offendeth God, and thou dost not rebuke him; he offendeth thee, and thou criest out; where is that “wedding garment”? Ye have heard therefore how Stephen was severe; now hear how he loved. He offended those whom he was rebuking, and was stoned by them. And as he was being overwhelmed and bruised to death by the hands of his furious persecutors on every side, and the blows of the stones, he first said, “Lord Jesus Christ, receive my spirit.” (Acts 7:59) Then after he had prayed for himself standing, he bent the knee for them who were stoning him, and said, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge; let me die in my body, but let not these die in their souls. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” (Acts 7:60)”

He refers to **Acts 7 (KJV):59** And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

He continues, “After these words he added no more; he spake them and departed; his last prayer was for his enemies. Learn ye hereby to have “the wedding garment.” **So do thou too bend the knee, and beat thy forehead against the ground, and as thou art about to approach the Table of the Lord, the Feast of the Holy Scriptures, do not say, “O that mine enemy might die! Lord, if I have deserved ought of Thee, slay mine enemy.”** Because if so be that thou sayest so, dost thou not fear lest He should answer thee, “If I should choose to slay thine enemy, I should first slay thee. What! Dost thou glory because thou hast now come invited hither? Think only what thou wast but a little while ago. Hast thou not blasphemed Me? Hast thou not derided Me? Didst thou not wish to wipe out My Name from off the earth? Yet now thou dost applaud thyself because thou hast come invited hither! If I had slain thee when thou wast Mine enemy, how could I have made thee My friend? Why, by thy wicked prayers dost thou teach Me to do, what I did not in thine own case?” Yea rather God saith to thee, “Let me teach thee to imitate Me. When I was hanging on the Cross, I said, ‘Forgive them, for they know not what they do.’” (Luke 23:34)”

He refers again to **Luke 23 (KJV):34** Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

But did Augustine really mean for us to **“beat thy forehead against the ground”**?

He concludes, “This lesson I taught My brave soldier. Be thou My recruit against the devil. In no other way wilt thou fight at all unconquerably, unless thou dost pray for thine enemies. Yet by all means ask this, yea ask this very thing, ask that thou mayest persecute thine enemy; but ask it with discernment; distinguish well what thou askest. See, a man is thine enemy; answer me, what is it in him which is at enmity with thee? Is it in this, that he is a man, that he is at enmity with thee? No. What then? That he is evil. In that he is a man, in that he is that I made him, he is not at enmity with thee.” He saith to thee, “I did not make man evil; he became evil by disobedience, who obeyed the devil rather than God. What he has made himself, is at enmity with thee; in that he is evil, he is thine enemy; not in that he is a man. For I hear the word “man,” and “evil;” the one is the name of nature, the other of sin; the sin I cure; and the nature I preserve.” And so thy God saith to thee, “See, I do avenge thee, I do slay thine enemy; I take away that which makes him evil, I preserve that which constitutes him a man: now if I shall have made him a good man, have I not slain thine enemy, and made him thy friend?” So

ask on what thou art asking, not that the men may perish, but that these their enmities may perish. For if thou pray for this, that the man may die; it is the prayer of one wicked man against another; and when thou dost say, “Slay the wicked one,” God answereth thee, “Which of you?””

## Summary

In paragraph 5, Augustine begins as he says, “What is it then? I would not that ye all who approach the Lord’s Table which is in this life, should be with the many who are to be shut out, but with the few who are to be reserved. And how shall ye be able to attain to this? Take “the wedding garment.”

He is referring to the “wedding garment” Jesus spoke of in Matthew 22:1-14.

He also said in this paragraph that “Without Baptism it is true no one attaineth to God; but not every one that hath Baptism attaineth to Him.”

Augustine believed that one is regenerated by Baptism. He seems to be contradicting himself here.

In paragraph 6, Augustine asserts, “What is that “wedding garment” then? This is the wedding garment: “Now the end of the commandment,” says the Apostle, “is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” (1 Timothy 1:5)”

Without charity we are nothing, not even His children, he asserts.

In paragraph 7, he concludes, “Thus against the one who slayeth, is the One who maketh alive. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22) Now as whosoever is born of the first, dieth; so whosoever believeth in Christ is made alive. Provided, that is, that he have “the wedding garment,” and be invited as one who is to remain, and not to be cast out.”

Augustine makes it slippery slope to be saved. But the Scriptures do not support his assertion that “whosoever believeth in Christ is made alive. Provided, that is, that he have “the wedding garment”.

The “wedding garment” Jesus spoke of in Matthew 22:1-14 is the righteousness of God, which is like a garment that God clothes us with when we believe in Jesus Christ, and He justifies us. It has nothing to do with charity, or love. Love is a fruit of the Spirit that grows in us after we have been born again of the Spirit of God.

## The Spiritual Regeneration in John, Chapter 3

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book 1, Chapters 59-62, page 38-40**

Chapter 59.—The Context of Their Chief Text.

“Now there was,” we read, “a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a

teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto Him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." (John 3:1-21) Thus far the Lord's discourse wholly relates to the subject of our present inquiry; from this point the sacred historian digresses to another matter.

**Commentary:** Augustine has faithfully quoted the Scripture here in John 3:1-21. Let us proceed to the next chapter, to read his thoughts.

Chapter 60 [XXXI.]—Christ, the Head and the Body; Owing to the Union of the Natures in the Person of Christ, He Both Remained in Heaven, and Walked About on Earth; How the One Christ Could Ascend to Heaven; The Head, and the Body, the One Christ.

Now when Nicodemus understood not what was being told him, he inquired of the Lord how such things could be. Let us look at what the Lord said to him in answer to his inquiry; for of course, as He deigns to answer the question, How can these things be? He will in fact tell us how spiritual regeneration can come to a man who springs from carnal generation. After noticing briefly the ignorance of one who assumed a superiority over others as a teacher, and having blamed the unbelief of all such, for not accepting His witness to the truth, He went on to inquire and wonder whether, as He had told them about earthly things and they had not believed they would believe heavenly things. He nevertheless pursues the subject, and gives an answer such as others should believe—though these refuse—to the question that he was asked, How these things can be? "No man," says He, "hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down

from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” (John 3:13) **Thus, He says, shall come the spiritual birth,—men, from being earthly, shall become heavenly; and this they can only obtain by being made members of me;** so that he may ascend who descended, since no one ascends who did not descend. All, therefore, who have to be changed and raised must meet together in a union with Christ, so that the Christ who descended may ascend, reckoning His body (that is to say, His Church) as nothing else than Himself, because it is of Christ and the Church that this is most truly understood: “And they twain shall be one flesh;” (Genesis 2:24) concerning which very subject He expressly said Himself, “So then they are no more twain, but one flesh.” (Mark 10:8) To ascend, therefore, they would be wholly unable, since “no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” (John 3:13) For although it was on earth that He was made the Son of man, yet He did not deem it unworthy of that divinity, in which, although remaining in heaven, He came down to earth, to designate it by the name of the Son of man, as He dignified His flesh with the name of Son of God: that they might not be regarded as if they were two Christs,—the one God, the other man, (the error of Nestorius)—but one and the same God and man,—God, because “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;” (John 1:1) and man, inasmuch as “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” (John 1:14) By this means—by the difference between His divinity and His humiliation—He remained in heaven as Son of God, and as Son of man walked on earth; whilst, by that unity of His person which made His two natures one Christ, He both walked as Son of God on earth, and at the same time as the very Son of man remained in heaven. Faith, therefore, in more credible things arises from the belief of such things as are more incredible. **For if His divine nature, though a far more distant object, and more sublime in its incomparable diversity, had ability so to take upon itself the nature of man on our account as to become one Person, and whilst appearing as Son of man on earth in the weakness of the flesh, was able to remain all the while in heaven in the divinity which partook of the flesh, how much easier for our faith is it to suppose that other men, who are His faithful saints, become one Christ with the Man Christ, so that, when all ascend by His grace and fellowship, the one Christ Himself ascends to heaven who came down from heaven?** It is in this sense that the apostle says, “As we have many members in one body, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so likewise is Christ.” (1 Corinthians 12:12) He did not say, “So also is Christ’s”—meaning Christ’s body, or Christ’s members—but his words are, “*So likewise is Christ,*” thus calling the head and body one Christ.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “**Now when Nicodemus understood not what was being told him, he inquired of the Lord how such things could be. Let us look at what the Lord said to him in answer to his inquiry; for of course, as He deigns to answer the question, How can these things be? He will in fact tell us how spiritual regeneration can come to a man who springs from carnal generation. After noticing briefly the ignorance of one who assumed a superiority over others as a teacher, and having blamed the unbelief of all such, for not accepting His witness to the truth, He went on to inquire and wonder whether, as He had told them about earthly things and they had not believed they would believe heavenly things.**”

Augustine here summarizes the first eleven verses of John, chapter 3.

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):1** There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that



thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? 11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

Augustine, and the Church in his time, did not see that Jesus speaks of two births, one of flesh, and the other of spirit. So he interprets verse 5, where Jesus says, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”, as referring to water baptism. But in the very next verse, Jesus says, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”. And then He says in verse 7, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again”. In other words, you were first born of the flesh, and now you must be born of the Spirit.

We should note that the words, “born again” in verse 3 and in verse 7, in the Greek are **γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν** (pronounced gennethay ä'-nō-then), and literally mean “born from above”.

The Greek word, **γεννηθῆναι** (pronounced gennethay), is the Verb - Aorist, passive, subjunctive, 3rd person singular form of **γεννάω** (pronounced gen-nä'-ō), from a variation of G1085; to procreate (properly, of the father, but by extension of the mother); figuratively, to regenerate:—bear, beget, be born, bring forth, conceive, be delivered of, gender, make, spring. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1080.**

The Greek word, **ἄνωθεν** (pronounced ä'-nō-then), from G507; from above; by analogy, from the first; by implication, anew:—from above, again, from the beginning (very first), the top. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G509.**

Augustine then continues, “He nevertheless pursues the subject, and gives an answer such as others should believe—though these refuse—to the question that he was asked, How these things can be? “No man,” says He, “hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” (John 3:13)

He refers in context to **John 3 (KJV)**: 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? 11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? 13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

Note that the words “which is in heaven” do not occur in the earliest manuscripts and are left out of the **New American Standard Bible** as we read in **John 3 (NASB):13** No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.

But Augustine does include them, as he followed the Latin Vulgate translation as we read in **John 3 (Douay Rheims):13** And no man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven.

Now we may very well ask why does Jesus respond this way in verse 13, when Nicodemus asks in verse 9, “How can these things be?” But Jesus is explaining to Nicodemus who He really is. He is not just a man. He tells him that, “No man has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man, as in John 3:13.

In verse 12, Jesus said, “I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?”

Jesus is explaining to Nicodemus about how one is born from above, from heaven.

Augustine then continues, “**Thus, He says, shall come the spiritual birth,—men, from being earthly, shall become heavenly; and this they can only obtain by being made members of me;** so that he may ascend who descended, since no one ascends who did not descend.”

Augustine seems to jump ahead to the resurrection, for we do not become heavenly until the resurrection of our bodies, as Paul explains in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):42** So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. 46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 47 The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

Augustine seems to acknowledge this, as he then continues, “All, therefore, who have to be changed and raised must meet together in a union with Christ, so that the Christ who descended may ascend, reckoning His body (that is to say, His Church) as nothing else than Himself, because it is of Christ and the Church that this is most truly understood: “And they twain shall be one flesh;” (Genesis 2:24) concerning which very subject He expressly said Himself, “So then they are no more twain, but one flesh.” (Mark 10:8)

He refers to **Genesis 2 (KJV):24** Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

And in context to **Mark 10 (KJV):6** But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

But Jesus is referring in the context above primarily to the marriage relationship between a man and a woman in these verses which he quotes. But Paul does use this analogy in relation to Christ’s body in **Ephesians 5 (KJV):29** For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I

speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

But in relation to Christ and the church, Paul calls it a “great mystery” in verse 32 above. And nothing is said about this relationship in John, chapter 3.

Augustine then continues, “To ascend, therefore, they would be wholly unable, since “no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” (John 3:13)”

He refers again to **John 3 (KJV):13** And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

Augustine then testifies, “For although it was on earth that He was made the Son of man, yet He did not deem it unworthy of that divinity, in which, although remaining in heaven, He came down to earth, to designate it by the name of the Son of man, as He dignified His flesh with the name of Son of God: that they might not be regarded as if they were two Christs,—the one God, the other man, (the error of Nestorius)—but one and the same God and man,—God, because “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;” (John 1:1) and man, inasmuch as “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” (John 1:14)”

He quotes from **John 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

And from **John 1 (KJV):14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

But he also refers in context to **Philippians 2 (KJV):5** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

He then continues, “By this means—by the difference between His divinity and His humiliation—He remained in heaven as Son of God, and as Son of man walked on earth; whilst, by that unity of His person which made His two natures one Christ, He both walked as Son of God on earth, and at the same time as the very Son of man remained in heaven. Faith, therefore, in more credible things arises from the belief of such things as are more incredible.”

Augustine knew the one true God, Jesus Christ.

He then continues, “For if His divine nature, though a far more distant object, and more sublime in its incomparable diversity, had ability so to take upon itself the nature of man on our account as to become one Person, and whilst appearing as Son of man on earth in the weakness of the flesh, was able to remain all the while in heaven in the divinity which partook of the flesh, how much easier for our faith is it to suppose that other men, who are His faithful saints, become one Christ with the Man Christ, so that, when all ascend by His grace and fellowship, the one Christ Himself ascends to heaven who came down from heaven? It is in this sense that the apostle says, “As we have many members in one body, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so likewise is Christ.” (1 Corinthians 12:12) He did not say, “So also is Christ’s”—meaning Christ’s body, or Christ’s members—but his words are, “*So likewise is Christ,*” thus calling the head and body one Christ.”

So he refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):12** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

And we also read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):27** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Yes we are one body in Christ, but we are members in particular. But he does not really explain to us what Nicodemus did not understand. He sort of skipped over verses 1 to 11, but after Nicodemus asks, “**How can these things be?**”, Augustine then said, as we already read in the first part of this chapter, “**He will in fact tell us how spiritual regeneration can come to a man who springs from carnal generation.**”

Augustine argues here that Christ, even though he took upon himself the nature of man, “**was able to remain all the while in heaven in the divinity which partook of the flesh**”. On this basis, he then argues, as we just read, “**how much easier for our faith is it to suppose that other men, who are His faithful saints, become one Christ with the Man Christ, so that, when all ascend by His grace and fellowship, the one Christ Himself ascends to heaven who came down from heaven?**”

The force of his argument then seems to rest on being one with Christ, that is, remaining connected to the Catholic Church, as he says, “**when all ascend by His grace and fellowship**”. But there is nothing about the body of Christ mentioned in John 3:1-21.

But Jesus told us how spiritual regeneration could come to a man, and Nicodemus did not understand. He was a teacher of Israel and he did not understand what it meant to be born again, that is, born from above.

Jesus was pointing to the fact that being born again, that is, born from above, was a requirement in every age for entrance into the kingdom of God. Augustine has tried to explain spiritual regeneration from the verses in John 3:9-15. But the explanation is in the verses in John 3:1-8. Let us look at these.

**John 3 (KJV):1** There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: **2** The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. **3** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. **4** Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? **5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Jesus is explaining the new birth here. The water he is speaking of is the water surrounding the fetus, which will break when a child is born physically. Jesus then speaks of the two births, as we continue to read in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Jesus is saying that there are two births which a man or woman must go through to enter the kingdom of God. The first is the birth of flesh. The second is the birth of the Spirit. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh”, and “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”. Now we continue to read in **John 3 (KJV):7** Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. **8** The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

The new birth is like the wind. We cannot tell where it comes from or where it goes. So is every one that is born of the Spirit. The literal meaning, again, in the Greek of the words translated “born again” is “born from above”. The reason we cannot tell where it comes from is

because it is a spiritual birth, a heavenly birth of God, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The Spirit of God gives birth to our spirit, and so we are born from above, from heaven as it were. Man and woman are composed of spirit, soul, and body as we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Before Christ, we were dead in trespasses and sins as we read in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

This is why we needed to be born again, that is, born from above. When we are born again, the Spirit of God is now the life of our spirit as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Our spirit is where we connect with God. Before we accept Christ, we have no connection with God or awareness of Him. We are dead in our trespasses and sins. When we are born again, our spirit is made alive to God, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

This is why our new inner man, our spirit, delights to do the will of God as in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Our soul is what is between our spirit and our flesh. Our spirit gives us consciousness of the spiritual world where God is. Our soul gives us consciousness of this world. I still have the old Adamic sin nature in my flesh, which is why I must put off and put on **Ephesians 4 (KJV):22** That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Our mind is in our soul area, as are our emotions, our heart which is the center of our emotions, and our will, and our conscience. Our soul is renewed as we walk in the light of the word of God. A progressive sanctification in our soul takes place.



Now let us continue to read in **John 3 (KJV):9** Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

What are the “things” Jesus is referring to? Jesus is referring to the new birth which is something Nicodemus should have been aware of since it is a requirement for all, even in Old Testament times, to believe in the Christ who was to come. In the Old Testament, they believed in the Christ who was to come. In the New Testament, we believe in the Christ who came.

Nothing is said about baptism in the Old Testament. We are all sons of Abraham by faith as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):1** What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3 For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. 4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. 9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: 12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

The word “imputed” in verse 11 is a translation of the Greek word **λογίζομαι** (pronounced lo-gē'-zo-mī), middle voice from G3056; to take an inventory, i.e. estimate (literally or figuratively):—conclude, (ac-)count (of), + despise, esteem, impute, lay, number, reason, reckon, suppose, think (on). **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3049.**

So the sense is that righteousness is reckoned, counted, or put down to one's account. Circumcision was only a token of the Abrahamic Covenant, because righteousness was imputed to Abraham when he had faith, and was uncircumcised. Now, baptism is only a token of the New Covenant. Righteousness is imputed to us also, when we have faith in Jesus Christ.

We then read of heavenly things as we continue to read in **John 3 (KJV):11** Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

What were the earthly things Jesus was talking about? Jesus told Nicodemus that flesh gives birth to flesh. The heavenly things related to being born of the Spirit. We continue in **John 3 (KJV):13** And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

Jesus has just explained His true identity. But Augustine continues his argument from John 3:14-19 in the next section. Let us go there.

on the Cross; Even Infants Themselves Poisoned by the Serpent's Bite.

And since this great and wonderful dignity can only be attained by the remission of sins, He goes on to say, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:14-15) We know what at that time happened in the wilderness. Many were dying of the bite of serpents: the people then confessed their sins, and, through Moses, besought the Lord to take away from them this poison; accordingly, Moses, at the Lord's command, lifted up a brazen serpent in the wilderness, and admonished the people that every one who had been serpent-bitten should look upon the uplifted figure. When they did so they were immediately healed. (Numbers 21:6-9) **What means the uplifted serpent but the death of Christ, by that mode of expressing a sign, whereby the thing which is effected is signified by that which effects it? Now death came by the serpent, which persuaded man to commit the sin, by which he deserved to die. The Lord, however, transferred to His own flesh not sin, as the poison of the serpent, but He did transfer to it death, that the penalty without the fault might transpire in the likeness of sinful flesh, whence, in the sinful flesh, both the fault might be removed and the penalty. As, therefore, it then came to pass that whoever looked at the raised serpent was both healed of the poison and freed from death, so also now, whosoever is conformed to the likeness of the death of Christ by faith in Him and His baptism, is freed both from sin by justification, and from death by resurrection. For this is what He says: "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:15) What necessity then could there be for an infant's being conformed to the death of Christ by baptism, if he were not altogether poisoned by the bite of the serpent?**

**Commentary:** While Augustine correctly sees the correspondence between the uplifted serpent, and the death of Christ on the cross, the Scripture says, **"That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:15).** There is nothing in Numbers 21:6-9 that mentions or corresponds to baptism. If you looked at the serpent lifted up by Moses you were healed as we read in **Numbers 21 (KJV):6** And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. 7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. 8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. 9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

Now let us continue to read in **John 3 (KJV):14** And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

There is no mention of baptism here. It is by faith that the Israelites were healed when

they lifted their eyes to the uplifted serpent. It is by faith that we are born again and justified when we lift our eyes up, and believe in Jesus. Let us proceed to the next section where he will again argue for the salvation of infants by baptism.

## Chapter 62 [XXXIII.]—No One Can Be Reconciled to God, Except by Christ.

He then proceeds thus, saying: “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) Every infant, therefore, was destined to perish, and to lose everlasting life, if through the sacrament of baptism he believed not in the only begotten Son of God; while nevertheless, He comes not so that he may judge the world, but that the world through Him may be saved. This especially appears in the following clause, wherein He says, “He that believeth in Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18) In what class, then, do we place baptized infants but amongst believers, as the authority of the Catholic Church everywhere asserts? They belong, therefore, among those who have believed; for this is obtained for them by virtue of the sacrament and the answer of their sponsors. And from this it follows that such as are not baptized are reckoned among those who have not believed. Now if they who are baptized are not condemned, these last, as not being baptized, are condemned. He adds, indeed: “But this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light. (John 3:19) Of what does He say, “Light is come into the world,” if not of His own advent? And without the sacrament of His advent, how are infants said to be in the light? And why should we not include this fact also in “men’s love of darkness,” that as they do not themselves believe, so they refuse to think that their infants ought to be baptized, although they are afraid of their incurring the death of the body? “In God,” however, he declares are the “works of him wrought, who cometh to the light,” (John 3:21) because he is quite aware that his justification results from no merits of his own, but from the grace of God. “For it is God,” says the apostle, “who worketh in you both to will and to do of His own good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:13) This then is the way in which spiritual regeneration is effected in all who come to Christ from their carnal generation. He explained it Himself, and pointed it out, when He was asked, How these things could be? He left it open to no man to settle such a question by human reasoning, lest infants should be deprived of the grace of the remission of sins. There is no other passage leading to Christ; no man can be reconciled to God, or can come to God otherwise, than through Christ.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “He then proceeds thus, saying: “God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

He continues, “Every infant, therefore, was destined to perish, and to lose everlasting life, if through the sacrament of baptism he believed not in the only begotten Son of God; while nevertheless, He comes not so that he may judge the world, but that the world through Him may be saved.”

He refers to **John 12 (KJV):47** And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

He continues, “This especially appears in the following clause, wherein He says, “He that believeth in Him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18)”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

He continues, “In what class, then, do we place baptized infants but amongst believers, as the authority of the Catholic Church everywhere asserts? They belong, therefore, among those who have believed; for this is obtained for them by virtue of the sacrament and the answer of their sponsors. And from this it follows that such as are not baptized are reckoned among those who have not believed. Now if they who are baptized are not condemned, these last, as not being baptized, are condemned.”

But we must rely on the authority of the word of God. And the word of God does not mention sacraments, or salvation by ritual. It is those who have believed who are not condemned. Nothing is said in this regard about baptism. It is just a ritual that is only a token to show others that one has believed.

He continues, “He adds, indeed: “But this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light. (John 3:19)”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):19** And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

He continues, “Of what does He say, “Light is come into the world,” if not of His own advent? And without the sacrament of His advent, how are infants said to be in the light?”

Was his advent a sacrament? His coming into the world enlightens every man as we read in **John 1 (KJV):9** That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

His life is the light of men as we read in **John 1 (KJV):4** In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

A sacrament is understood to be, “:a Christian rite (such as baptism or the Eucharist) that is believed to have been ordained by Christ and that is held to be a means of divine grace or to be a sign or symbol of a spiritual reality”. (Merriam Webster)

He continues, “And why should we not include this fact also in “men’s love of darkness,” that as they do not themselves believe, so they refuse to think that their infants ought to be baptized, although they are afraid of their incurring the death of the body? “In God,” however, he declares are the “works of him wrought, who cometh to the light,” (John 3:21) because he is quite aware that his justification results from no merits of his own, but from the grace of God.”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):21** But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

He continues, ““For it is God,” says the apostle, “who worketh in you both to will and to do of His own good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:13)”

He refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):13** For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

He continues, “This then is the way in which spiritual regeneration is effected in all who

come to Christ from their carnal generation. He explained it Himself, and pointed it out, when He was asked, How these things could be? **He left it open to no man to settle such a question by human reasoning, lest infants should be deprived of the grace of the remission of sins. There is no other passage leading to Christ; no man can be reconciled to God, or can come to God otherwise, than through Christ.**”

Augustine quotes the Scripture, but still has not found any definitive proof that baptism saves infants, or anyone else for that matter. The reason is because baptism does not save us. It is our faith in Christ that saves us. Infants are too young to have this faith, so it is likely that they will be saved because they are under the age of accountability, and because Jesus died for the sins of the whole world. Baptizing infants makes their salvation dependent on something we do for them. This is not according to the Scriptures.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book 1, Chapter 70, page 43**

Chapter 70 [XXXIX.]—How Far Sin is Done Away in Infants by Baptism, Also in Adults, and What Advantage Results Therefrom.

In infants it is certain that, by the grace of God, through *His* baptism who came in the likeness of sinful flesh, it is brought to pass that the sinful flesh is done away. This result, however, is so effected, that the concupiscence which is diffused over and innate in the living flesh itself is not removed all at once, so as to exist in it no longer; but only that that might not be injurious to a man at his death, which was inherent at his birth. For should an infant live after baptism, and arrive at an age capable of obedience to a law, he finds there somewhat to fight against, and, by God’s help, to overcome, if he has not received His grace in vain, and if he is not willing to be a reprobate. **For not even to those who are of riper years is it given in baptism (except, perhaps, by an unspeakable miracle of the almighty Creator), that *the law of sin* which is in their members, warring against the law of their mind, should be entirely extinguished, and cease to exist; but that *whatever of evil has been done, said, or thought* by a man whilst he was servant to a mind subject to its concupiscence, should be abolished, and regarded as if it had never occurred.** The concupiscence itself, however, (notwithstanding the loosening of the bond of guilt in which the devil, by it, used to keep the soul, and the destruction of the barrier which separated man from his Maker,) remains in the contest in which we chasten our body and bring it into subjection, whether to be relaxed for lawful and necessary uses, or to be restrained by continence. (1 Corinthians 9:27) But inasmuch as the Spirit of God, who knows so much better than we do all the past, and present, and future of the human race, foresaw and foretold that the life of man would be such that “no man living should be justified in God’s sight,” (Psalm 142:2) it happens that through ignorance or infirmity we do not exert all the powers of our will against it, and so yield to it in the commission of sundry unlawful things,—becoming worse in proportion to the greatness and frequency of our surrender; and better, in proportion to its unimportance and infrequency. The investigation, however, of the point in which we are now interested—whether there could possibly be (or whether in fact there is, has been, or ever will be) a man without sin in this present life, except Him who said, “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me” (John 14:30)—requires a much fuller discussion; and the



arrangement of the present treatise is such as to make us postpone the question to the commencement of another book.

**Commentary:** It is difficult to say exactly what he means as he begins, and says, “*In infants it is certain that, by the grace of God, through His baptism who came in the likeness of sinful flesh, it is brought to pass that the sinful flesh is done away. This result, however, is so effected, that the concupiscence which is diffused over and innate in the living flesh itself is not removed all at once, so as to exist in it no longer; but only that that might not be injurious to a man at his death, which was inherent at his birth.*”

Baptism does not do away with the sinful nature of our flesh. The Spirit of God gives us the victory over our fleshly nature when we are born again as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Paul explains that the new birth gives us a new nature in our spirit, our inner man, by which we delight in the law of God in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Augustine even refers to this as he continues, and says, “*For not even to those who are of riper years is it given in baptism (except, perhaps, by an unspeakable miracle of the almighty Creator), that the law of sin which is in their members, warring against the law of their mind, should be entirely extinguished, and cease to exist; but that whatever of evil has been done, said, or thought by a man whilst he was servant to a mind subject to its concupiscence, should be abolished, and regarded as if it had never occurred.*”

The “*law of sin*” in the members of believers is not extinguished at all by baptism or regeneration by faith. It is true that all sin, as an issue past, present, and future, has been forgiven in Christ, as we read in **Psalms 132 (KJV):12** As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

And we have been given a new nature in our spirit, and by the life of the Holy Spirit who is the life of our spirits, having been born again, we have the victory over sin in our lives, as we read again in **Romans 8 (KJV):2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

However, we will not be entirely free of our old Adamic sin nature until our bodies are glorified at the resurrection.

In the next section, Augustine refers again to the “*laver of regeneration*”.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book II**

### **Book II.**

In which Augustin argues against such as say that in the present life there are, have been,

and will be, men who have absolutely no sin at all. He lays down four propositions on this head: and teaches, first, that a man might possibly live in the present life without sin, by the grace of God and his own free will; he next shows that nevertheless in fact there is no man who lives quite free from sin in this life; thirdly, he sets forth the reason of this,—because there is no man who exactly confines his wishes within the limits of the just requirement of each case, which just requirement he either fails to perceive, or is unwilling to carry out in practice; in the fourth place, he proves that there is not, nor has been, nor ever will be, a human being—except the one mediator, Christ—who is free from all sin.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book II, Chapters 9-10, page 47-48**

Chapter 9.—The Beginning of Renewal; Resurrection Called Regeneration; They are the Sons of God Who Lead Lives Suitable to Newness of Life.

And hence in the passage, “Whosoever is born of God doth not sin, and he cannot sin, for His seed remaineth in him,” (1 John 3:9) and in every other passage of like import, they much deceive themselves by an inadequate consideration of the Scriptures. **For they fail to observe that men severally become sons of God when they begin to live in newness of spirit, and to be renewed as to the inner man after the image of Him that created them. (Colossians 3:10)** For it is not from the moment of a man’s baptism that all his old infirmity is destroyed, but renovation begins with the remission of all his sins, and so far as he who is now wise is spiritually wise. All things else, however, are accomplished in hope, looking forward to their being also realized in fact, even to the renewal of the body itself in that better state of immortality and incorruption with which we shall be clothed at the resurrection of the dead. **For this too the Lord calls a regeneration,—though, of course, not such as occurs through baptism, but still a regeneration wherein that which is now begun in the spirit shall be brought to perfection also in the body.** “In the regeneration,” says He, “when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matthew 19:28) **For however entire and full be the remission of sins in baptism, nevertheless, if there was wrought by it at once, an entire and full change of the man into his everlasting newness,—I do not mean change in his body, which is now most clearly tending evermore to the old corruption and to death, after which it is to be renewed into a total and true newness,—but, the body being excepted, if in the soul itself, which is the inner man, a perfect renewal was wrought in baptism, the apostle would not say: “Even though our outward man perishes, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” 2 Corinthians 4:16)** Now, undoubtedly, he who is still renewed day by day is not as yet wholly renewed; and in so far as he is not yet wholly renewed, he is still in his old state. Since, then, men, even after they are baptized, are still in some degree in their old condition, they are on that account also still children of the world; but inasmuch as they are also admitted into a new state, that is to say, by the full and perfect remission of their sins, and in so far as they are spiritually-minded, and behave correspondingly, they are the children of God. Internally we put off the old man and put on the new; for we then and there lay aside lying, and speak truth, and do those other things wherein the apostle makes to consist the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Ephesians

4:24) Now it is men who are already baptized and faithful whom he exhorts to do this,—an exhortation which would be unsuitable to them, if the absolute and perfect change had been already made in their baptism. **And yet made it was, since we were then actually saved;** for “He saved us by the laver of regeneration.” (Titus 3:5) In another passage, however, he tells us how this took place. “Not they only,” says he, “but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” (Romans 8:23-25)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “And hence in the passage, “Whosoever is born of God doth not sin, and he cannot sin, for His seed remaineth in him,” (1 John 3:9) and in every other passage of like import, they much deceive themselves by an inadequate consideration of the Scriptures. **For they fail to observe that men severally become sons of God when they begin to live in newness of spirit, and to be renewed as to the inner man after the image of Him that created them. (Colossians 3:10)”**

He refers to **1 John 3 (KJV):9** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

And in context to **Colossians 3 (NASB):8** But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.

The words “old self”, in verse 9, in the Greek are **παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον** (pronounced palai-on an-throw-pon), and literally mean “old man”.

The words “new self”, in verse 10, in the Greek is **νέον** (pronounced neh-on) and simply mean “new”. The word “man” is not in the Greek, but it is implied.

The words “being renewed” in verse 10 in the Greek is **ἀνακαινούμενον** (pronounced ana-kai-new-meh-non), which is in the accusative, singular, masculine, participle, present passive tense.

In Colossians 3:10, the words “new man” refer to our soul, which is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him. The soul and the spirit of man are not visible parts of man. The spirit of man is where we connect with God. Being born of the Spirit, our spirit has the divine nature of the Spirit of God. When we are born again, we have a new spirit within us as stated in **Ezekiel 36 (KJV):26** A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

It is then that we become partakers of the divine nature as Peter reveals in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The soul is how we connect with our fellow man on earth. The soul is composed of our mind, will, heart, which is the center of our emotions, and our conscience. The soul is being renewed. This is what is stated in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which

is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We will explain more about the soul's renewal shortly. However, Augustine did not understand that when we are born again, our spirit is born of the Spirit of God. Augustine combined the soul and spirit into one, saying that the soul is composed of spirit. But there is a difference between the soul and the spirit as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

It is not a gradual becoming sons of God, but it is a spiritual birth. It is because of this spiritual birth that "his seed remaineth in him", as in 1 John 3:9 above. That is, the Spirit of God is now the life of our spirits, as in **Romans 8 (KJV):2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

This is why we now have eternal life as John says in **1 John 5 (KJV):12** He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

So our soul, our new self, is "being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him". A progressive sanctification is taking place in our soul as we walk in the light of the word of God, and grow in grace and knowledge. But our spirit has the divine nature of the Spirit of God. Augustine did not understand this principle.

Augustine then continues, "He then explains, "For it is not from the moment of a man's baptism that all his old infirmity is destroyed, but renovation begins with the remission of all his sins, and so far as he who is now wise is spiritually wise."

Augustine's wording is vague. What does he mean by "old infirmity"? And what does he mean by "renovation"? These are terms that the Scripture does not use in reference to man. Man has a nature to sin as we have read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

This nature is described as the "law of sin" in our members in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Paul was saved when he described his condition in Romans, chapter 7. He delighted in the law of God after the inward man, which had been born again. But in his flesh, his members, was a law of sin "warring against the law" of his mind. Why Paul encouraged the Galatian believers to walk in the Spirit is revealed in **Galatians 5 (KJV):16** This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and these are contrary the one to the other because of this law of sin in our members. This nature doesn't go away gradually until the resurrection, as Augustine seems to imply. But as we walk in the light of the word of God, we will have more and more victory over it. The condition of the Christian is summarized by Paul in **Romans 7 (KJV):**24 O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Augustine then continues, "All things else, however, are accomplished in hope, looking forward to their being also realized in fact, even to the renewal of the body itself in that better state of immortality and incorruption with which we shall be clothed at the resurrection of the dead."

And this is what we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

So, according to Augustine, baptism is only the beginning of the renovation. The body is not regenerated yet, but there is hope that it will be at the resurrection. Augustine did not understand the difference between the soul and the spirit of man. He thought the soul was composed of spirit, and so they were the same thing. But our spirit is where we connect with God. Before Christ, we are dead in our trespasses and sins, and we have no connection to God. When we are born again, our spirit is made alive to God by the Spirit of God.

And the soul, which is composed of the mind, will, emotions, and heart, which is the center of our emotions, and conscience, is being renewed, and progressively sanctified.

Augustine then continues, "For this too the Lord calls a regeneration,—though, of course, not such as occurs through baptism, but still a regeneration wherein that which is now begun in the spirit shall be brought to perfection also in the body." "In the regeneration," says He, "when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matthew 19:28)".

Augustine believed that regeneration occurs at baptism, and that there will also be the regeneration spoken of by Jesus, at the resurrection.

Augustine is referring to the words of Jesus in reply to Peter's question in **Matthew 19 (KJV):**27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? 28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. 30 But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.

The Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory in the Kingdom age, that is, the millennium, or thousand year reign of Christ. The regeneration in verse 28 above speaks of the changes that will be brought about by the Lord when He comes. Isaiah tells us what these



changes will be when Jesus will reign in the millennium in **Isaiah 11 (KJV)**:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: 2 And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; 3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: 4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. 5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. 6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. 7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. 10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

Now Augustine continues as he says, “For however entire and full be the remission of sins in baptism, nevertheless, if there was wrought by it at once, an entire and full change of the man into his everlasting newness,—I do not mean change in his body, which is now most clearly tending evermore to the old corruption and to death, after which it is to be renewed into a total and true newness,—but, the body being excepted, if in the soul itself, which is the inner man, a perfect renewal was wrought in baptism, the apostle would not say: “Even though our outward man perishes, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” 2 Corinthians 4:16)

Augustine here equates the inward man, or inner man, with the soul, as he says, “if in the soul itself, which is the inner man”. In Augustine’s understanding, the soul was composed of spirit. So to Augustine the two are the same in a sense. In the Scriptures, there are times when they are used interchangeably as we read in **Genesis 35 (KJV)**:18 And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.

And in **Luke 8 (KJV)**:55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

But we read of a division between soul and spirit in **Hebrews 4 (KJV)**:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

That is, as the joints and marrow are different things, so the soul is different from the spirit, though both soul and spirit are unseen. And we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV)**:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now Augustine refers to **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV)**:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

Our spirit is where we connect with God. Our soul is how we connect with our fellow man on earth. When we are born again, our spirit is made alive as we read in **Colossians 2**

**(KJV):13** When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.

This is why our inner man delights to do the will of God as Paul reveals in **Romans 7**

**(KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

But our soul still has all of the old perceptions of our mind, and the hurts of our past life on earth. It is in our soul where we are progressively sanctified as we walk in the light of the word of God, and grow in grace and knowledge.

Augustine continues as he says, “Now, undoubtedly, he who is still renewed day by day is not as yet wholly renewed; and in so far as he is not yet wholly renewed, he is still in his old state. Since, then, men, even after they are baptized, are still in some degree in their old condition, they are on that account also still children of the world; but inasmuch as they are also admitted into a new state, that is to say, by the full and perfect remission of their sins, and in so far as they are spiritually-minded, and behave correspondingly, they are the children of God.”

So Augustine is correct when he says, “Now, undoubtedly, he who is still renewed day by day is not as yet wholly renewed; and in so far as he is not yet wholly renewed, he is still in his old state.”

We are still in our old state in regards to our soul area, which is being cleansed and renewed as we walk with the Lord. All our old ways of thinking must be purged. This happens as we grow in grace and knowledge. The knowledge of the word of God renews our minds. This brings about a transformation in our lives, and we then begin to prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

But Augustine goes so far as to conclude “...and in so far as they are spiritually-minded, and behave correspondingly, they are the children of God.”

This statement makes our salvation dependent on our works. We are children of God when we believe in Jesus Christ, as a result of our being born again in our spirit. There is no turning back. There is no being born again, again. We now have a standing as righteous ones. We simply wash our feet to maintain our fellowship with the Lord. In doing so, we grow in grace and knowledge.

When we accept Christ, and we are born again, our spirits are made alive to God, and are partakers of the divine nature, and delight to do the will of God. We are now children of God, as John says in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. **2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

But in our soul area, we are being changed from glory to glory, as we read in **2 Corinthians 3 (KJV):18** But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Augustine did not understand this. To him we were gradually becoming children of God.

He continues, “Internally we put off the old man and put on the new; for we then and there lay aside lying, and speak truth, and do those other things wherein the apostle makes to consist the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Ephesians 4:24)”

Augustine is quoting from **Ephesians 4 (KJV):24** And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

The new man “is created in righteousness and true holiness.” This is speaking of the new man of the spirit which has the divine nature of the Spirit of God, being born of the Spirit.

But Augustine is referring in context to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

The old man relates to our fleshly ways of doing things without acknowledging God. The new man relates to the new nature in our spirits when we are born again. Our sanctification, that is, our putting off and putting on, is a process of surrender to the word of God, as we grow in grace and knowledge. This is happening in our soul area, which is gradually being cleansed of all our old worldly ways. Our ways of thinking, and our feelings, now include the presence of God. As we include God in our thinking, our minds are renewed and we become spiritually minded. The one who has been born again now has access to the Spirit of God, as we read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):**9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Augustine continues as he says, “Now it is men who are already baptized and faithful whom he exhorts to do this,—an exhortation which would be unsuitable to them, if the absolute and perfect change had been already made in their baptism.”

We are now the children of God, and it does not appear what we shall be as the apostle John reveals in **1 John 3 (KJV):**2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Our bodies will be changed, and glorified, and our souls will be completely purified when we see Him. But our spirits have the divine nature, being born of the Spirit of God.

Augustine continues as he says, “**And yet made it was, since we were then actually saved;**

for “He saved us by the laver of regeneration.” (Titus 3:5)

We read in context in **Titus 3 (KJV)**:4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Augustine only quotes part of the verse in Titus 3:5, as he says, “...He saved us by the laver of regeneration.” But the actual verse reads, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost”.

This reference to “washing” refers to the cleansing that happens when we believe in Jesus Christ. All our sins are forgiven. Getting baptized with water is something we do in obedience to the Lord’s command after we believe, for it is our believing that saves us as Paul reveals in **Romans 10 (KJV)**:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

This is what Jesus says in **John 3 (KJV)**:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Jesus also spoke as in **John 5 (KJV)**:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

When we truly believe in Jesus Christ, we pass from death to life, and we are born again of the Spirit of God. Our belief in Jesus Christ is not dependent on anyone else, or baptism.

The new birth is of God, as we read in **John 1 (KJV)**:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And Jesus explains that after we have bathed, we only need to wash our feet as we read in **John 13 (KJV)**:6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. 8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. 9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

Augustine continues as he says, in context, “And yet made it was, since we were then actually saved; for “He saved us by the laver of regeneration. (Titus 3:5) In another passage, however, he tells us how this took place. “Not they only,” says he, “but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the



adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” (Romans 8:23-25)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):23** And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

So, according to Augustine, we are saved by the “**laver of regeneration**”, and this takes place “**by hope**”. But does Augustine mean that if we lose hope, we are no longer saved? Let us read further in his writings.

And he refers to **Titus 3 (Douay Rheims):5** Not by the works of justice which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost.

However, the word translated “laver” in the Greek is **λουτρόν** (pronounced lü-tro'n), from G3068; a bath, i.e. (figuratively), baptism:—washing. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 3067**

This Greek word comes from the Greek word **λούω** (pronounced lü'-ō), a primary verb; to bathe (the whole person); **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 3068.**

So a better translation is as in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Augustine relied on the Latin Vulgate here. The Catholic Church was greatly influenced by the traditions of those who had gone before, and they began to substitute words into the Biblical text that corresponded to their traditions of interpretation.

We continue to read in the next chapter of this section.

## Chapter 10 [VIII.]—Perfection, When to Be Realized.

Our full adoption, then, as children, is to happen at the redemption of our body. It is therefore the first-fruits of the Spirit which we now possess, whence we are already really become the children of God; for the rest, indeed, as it is by hope that we are saved and renewed, so are we the children of God. But inasmuch as we are not yet actually saved, we are also not yet fully renewed, nor yet also fully sons of God, but children of the world. We are therefore advancing in renewal and holiness of life,—and it is by this that we are children of God, and by this also we cannot commit sin;—until at last the whole of that by which we are kept as yet children of this world is changed into this;—for it is owing to this that we are as yet able to sin. Hence it comes to pass that “whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;” (1 John 3:9) and as well, “if we were to say that we have no sin, we should deceive ourselves, and the truth would not be in us.” (1 John 1:8) There shall be then an end put to that within us which keeps us children of the flesh and of the world; whilst that other shall be perfected which makes us the children of God, and renews us by His Spirit. Accordingly the same John says, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.” (1 John 3:2) Now what means this variety in the expressions, “*we are*,” and “*we shall be*,” but this —*we are* in hope,



*we shall be* in reality? For he goes on to say, “We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2) We have therefore even now begun to be like Him, having the first fruits of the Spirit; but yet we are still unlike Him, by reason of the remainders of the old nature. In as far, then, as we are like Him, in so far are we, by the regenerating Spirit, sons of God; but in as far as we are unlike Him, in so far are we the children of the flesh and of the world. On the one side, we cannot commit sin; but, on the other, if we say that we have no sin, we only deceive ourselves,—until we pass entirely into the adoption, and the sinner be no more, and you look for his place and find it not. (Psalm 36:10)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Our full adoption, then, as children, is to happen at the redemption of our body.” He is correct when he says that our full adoption will happen at the redemption of our body as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):22** For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Augustine continues as he says, “It is therefore the first-fruits of the Spirit which we now possess, whence we are already really become the children of God; for the rest, indeed, as it is by hope that we are saved and renewed, so are we the children of God. But inasmuch as we are not yet actually saved, we are also not yet fully renewed, nor yet also fully sons of God, but children of the world.”

Augustine seems to equivocate here. That is, he avoids committing himself in what he is saying. First he says, “we are already really become the children of God; for the rest, indeed, as it is by hope that we are saved and renewed, so are we the children of God.” And then he says, “But inasmuch as we are not yet actually saved, we are also not yet fully renewed, nor yet also fully sons of God, but children of the world.”

Augustine sees a problem which he cannot resolve with the given teaching of the Catholic Church in his time. But he still tries to resolve it as he continues, and restates the problem, “We are therefore advancing in renewal and holiness of life,—and it is by this that we are children of God, and by this also we cannot commit sin;—until at last the whole of that by which we are kept as yet children of this world is changed into this;—for it is owing to this that we are as yet able to sin. Hence it comes to pass that “whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;” (1 John 3:9) and as well, “if we were to say that we have no sin, we should deceive ourselves, and the truth would not be in us.” (1 John 1:8)

He refers to **1 John 3 (KJV):9** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

The “seed” is the new divine nature in our spirit when we are born again. But our soul still has to be cleansed and renewed.

And in context to **1 John 1 (KJV):8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The problem seems to be that the apostle John says that whosoever is born of God does not commit sin, and also says that if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Now we must understand that the apostle John writes to his children in the Lord, as in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: **2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

John is addressing the ones he is writing to as, “My little children...”. And then in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Let us keep this in mind as we continue to read, and Augustine now explains, “*There shall be then an end put to that within us which keeps us children of the flesh and of the world; whilst that other shall be perfected which makes us the children of God, and renews us by His Spirit. Accordingly the same John says, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.” (1 John 3:2) Now what means this variety in the expressions, “we are,” and “we shall be,” but this —we are in hope, we shall be in reality? For he goes on to say, “We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2) We have therefore even now begun to be like Him, having the first fruits of the Spirit; but yet we are still unlike Him, by reason of the remainders of the old nature.*”

So far so good, as Augustine then continues, “*In as far, then, as we are like Him, in so far are we, by the regenerating Spirit, sons of God; but in as far as we are unlike Him, in so far are we the children of the flesh and of the world. On the one side, we cannot commit sin; but, on the other, if we say that we have no sin, we only deceive ourselves,—until we pass entirely into the adoption, and the sinner be no more, and you look for his place and find it not. (Psalm 36:10)*”

He refers to **Psalm 36 (Douay Rheims):10** For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: and thou shalt seek his place, and shalt not find it.

And to **Psalm 37 (KJV):10** For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

Remember that Augustine’s definition of regeneration is that all our sins are forgiven at baptism. This really puts us in a standing with God in grace, but it does not explain the change in the nature of our spirit when we are born again. What he doesn’t seem to completely understand is that we are now fully sons of God by the new birth in our spirits.

Dr. Albert Grimes explains regeneration in his book, **Doctrines of Salvation, Lesson 5: The Doctrine of Adoption Or Sonship, Page 1:**

“Regeneration begins the new life in our spirit. We are born again. A miracle of life has taken place in our spirit. A new nature or man is born in us. So regeneration deals with our change in nature. With a change in our nature comes a change in our standing which takes place because of our justification. Then we stand in God’s presence guiltless and uncondemned and righteous, in a righteousness which God accepts because of what Christ has done.

Sanctification deals with our change of character. We are being conformed to His image. This is a progressive experience.

Adoption deals with our change of position. We were, in our unregenerated state, children of the devil with his nature, as Ephesians 2:3 states, “...and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

Through adoption by Jesus Christ we are now sons of God, as Ephesians 1:5 says, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Also in 1 John 3:2, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God..."

Dr. Grimes has here explained how complete our salvation is.

Now, the word adoption in the Greek is **υιοθεσία** (pronounced hwē-o-theh-sē'-ä). Vine says that this word is "from *huios*, "a son," and *thesis*, "a placing," akin to *tithemi*, "to place," signifies the place and condition of a son given to one to whom it does not naturally belong. The word is used by the Apostle Paul only. In Romans 8:15, believers are said to have received "the Spirit of adoption," that is, the Holy Spirit who, given as the Firstfruits of all that is to be theirs, produces in them the realization of sonship and the attitude belonging to sons. In Galatians 4:5 they are said to receive "the adoption of sons," i.e., sonship bestowed in distinction from a relationship consequent merely upon birth;" **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. I, page 31-32.**

We have now received the Spirit of adoption as Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (KJV):15** For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

And in **Galatians 4 (KJV):5** To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

That is, we have been placed as sons with full rights of sonship, so that we are now the sons of God. But the completion of our adoption will happen with the redemption of our bodies.

So in one sense, we are waiting for the full adoption, the redemption of our body. But in another sense, we are already adopted, as we are now the sons of God, and accepted in the beloved as in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):6** Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

We are no longer children of the devil. And we have been justified by God, and we stand in grace as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The word "peace" in verse one in the Greek is **εἰρήνη** (pronounced eirēnē). "The verb is *eiro*, to bind together that which has been separated." **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume 1, Romans in the Greek New Testament, Page 77.**

So we could say it means "to be set at one with". What Augustine did not understand is the difference between our standing and our state. Being regenerated, and justified, and adopted, we have a standing as sons and daughters in Christ. Our spirit has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and has been made partaker of the divine nature as Peter says in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

So our spirit cannot sin, but in our soul, which is composed of our mind, our heart, our emotions, our will and our conscience, we have all of the baggage of our past. This is where we need to get cleaned up. This has to do with our state at any given time. If in our soul we yield to the sin nature in our flesh, we sin. As we yield to the new nature in our spirit, we walk in the Spirit. If we sin we have an advocate with the Father as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little

children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Again we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):5** This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

We maintain our fellowship with him by walking in the light, as He is in the light. His word is our light as we read in **Psalms 119 (KJV):105** Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

And Paul says in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

We were washed when we were regenerated, or born again by the Spirit of God. After this cleansing, we only need to wash our feet as Jesus tells Peter in **John 13 (KJV):8** Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. 9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

So we are now the children of God, but at the resurrection, we will be like Him as in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

What we shall be refers to the resurrection as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):51** Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

We are not gradually being born again, or gradually becoming sons of God. When we believe in Jesus Christ, that God raised Him from the dead, and we confess Him as Lord of our life, we are saved, and we are not our own as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

We are born again in that moment of faith. And we are then justified as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

We now have a standing with God as righteous ones. God has justified us. That is, He has declared us to be righteous, and put His righteousness down to our account. Nothing can separate us from His love as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So we have a standing before God as righteous ones, as sons and daughters. Nothing can now separate us from His love. But in our state, we are being progressively cleansed in our souls. Augustine did not have a clear understanding of regeneration, because of his belief that the soul was composed of spirit, and so man has only two parts, body and soul. That thinking hindered his understanding of how a believer deals with sin. If the soul and the spirit are one, then one can only be renewed in part because of the fact that we still sin after we are regenerated. In his words, **“We are therefore advancing in renewal and holiness of life,—and it is by this that we are children of God, and by this also we cannot commit sin;—until at last the whole of that by which we are kept as yet children of this world is changed into this;—for it is owing to this that we are as yet able to sin.”**

We are still not able to answer the question whether Augustine believed you could lose your salvation if you lost hope.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate XII. Chapter III. 6–21, paragraph 5, page 82**

5. The Lord says to Nicodemus, and explains to him: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Thou, says He, understandest a carnal generation, when thou sayest, Can a man return into his mother’s bowels? The birth for the kingdom of God must be of water and of the Spirit. **If one is born to the temporal inheritance of a human father, be he born of the bowels of a carnal mother; if one is born to the everlasting inheritance of God as his Father, be he born of the bowels of the Church.** A father, as one that will die, begets a son by his wife to succeed him; but God begets of the Church sons, not to succeed Him, but to abide with Himself. And He goes on: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” We are born spiritually then, and spirit we are born by the word and sacrament. The Spirit is present that we may be born; the Spirit is invisibly present whereof thou art born, for thou too must be invisibly born. For He goes on to say: “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest its voice, but knowest not whence it cometh, or whither it goeth.” None sees the Spirit; and how do we hear the Spirit’s voice? There sounds a psalm, it is the Spirit’s voice; the gospel sounds, it is the Spirit’s voice; the divine



word sounds, it is the Spirit's voice. "Thou hearest its voice, and knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth." But if thou art born of the Spirit, thou too shall be so, that one who is not born of the Spirit knows not, as for thee, whence thou comest, or whither thou goest. For He said, as He went on, "So is also every one that is born of the Spirit."

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "The Lord says to Nicodemus, and explains to him: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Thou, says He, understandest a carnal generation, when thou sayest, Can a man return into his mother's bowels? The birth for the kingdom of God must be of water and of the Spirit."

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Augustine misunderstood this Scripture. Jesus is saying that there are two births, one physical of water, and one spiritual of the Holy Spirit.

He continues, "If one is born to the temporal inheritance of a human father, be he born of the bowels of a carnal mother; if one is born to the everlasting inheritance of God as his Father, be he born of the bowels of the Church."

The new birth of the Spirit is never expressed as being "born of the bowels of the Church". We are all baptized by one Spirit into the body of Christ when we have faith, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

This was a sovereign baptism by the Lord when we believed. Augustine thought it was by the ritual of baptism that one is born again. But that would make it something we did. But as the wind blows, so is everyone who is born of the Spirit. We are born as God wills, as we read in **John1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Augustine continues, "A father, as one that will die, begets a son by his wife to succeed him; but God begets of the Church sons, not to succeed Him, but to abide with Himself."

The Church is never said to beget sons in the Scriptures, but Augustine concludes it is so because of the Church's thinking about baptism.

Augustine then explains, as he continues, "And He goes on: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." We are born spiritually then, and spirit we are born by the word and sacrament. The Spirit is present that we may be born; the Spirit is invisibly present whereof thou art born, for thou too must be invisibly born. For He goes on to say: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest its voice, but knowest not whence it cometh, or whither it goeth.""

He refers to **John 3 (Douay Rheims):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Wonder not that I said to thee: You must be born again. 8 The Spirit breatheth where he will and thou hearest his voice: but thou knowest not whence he cometh and whither he goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit.

But we read as in **John 3 (ESV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

But no matter how you translate it, “The Spirit breatheth where he will”, or “The wind blows where it wishes”, the point is, it is not by the will of man that one is “born of the Spirit” as we read in **John 1 (ESV):12** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

So when he said, “We are born spiritually then, and spirit we are born by the word and sacrament”, he explains how we are born of the Church. In his thinking, it is “by the word and sacrament”, because the Spirit speaks the word through the Church, which administers the sacrament.

The Scripture says that we are born of the Spirit. It is not just the Spirit’s presence, but it is His working in us that brings about our spiritual birth. We are born again in a moment. The tradition of the Catholic Church was speaking so loudly that Augustine could not understand this simple truth as it is written in the Scripture.

He continues, “None sees the Spirit; and how do we hear the Spirit’s voice? There sounds a psalm, it is the Spirit’s voice; the gospel sounds, it is the Spirit’s voice; the divine word sounds, it is the Spirit’s voice. “Thou hearest its voice, and knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.””

The verse reads as in **John 3 (KJV):8** The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

He is making an analogy of the wind of the Spirit as a voice. He continues, “But if thou art born of the Spirit, thou too shall be so, that one who is not born of the Spirit knows not, as for thee, whence thou comest, or whither thou goest. For He said, as He went on, “So is also every one that is born of the Spirit.””

And it is true, that the world does not know or perceive those who have been born again as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

## Summary

In **On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book 1, Chapters 59-62, page 38-40**, Chapter 59, Augustine quotes John 3:1-21 faithfully.

In Chapter 60, he refers to spiritual regeneration, but he skips over John 3:1-12, and instead focuses on John 3:13, and refers to it as something heavenly, as he says, “**Thus, He says, shall come the spiritual birth,—men, from being earthly, shall become heavenly; and this they can only obtain by being made members of me;**”

And with this statement, he intimates that one has to be connected to the body of Christ, the Church, to become heavenly. He uses John 3:13 to try to explain that it is a heavenly birth,

as in **John 3 (ESV):13** No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

In Chapter 61, while Augustine correctly sees the correspondence between the uplifted serpent, and the death of Christ on the cross, he does not understand that it was the faith of those who looked up to the serpent upon the pole that brought about their healing. In the same way, it is the faith of those who look to Jesus Christ that saves them.

In Chapter 62, he asserts that the “**virtue of the sacrament and the answer of their sponsors**” in baptism saves infants. But “sacraments” are not mentioned in the Scriptures. And one can only have faith for themselves.

Then in **On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book 1, Chapter 70, page 43**, he says, “**Our full adoption, then, as children, is to happen at the redemption of our body.**” He understood that our bodies would be changed at the resurrection. But he then says, “**But inasmuch as we are not yet actually saved, we are also not yet fully renewed, nor yet also fully sons of God, but children of the world.**”

When we believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord, we are born again. We pass from death to life. We are now the sons and daughters of God as the apostle John reveals in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. **2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

But let us take heed to Paul’s warning in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

If we have truly believed, Jesus Christ is in us, and we are in Him.

Then in **On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book II, Chapters 9-10, page 47-48**, Chapter 9, Augustine says that we are saved by the “**laver of regeneration**”, and this takes place “**by hope**”. But a better translation is the “washing of regeneration”.

Augustine relied on the **Latin Vulgate** in his writings. The Catholic Church was greatly influenced by the traditions of those who had gone before, and they began to substitute words into the Biblical text that corresponded to their traditions of interpretation, such as laver for washing.

It is true we are not what we shall be. Augustine doesn’t seem to completely understand that we are now fully sons of God by the new birth in our spirits.

Then in **Tractate XII. Chapter III. 6–21, paragraph 5, page 82**, he says, “**if one is born to the everlasting inheritance of God as his Father, be he born of the bowels of the Church.**” Because of his belief that the ritual of baptism was the “**laver of regeneration**”, he concluded that one is “**born of the bowels of the Church**”, since the Church administered baptism, whereby “we are born by the word and sacrament”, according to Augustine.

But as we read in John 1:12, being born again is a sovereign working of God in the one whom He has chosen, for it is of His will that we are born again and not ours, as we read again in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: **13** Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

## The Adamic Sin Nature

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book II, Chapter 37, page 59

Chapter 37 [XXIII.]—The Corruption of Nature is by Sin, Its Renovation is by Christ.

From this law of sin is born the flesh of sin, **which requires cleansing through the sacrament of Him who came in the likeness of sinful flesh**, that the body of sin might be destroyed, which is also called “the body of this death,” from which only God’s grace delivers wretched man through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 7:24-25) For this law, the origin of death, passed on from the first pair to their posterity, as is seen in the labour with which all men toil in the earth, and the travail of women in the pains of childbirth. For these sufferings they merited by the sentence of God, when they were convicted of sin; and we see them fulfilled not only in them, but also in their descendants, in some more, in others less, but nevertheless in all. **Whereas, however, the primeval righteousness of the first human beings consisted in obeying God, and not having in their members the law of their own concupiscence against the law of their mind; now, since their sin, in our sinful flesh which is born of them, it is obtained by those who obey God, as a great acquisition, that they do not obey the desires of this evil concupiscence, but crucify in themselves the flesh with its affections and lusts, in order that they may be Jesus Christ’s, who on His cross symbolized this, and who gave them power through His grace to become the sons of God. For it is not to all men, but to as many as have received Him, that He has given to be born again to God of the Spirit, after they were born to the world by the flesh. Of these indeed it is written: “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God; which were born, not of the flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God.” (John 1:12-13)**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “From this law of sin is born the flesh of sin, **which requires cleansing through the sacrament of Him who came in the likeness of sinful flesh**, that the body of sin might be destroyed, which is also called “the body of this death,” from which only God’s grace delivers wretched man through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 7:24-25)”

He refers first to **Romans 8 (KJV):3** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

And to **Romans 6 (KJV):6** Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

And to **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? **25** I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Augustine then continues, “For this law, the origin of death, passed on from the first pair to their posterity, as is seen in the labour with which all men toil in the earth, and the travail of women in the pains of childbirth. For these sufferings they merited by the sentence of God,

when they were convicted of sin; and we see them fulfilled not only in them, but also in their descendants, in some more, in others less, but nevertheless in all.”

He refers to God’s judgment on Adam and Eve’s sin in the Garden of Eden as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):**16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. 17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

And we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):**21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

And this death is not just physical, but also spiritual as we read in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):**1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

So in Adam all die. Augustine continues, “Whereas, however, the primeval righteousness of the first human beings consisted in obeying God, and not having in their members the law of their own concupiscence against the law of their mind;”

Adam and Eve were innocent in the Garden of Eden until they sinned. There was no sin nature in their flesh before they sinned. But since sin was in the world because of Lucifer, they were tested in regards to their obedience, and when they sinned, sin came into their members as Paul reveals in **Romans 7 (KJV):**23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Augustine then continues, “now, since their sin, in our sinful flesh which is born of them, it is obtained by those who obey God, as a great acquisition, that they do not obey the desires of this evil concupiscence, but crucify in themselves the flesh with its affections and lusts, in order that they may be Jesus Christ’s, who on His cross symbolized this, and who gave them power through His grace to become the sons of God.”

Augustine is saying that the “it” that “is obtained by those who obey God” is the “primeval righteousness”, which is obtained “as a great acquisition”, by those who “do not obey the desires of this evil concupiscence, but crucify in themselves the flesh with its affections and lusts”. This is done “in order that they may be Jesus Christ’s, who on His cross symbolized this, and who gave them power through His grace to become the sons of God.”

The “primeval righteousness” is restored when we have faith in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord, and we are born again. This is what justification does for us.

Now also, Augustine makes it a process whereby we “may be Jesus Christ’s” if we “do not obey the desires of this evil concupiscence, but crucify” in ourselves “the flesh with its affections and lusts”, so that we may receive “power through His grace to become the sons of God.” But the Scriptures are clear that when we believe, we are born again, and we are now the



sons of God, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

We are not our own, for we have been bought with a price, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? **20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

And it is also clear, by the Scriptures, that when we believe, we are justified by faith in Jesus Christ as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; **22** Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: **23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **24** Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: **25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; **26** To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

So when we believe in Jesus Christ, God justifies us, and imputes or reckons His righteous down to our account. This is also evident as we read in **Romans 5 (ESV):1** Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **2** Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Augustine then continues, “For it is not to all men, but to as many as have received Him, that He has given to be born again to God of the Spirit, after they were born to the world by the flesh. Of these indeed it is written: “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God; which were born, not of the flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God.” (John 1:12-13)”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: **13** Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Although he quotes the Scripture correctly, Augustine is making the reception of Christ a process that does not complete until one takes his or her final breath. But when we believe in Jesus Christ, we pass over from death to life. His eternal life is in our spirit. His righteousness is then put down to our account. This is why our justification is in the past tense. The **King James Version** mistakenly has it in the present tense as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):11** And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

But the **New American Standard Bible** corrects this as in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

The word “washed” in the Greek here is **ἀπολούω** (Pronounced apolouō), and comes from two Greek words **ἀπό** (Pronounced apa), meaning from, and **λούω** (Pronounced lū'-ō), meaning to bathe, wash. Thus this word means “to wash off or away”. **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. IV, page 199.**

Before we believed, we were unrighteous. After we believed, we were born again in our spirit, bathed or washed, sanctified or separated from our sins, and justified or declared righteous, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. This is why we are now the children of God.

We are not perfect yet. When we see Him we will be like Him. But in our standing we are righteous. The Church in Augustine's time did not understand this.

The washing here spoken of in 1 Corinthians 6:11 is the cleansing as a result of the forgiveness of sins that happens when we are born again. This is spoken of by Jesus as a bath in **John 13 (KJV):**5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. 8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. 9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

The word for washed in verse 10 in the Greek is **νίπτω** (pronounced niptō), and means “to wash, to wash one's self”. It is translated “bathe” by the **English Standard Version** in **John 13 (ESV):**10 Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you."

Once we believe, we take a bath as it were. We then have a standing as righteous ones. After this, we do not need to take a bath all over again. We only need to wash our feet and we are all clean. This is how we stay in fellowship with the Lord, but our salvation is secure.

In the next section, Augustine refers to the “**sacrament of spiritual regeneration and renewal**”.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book II, Chapter 44-45, page 62-63**

### **Chapter 44.—An Objection of the Pelagians.**

Nor do they fail to see this point, that his own sins are no detriment to the parent after his conversion; they therefore raise the question: “How much more impossible is it that they should be a hindrance to his son?” But they who thus think do not attend to this consideration, that as his own sins are not injurious to the father for the very reason that he is born again of the Spirit, so in the case of his son, unless he be in the same manner born again, the sins which he derived from his father will prove injurious to him. **Because even renewed parents beget children, not out of the first fruits of their renewed condition, but carnally out of the remains of the old nature; and the children who are thus the offspring of their parents' remaining old nature, and are born in sinful flesh, escape from the condemnation which is due to the old man by the sacrament of spiritual regeneration and renewal. Now this is a consideration which, on account of the controversies that have arisen, and may still arise, on this subject, we ought to keep in our view and memory,—that a full and perfect remission of sins takes place only in baptism, that**

the character of the actual man does not at once undergo a total change, but that the first fruits of the Spirit in such as walk worthily change the old carnal nature into one of like character by a process of renewal, which increases day by day, until the entire old nature is so renovated that the very weakness of the natural body attains to the strength and incorruptibility of the spiritual body.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Nor do they fail to see this point, that his own sins are no detriment to the parent after his conversion; they therefore raise the question: “How much more impossible is it that they should be a hindrance to his son?” But they who thus think do not attend to this consideration, that as his own sins are not injurious to the father for the very reason that he is born again of the Spirit, so in the case of his son, unless he be in the same manner born again, the sins which he derived from his father will prove injurious to him.”

This comment by Augustine follows a chapter speaking again of baptism for infants, in which the Pelagians believed that a sin nature was not passed down to the child of believing parents. Augustine is making his case for the baptism of infants. He continues and argues, “Because even renewed parents beget children, not out of the first fruits of their renewed condition, but carnally out of the remains of the old nature; and the children who are thus the offspring of their parents’ remaining old nature, and are born in sinful flesh, escape from the condemnation which is due to the old man by the sacrament of spiritual regeneration and renewal.”

“The sacrament of spiritual regeneration and renewal” refers to baptism in Augustine’s time. But baptism is only an outward token of something that has already taken place. Our new birth is a spiritual birth, and it takes place when we truly believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord. We are baptized because we believe.

Augustine continues, “Now this is a consideration which, on account of the controversies that have arisen, and may still arise, on this subject, we ought to keep in our view and memory,—that a full and perfect remission of sins takes place only in baptism”.

Actually, “a full and perfect remission of sins takes place only” when we believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord. We are then baptized because we have made this confession.

Augustine continues, as he asserts “that the character of the actual man does not at once undergo a total change, but that the first fruits of the Spirit in such as walk worthily change the old carnal nature into one of like character by a process of renewal, which increases day by day, until the entire old nature is so renovated that the very weakness of the natural body attains to the strength and incorruptibility of the spiritual body.”

Augustine is correct when he says that “the character of the actual man does not at once undergo a total change”. But the old carnal nature is in our flesh. It is not our flesh that is renewed, but our mind and our heart and our emotions and our will and our conscience, which are all in our soul area.

The “the very weakness of the natural body” will not attain “to the strength and incorruptibility of the spiritual body” until the resurrection when it shall be changed.

The old nature in our flesh is not renovated, but it is overcome by the life of the Spirit of God in our spirits when we are born again. This new life in our spirits gives us power over our flesh and our souls to do the will of God. Baptism is a ritual, and not the reality.

We must understand that our character is a reflection of what is in our soul. It is true that “the first fruits of the Spirit in such as walk worthily” increases day by day, as we walk in the light and grow in grace and knowledge of the word of God. But Augustine asserts that the first fruits of the Spirit “change the old carnal nature into one of like character by a process of renewal”. We must understand that the carnal nature in the body will not be changed until the resurrection. The body of our flesh is mortal, that is, it is doomed to die. So, our old Adamic nature to sin is not “so renovated that the very weakness of the natural body attains to the strength and incorruptibility of the spiritual body”.

We read in **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):16** For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

The outward man is our flesh, and is perishing. The inward man is our soul and our spirit. As our soul is cleansed, we will increase in the fruit of the Spirit and we will become spiritual. That is, we will be led by the Spirit, and we will be walking in the Spirit’s control. But our natural body will not be changed until the resurrection. Paul explains this in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):35** But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? **36** Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: **37** And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: **38** But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. **39** All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. **40** There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. **41** There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. **42** So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: **43** It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: **44** It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

The body we have now is a natural body. But when we are raised from the dead, our bodies will be changed to be a spiritual body, like His glorious body as we read in **Philippians 3 (KJV):21** Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Paul continues as he explains what will take place at the resurrection in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):45** And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. **46** Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. **47** The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. **48** As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. **49** And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. **50** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. **51** Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, **52** In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. **53** For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. **54** So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. **55** O death, where is thy sting? O

grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.  
57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.  
58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Our bodies are not being changed yet, and our old nature is not being renovated “**that the very weakness of the natural body attains to the strength and incorruptibility of the spiritual body.**” This will happen in the rapture when He comes. If we are alive and remain, we will be changed. If we have died, when He comes we will be raised from the dead as we read in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):** 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Now there is a renewal in our minds, which is in our souls, that is taking place as we yield ourselves a living sacrifice unto God. This renewal transforms our character as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):** 1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

But the old Adamic nature in our bodies is what makes them mortal, and doomed to die. That is why our bodies will be changed at the resurrection to be immortal, imperishable, and incorruptible. The transformation in our soul area is where a progressive sanctification is taking place that is conforming our character more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ as in **2 Corinthians 3 (KJV):** 18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

This change is happening in our soul, and not our bodies. This is not to say that our bodies are not strengthened by this renewing in our souls, for we read in **Isaiah 40 (KJV):** 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31 But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Augustine did not understand the difference between our soul and our spirit. He saw the progressive sanctification of the believer as a change in the soul, but he believed that it was in our soul where we were born again. And so he believed we were gradually becoming children of God more and more as this change took place. He did not understand the standing of the believer as a fully born again, in their spirit, child of God, who has been justified, and adopted as a son of God. It is these who will then go through a progressive sanctification in their souls.

We will next look at the law of sin.

Chapter 45 [XXVIII.]—The Law of Sin is Called Sin; How Concupiscence Still Remains After Its Evil Has Been Removed in the Baptized.

This law of sin, however, which the apostle also designates “sin,” when he says, “Let not *sin* therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof,” (Romans 6:12) does not so remain in the members of those who are born again of water and the Spirit, as



if no remission thereof has been made, because there is a full and perfect remission of our sins, all the enmity being slain, which separated us from God; but it remains in our old carnal nature, as if overcome and destroyed, if it does not, by consenting to unlawful objects, somehow revive, and recover its own reign and dominion. There is, however, so clear a distinction to be seen between this old carnal nature, in which the law of sin, or sin, is already repealed, and that life of the Spirit, in the newness of which they who are baptized are through God's grace born again, that the apostle deemed it too little to say of such that they were not in sin; unless he also said that they were not in the flesh itself, even before they departed out of this mortal life. "They that are in the flesh," says he, "cannot please God; but ye *are not in the flesh*, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." (Romans 8:8-9) And indeed, as they turn to good account the flesh itself, however corruptible it be, who apply its members to good works, and no longer are in that flesh, since they do not mould their understanding nor their life according to its principles; and as they in like manner make even a good use of death, which is the penalty of the first sin, who encounter it with fortitude and patience for their brethren's sake, and for the faith, and in defense of whatever is true and holy and just,—so also do all "true yokefellowes" in the faith turn to good account that very law of sin which still remains, though remitted, in their old carnal nature, who, because they have the new life in Christ, do not permit lust to have dominion over them. *And yet these very persons, because they still carry about Adam's old nature, mortally generate children to be immortally regenerated, with that propagation of sin, in which such as are born again are not held bound, and from which such as are born are released by being born again. As long, then, as the law by concupiscence dwells in the members, although it remains, the guilt of it is released; but it is released only to him who has received the sacrament of regeneration, and has already begun to be renewed. But whatsoever is born of the old nature, which still abides with its concupiscence, requires to be born again in order to be healed. Seeing that believing parents, who have been both carnally born and spiritually born again, have themselves begotten children in a carnal manner, how could their children by any possibility, previous to their first birth, have been born again?*

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "This law of sin, however, which the apostle also designates "sin," when he says, "Let not *sin* therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof," (Romans 6:12) does not so remain in the members of those who are born again of water and the Spirit, as if no remission thereof has been made, because there is a full and perfect remission of our sins, all the enmity being slain, which separated us from God; but it remains in our old carnal nature, as if overcome and destroyed, if it does not, by consenting to unlawful objects, somehow revive, and recover its own reign and dominion."

He refers in context to **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

And to **Romans 6 (KJV):12** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

And "*all the enmity being slain*" refers in context to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):11** Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by

that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

So there is nothing that separates us from God. But we have a sin nature in our flesh which we now must take authority over. We must put off the old and put on the new.

Augustine then continues, “There is, however, so clear a distinction to be seen between this old carnal nature, in which the law of sin, or sin, is already repealed, and that life of the Spirit, in the newness of which they who are baptized are through God’s grace born again, that the apostle deemed it too little to say of such that they were not in sin; unless he also said that they were not in the flesh itself, even before they departed out of this mortal life. “They that are in the flesh,” says he, “cannot please God; but ye *are not in the flesh*, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” (Romans 8:8-9)

He refers in context to **Romans 8 (KJV):8** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Now in order to unpack what is being said in this Scripture, we need to read them in context, as we begin in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

The law of sin and death is in my members as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is in our spirits when we are born again, for whatever is born of Spirit is spirit as we read in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

This law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. I don’t have to live that way anymore.

We continue to read in **Romans 8 (KJV):3** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

We are not to be “after the flesh” so that we “mind the things of the flesh”. We are to be “after the Spirit” so that we mind “the things of the Spirit”. The carnal mind brings death. But “to be spiritually minded is life and peace”.

To be spiritually minded is to think as in **Philippians 4 (KJV):8** Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just,

whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

We continue to read in **Romans 8 (KJV):7** Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

When we are after what the flesh wants, so that we are always thinking about how to please our fleshly desires, our minds are carnal, that is, fleshly. To live this way is enmity against God. It is to be not subject to the law of God. When we live this way, we cannot please God.

We continue to read in **Romans 8 (KJV):9** But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

When we are born again, the Spirit of God dwells in us. And so Christ is in us, and the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. In our spirit we have a new nature, and we delight to do the will of God as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

The Spirit of God is the life of our spirit, and we now have the victory over our flesh.

Now Augustine continues as he then says, “And indeed, as they turn to good account the flesh itself, however corruptible it be, who apply its members to good works, and no longer are in that flesh, since they do not mould their understanding nor their life according to its principles; and as they in like manner make even a good use of death, which is the penalty of the first sin, who encounter it with fortitude and patience for their brethren’s sake, and for the faith, and in defense of whatever is true and holy and just,—so also do all “true yokefellows” in the faith turn to good account that very law of sin which still remains, though remitted, in their old carnal nature, who, because they have the new life in Christ, do not permit lust to have dominion over them.”

And Jesus spoke as in **John 10 (KJV):10** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

We will find the abundant life that Jesus came to give us if we “do not permit lust to have dominion over” us, as Augustine has said.

But he then continues, “**And yet these very persons, because they still carry about Adam’s old nature, mortally generate children to be immortally regenerated, with that propagation of sin, in which such as are born again are not held bound, and from which such as are born are released by being born again.**”

So Augustine does not hold married people as if they were sinning when they come together to have children, but he says they do “**mortally generate children to be immortally regenerated, with that propagation of sin**”. But God created married people to be one flesh as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):24** Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

The words “one flesh” in the Scripture speak of the unceasing intimacy of husband and wife. Augustine never was able to get over the guilt he felt because of his former promiscuous lifestyle. Nevertheless he continues, “**As long, then, as the law by concupiscence dwells in the**

members, although it remains, the guilt of it is released; but it is released only to him who has received the sacrament of regeneration, and has already begun to be renewed.”

We can substitute the word “lust” for the word “concupiscence”, for then it is more understandable. But within marriage, there is no guilt to be released for the bed is undefiled as we read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):4** Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Fornication, or sex outside of marriage, is a sin. But sex within marriage is “honorable in all, and the bed is undefiled”.

Augustine then continues, “But whatsoever is born of the old nature, which still abides with its concupiscence, requires to be born again in order to be healed. Seeing that believing parents, who have been both carnally born and spiritually born again, have themselves begotten children in a carnal manner, how could their children by any possibility, previous to their first birth, have been born again?”

So Augustine is saying that believing parents, having been born again, beget children in a carnal manner, who will need to be born again after they are born physically.

Parents who are born again give birth to the flesh of children, but when he says that they “have themselves begotten children in a carnal manner”, he implies sin, when there is no sin in marriage. There is only sin outside of marriage. But the children of believing parents are not born again when they are born, but they need to be born again when they grow to the age of accountability.

In conclusion, when we are born again, God justifies us and puts His righteousness down to our account. Our sins have been forgiven.

Let us be clear what the Scripture says.

The law of sin may recover and have dominion in our lives if we do not yield to the inner spirit which has been born again of the Spirit of God. But it is not so that we then lose the grace of God, and somehow become unborn again in our spirits, and need to be born again, again.

When we are born again, our spirit is born again of the Spirit, and has eternal life from the Spirit of God, and a new nature, by the grace of God. We are then not our own as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):15** Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

16 What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh. 17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. 19 What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

We must flee fornication, but marriage is honorable in all. We are joined to the Lord in one spirit when we are born again. We have been bought with a price, and we are God's possession. We are not our own any more.

So what happens if we let our carnal nature, our old man, have dominion? We read the following in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):3** For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art

rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. 14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

He whom the Lord loves, he chastens, or He disciplines. All God's children are partakers of discipline. This is how we grow to be more like Him. Now what forms may this discipline take? We have them recorded in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV)**: 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. 33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

In verse 30 above he says, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." When the Corinthians were disciplined by the Lord for eating the Lord's supper in an unworthy manner, many became weak, or sickly. Some even slept, that is, they died. But their spirits went to be with the Lord, yet they underwent the fire of their bad choices while on earth. Paul explains in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**: 10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

If any man's work shall be burned, referring to wood, hay, and stubble, "he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." That is, he shall suffer for the bad choices he makes in this life. This discipline is also mentioned in **1 Corinthians 5 (KJV)**: 1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from



among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Though someone's work is burned up so as by fire, yet the spirit will be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. This is referring to one who has been born again, but who yields to his flesh so that his flesh again has dominion over him and he does not repent, as this man was doing.

But this man repented of his fornication as we read in **2 Corinthians 2 (KJV):6** Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. 7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. 8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. 9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. 10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; 11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Augustine did not understand what was changed, or transformed in us. Our flesh has not changed. It is still mortal and doomed to die. It still has the old Adamic sin nature in it, which is the law of sin in our members as we read again in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

But our spirit has been changed, being born of the Spirit of God, so that we delight to do the will of God there, as we read again in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

It is in our soul where all of our problems are. This is where we are transformed.

Augustine went from a profligate to a celibate by his own admission. He had a son, Adeodatus, out of wedlock when he was 18. He was not converted to Christ until the age of 31. To help us understand Augustine's thinking, let us look at a few thoughts on Christian History.

Frank A. James III published this article in **Christian History**, Issue 15, in 1987:

To Augustine's mind, converting to Christianity meant abandoning marriage altogether. As he records his conversion in the *Confessions*, he describes being torn between marriage and chaste devotion to God. He decided it could be only the latter for him.

After his conversion, he had much to say about sex and marriage. The fall of Adam, he taught, drastically affected human sexuality. In particular, human nature had fallen under the compulsive power of concupiscence, or lust, which he understood as the passionate, uncontrolled element in sexuality. Augustine believed that all sexual intercourse—even within the bounds of Christian marriage—involved concupiscence.

But Augustine did not altogether disparage matrimony. It is "honorable and permissible," he said. But to him, celibacy was better. The purpose of sex in marriage is procreation, he said, although it was "pardonable" if married persons enjoyed conjugal union without intending

procreation. He even went so far as to recommend sexual abstinence for married couples—if they mutually agreed to it.

Over the years, the bishop of Hippo's views on sex and marriage became the basis for many of the Roman Church's teachings on these matters. If we look closely at the writings of Augustine, we can better understand why Roman Catholics believe that the chief end of marriage is procreation, that divorce and birth control are impermissible, and that continence is the ideal for sexual self-discipline.

<https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/augustines-sex-life-from-profligate-to-celibate>

And **Wikipedia** states:

"The Council of Elvira (306) is often seen as the first to issue a written regulation requiring clergy to abstain from sexual intercourse. Its canon 33 decreed: "Bishops, presbyters, deacons, and others with a position in the ministry are to abstain completely from sexual intercourse with their wives and from the procreation of children. If anyone disobeys, he shall be removed from the clerical office." It is disputed whether this canon mandated permanent continence or only, as is the practice in the Eastern Orthodox Church even for the laity, periodical continence before partaking of the Eucharist. And Maurice Meigne even interpreted it as meaning: "It was decided to forbid keeping back from one's wife and not producing children".

In 387 or 390, or according to others in 400, a Council of Carthage decreed that bishops, priests and deacons abstain from conjugal relations: "It is fitting that the holy bishops and priests of God as well as the Levites, i.e. those who are in the service of the divine sacraments, observe perfect continence, so that they may obtain in all simplicity what they are asking from God; what the Apostles taught and what antiquity itself observed, let us also endeavour to keep... It pleases us all that bishop, priest and deacon, guardians of purity, abstain from conjugal intercourse with their wives, so that those who serve at the altar may keep a perfect chastity."

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clerical\\_celibacy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clerical_celibacy)

So in Augustine's time, who was born in 354 AD, the thinking that priests and bishops should remain celibate was well established in the Catholic Church.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Nature and Grace, Chapter 61, page 142**

Chapter 61 [LIII.]—Paul Asserts that the Flesh is Contrary Even in the Baptized.

Now let us see whether we anywhere read about the flesh being contrary in the baptized also. **And here, I ask, to whom did the apostle say, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye do not the things that ye would?" (Galatians 5:17)** He wrote this, I apprehend, to the Galatians, to whom he also says, "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?" (Galatians 3:5) It appears, therefore,

that it is to Christians that he speaks, to whom, too, God had given His Spirit: therefore, too, to the baptized. Observe, therefore, that even in baptized persons the flesh is found to be contrary; so that they have not that capacity which, our author says, is inseparably implanted in nature. Where then is the ground for his assertion, “How can it be that in the case of a baptized person the flesh is contrary to him?” in whatever sense he understands the flesh? Because in very deed it is not its nature that is good, but it is the carnal defects of the flesh which are expressly named in the passage before us. Yet observe, even in the baptized, how contrary is the flesh. And in what way contrary? So that, “They do not the things which they would.” Take notice that the will is present in a man; but where is that “capacity of nature?” Let us confess that grace is necessary to us; let us cry out, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” And let our answer be, “The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Romans 7:24-25)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Now let us see whether we anywhere read about the flesh being contrary in the baptized also. **And here, I ask, to whom did the apostle say, “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye do not the things that ye would?” (Galatians 5:17)**

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):17** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

He then continues as he says, “He wrote this, I apprehend, to the Galatians, to whom he also says, “He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?” (Galatians 3:5)

He refers in context to **Galatians 3 (KJV):4** Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. 5 He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

He then explains, “It appears, therefore, that it is to Christians that he speaks, to whom, too, God had given His Spirit: therefore, too, to the baptized.”

Yes, the Galatians had received the Spirit as we read in context in **Galatians 3 (KJV):1** O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? 2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

The Galatians had received the Spirit by the hearing of faith, which meant that they were saved, and had been born again. Paul was rebuking them for then trying to keep the law, as we continue reading in **Galatians 3 (KJV):6** Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. 11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. 12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

He then observes, “It appears, therefore, that it is to Christians that he speaks, to whom, too, God had given His Spirit: therefore, too, to the baptized. Observe, therefore, that even in baptized persons the flesh is found to be contrary; so that they have not that capacity which, our author says, is inseparably implanted in nature.”

To Augustine “baptized persons” meant those who had been born again. So we can agree with Augustine that even in those who have been born again “the flesh is found to be contrary”.

He continues, speaking of Pelagius, as he then says, “Where then is the ground for his assertion, “How can it be that in the case of a baptized person the flesh is contrary to him?” in whatever sense he understands the flesh? Because in very deed it is not its nature that is good, but it is the carnal defects of the flesh which are expressly named in the passage before us.”

By “carnal defects of the flesh”, he is referring to **Galatians 5 (KJV):18** But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

He then continues, “Yet observe, even in the baptized, how contrary is the flesh. And in what way contrary? So that, “They do not the things which they would.”

He refers again to **Galatians 5 (KJV):17** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Augustine then observes, “Take notice that the will is present in a man; but where is that “capacity of nature?”

The will is present in the man or woman who has been born again. But he is referring in context to **Romans 7 (KJV):14** For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

The nature of our flesh is spoken of in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Pelagius was saying that after baptism, the flesh could not be contrary to the person. But Paul spoke of his own battle here in Romans, chapter 7. After we are born again, the new birth takes place in our spirit, and the nature of our flesh is unchanged. Sin still dwells there in our members.

Augustine then concludes, “Let us confess that grace is necessary to us; let us cry out, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” And let our answer be, “The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Romans 7:24-25)

He refers in context to **Romans 7 (KJV):21** I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into

captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Note that the fruit of the Spirit is something that grows in the one who has been born again, or regenerated. This is spoken of in **Galatians 5 (KJV):22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. 24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Man's Perfection in Righteousness, Chapter II, page 160**

Chapter II.—(1.) The First Breviate of Cœlestius.

I. “First of all,” says he, “he must be asked who denies man’s ability to live without sin, what every sort of sin is,—is it such as can be avoided? Or is it unavoidable? If it is unavoidable, then it is not sin; if it can be avoided, then a man can live without the sin which can be avoided. No reason or justice permits us to designate as sin what cannot in any way be avoided.” **Our answer to this is, that sin can be avoided, if our corrupted nature be healed by God’s grace, through our Lord Jesus Christ. For, in so far as it is not sound, in so far does it either through blindness fail to see, or through weakness fail to accomplish, that which it ought to do; “for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh,” (Galatians 5:17) so that a man does not do the things which he would.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he states a premise of Coelestius, a follower of Pelagius, ““First of all,” says he, “he must be asked who denies man’s ability to live without sin, what every sort of sin is,—is it such as can be avoided? Or is it unavoidable? If it is unavoidable, then it is not sin; if it can be avoided, then a man can live without the sin which can be avoided. No reason or justice permits us to designate as sin what cannot in any way be avoided.”

This sounds very logical, but it does not refer to any Scripture. In fact, it goes against Scripture as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):7** Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Before Christ, we don’t have the Spirit of Christ, and sin is unavoidable, for “they that are in the flesh cannot please God”, as in verse 8 above. After accepting Christ, we have the Spirit of God dwelling in us, who gives us the power over our flesh, to not yield to it and sin.

Augustine then responds, **“Our answer to this is, that sin can be avoided, if our corrupted nature be healed by God’s grace, through our Lord Jesus Christ. For, in so far as it is not sound, in so far does it either through blindness fail to see, or through weakness fail to accomplish, that which it ought to do; “for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh,” (Galatians 5:17) so that a man does not do the things which he would.”**



What Augustine did not understand is that our “corrupted nature” is not “healed by God’s grace, through our Lord Jesus Christ”. But the new divine nature in our spirit which has been born again by the Spirit of God, and the indwelling Spirit of God, gives us the power over our corrupted nature so that we do not have to sin, as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):16** This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. 18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

If we put off the works of the flesh, and put on the fruit of the Spirit, we will live and walk in the Spirit as in **Galatians 5 (KJV):25** If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

## (2.) The Second Breviate.

II. “We must next ask,” he says, “whether sin comes from will, or from necessity? If from necessity, it is not sin; if from will, it can be avoided.” **We answer as before; and in order that we may be healed, we pray to Him to whom it is said in the Psalm: “Lead Thou me out of my necessities.” (Psalm 25:17)**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he again states a premise of Coelestius, a follower of Pelagius, ““We must next ask,” he says, “whether sin comes from will, or from necessity? If from necessity, it is not sin; if from will, it can be avoided.””

And Augustine responds, **“We answer as before; and in order that we may be healed, we pray to Him to whom it is said in the Psalm: “Lead Thou me out of my necessities.” (Psalm 25:17)”**

He refers to **Psalm 24 (Douay Rheims):17** The troubles of my heart are multiplied: deliver me from my necessities.

And to **Psalm 25 (KJV):17** The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.

In the unsaved, sin comes from will, and necessity as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

But the saved have been made alive to God as we continue in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

We must stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made us free as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):1** Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

### (3.) The Third Breviate.

III. “Again we must ask,” he says, “what sin is,—natural? or accidental? If natural, it is not sin; if accidental, it is separable: and if it is separable, it can be avoided; and because it can be avoided, man can be without that which can be avoided.” **The answer to this is, that sin is not natural; but nature (especially in that corrupt state from which we have become by nature “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:2)) has too little determination of will to avoid sin, unless assisted and healed by God’s grace through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he states another premise of Coelestius, a follower of Pelagius, ““Again we must ask,” he says, “what sin is,—natural? or accidental? If natural, it is not sin; if accidental, it is separable: and if it is separable, it can be avoided; and because it can be avoided, man can be without that which can be avoided.”

This is another false argument of Coelestius. It sounds very logical, but it is not according to Scripture, as Augustine then responds, **“The answer to this is, that sin is not natural; but nature (especially in that corrupt state from which we have become by nature “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:2)) has too little determination of will to avoid sin, unless assisted and healed by God’s grace through Jesus Christ our Lord.”**

Again, the sin nature in our flesh is a result of Adam’s sin, and it is the reason our flesh is still mortal. It is not healed by God’s grace, but it is overcome by the new nature in our spirit which is born of the Spirit of God, and by the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God.

### (4.) The Fourth Breviate.

IV. “We must ask, again,” he says, “What is sin,—an act, or a thing? If it is a thing, it must have an author; and if it be said to have an author, then another besides God will seem to be introduced as the author of a thing. But if it is impious to say this, we are driven to confess that every sin is an act, not a thing. If therefore it is an act, for this very reason, because it is an act, it can be avoided.” Our reply is, that sin no doubt is called an act, and is such, not a thing. But likewise in the body, lameness for the same reason is an act, not a thing, since it is the foot itself, or the body, or the man who walks lame because of an injured foot, that is the thing; but still the man cannot avoid the lameness, unless his foot be cured. The same change may take place in the inward man, but it is by God’s grace, through our Lord Jesus Christ. The defect itself which causes the lameness of the man is neither the foot, nor the body, nor the man, nor indeed the lameness itself; for there is of course no lameness when there is no walking, although there is nevertheless the defect which causes the lameness whenever there is an attempt to walk. Let him therefore ask, what name must be given to this defect,—would he have it called a thing, or an act, or rather a bad property in the thing, by which the deformed act comes into existence? **So in the inward man the soul is the thing, theft is an act, and avarice is the defect, that is, the property by which the soul is evil, even when it does nothing in gratification of its avarice, even when it hears the prohibition, “Thou shalt not covet,” (Exodus 20:17) and censures itself, and yet remains avaricious. By faith, however, it receives renovation; in other words, it is healed day by day, (2 Corinthians 4:16)—yet only by God’s grace through**

our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he states another premise of Coelestius, a follower of Pelagius, ““We must ask, again,” he says, “What is sin,—an act, or a thing? If it is a thing, it must have an author; and if it be said to have an author, then another besides God will seem to be introduced as the author of a thing. But if it is impious to say this, we are driven to confess that every sin is an act, not a thing. If therefore it is an act, for this very reason, because it is an act, it can be avoided.””

Augustine then answers, “Our reply is, that sin no doubt is called an act, and is such, not a thing.”

We can agree with Augustine here. Sin is an act, not a thing. He continues, “But likewise in the body, lameness for the same reason is an act, not a thing, since it is the foot itself, or the body, or the man who walks lame because of an injured foot, that is the thing; but still the man cannot avoid the lameness, unless his foot be cured. The same change may take place in the inward man, but it is by God’s grace, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Augustine is speaking of the need for change in the inward man of the soul. What he did not realize was that the inward man of the spirit has been healed already when born again of the Spirit of God. But the soul still needs healing.

Augustine then continues as he further explains his analogy, “The defect itself which causes the lameness of the man is neither the foot, nor the body, nor the man, nor indeed the lameness itself; for there is of course no lameness when there is no walking, although there is nevertheless the defect which causes the lameness whenever there is an attempt to walk. Let him therefore ask, what name must be given to this defect,—would he have it called a thing, or an act, or rather a bad property in the thing, by which the deformed act comes into existence?”

When Augustine asks “...would he have it called a thing, or an act, or rather a bad property in the thing, by which the deformed act comes into existence?”, he is asking for the opinion of Coelestius.

Augustine then concludes, “So in the inward man the soul is the thing, theft is an act, and avarice is the defect, that is, the property by which the soul is evil, even when it does nothing in gratification of its avarice, even when it hears the prohibition, “Thou shalt not covet,” (Exodus 20:17) and censures itself, and yet remains avaricious. By faith, however, it receives renovation; in other words, it is healed day by day, (2 Corinthians 4:16)—yet only by God’s grace through our Lord Jesus Christ.

He refers to **Exodus 20 (NASB):17** “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

And to **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):16** For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

So the inward man includes the soul, which is composed of spirit, according to Augustine. According to the Scripture that he refers to, the outward man is still mortal and will perish, and the inward man of the soul, that is our mind, will, heart, emotions, and conscience is being renewed day by day.

But Augustine did not realize that our spirit has the divine nature of the Spirit of God, being born of the Spirit. While he understood that we are being cleansed of our past sinfulness,

and renewed in our soul, he did not understand that our standing was not affected by this cleansing, and that our inner man of the spirit was already made perfect by the new birth. This is because His seed, the divine nature, remains in us who have been born again as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):9** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Our new man, relating to our spirit, does not commit sin because it now has the divine nature of God from the Holy Spirit. The inner man of the soul still can commit sin, but God has made provision for this by the blood of Jesus as in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Before Christ, our mind and conscience were as in **Titus 1 (KJV):15** Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

Our mind and conscience are in our soul. This is why we need to be progressively sanctified after we have been born again. Our soul needs cleansing. As we grow in grace and knowledge, our mind is renewed and our conscience is cleansed, and has the right standards by which to judge by. We now skip to the Seventh Breviate in Chapter III.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Man's Perfection in Righteousness, Chapter III, page 161**

#### **(7.) The Seventh Breviate.**

VII. "The next question we shall have to propose," he says, "is, whether God wishes that man be without sin." Beyond doubt God wishes it; and no doubt he has the ability. For who is so foolhardy as to hesitate to believe that to be possible, which he has no doubt about God's wishing?" **This is the answer. If God wished not that man should be without sin, He would not have sent His Son without sin, (2 Corinthians 4:16) to heal men of their sins. This takes place in believers who are being renewed day by day until their righteousness becomes perfect, like fully restored health.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he states another premise of Coelestius, a follower of Pelagius, "The next question we shall have to propose," he says, "is, whether God wishes that man be without sin." Beyond doubt God wishes it; and no doubt he has the ability. For who is so foolhardy as to hesitate to believe that to be possible, which he has no doubt about God's wishing?"

Again, the argument of Coelestius is logical, but without foundation in the Scriptures.

And Augustine then responds, **"This is the answer. If God wished not that man should be without sin, He would not have sent His Son without sin, (2 Corinthians 4:16) to heal men of their sins. This takes place in believers who are being renewed day by day until their righteousness becomes perfect, like fully restored health."**

This reminds us of **Proverbs 4 (NASB):18** But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.

Augustine refers in part to **John 3 (KJV):17** For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

And again he refers to **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):16** For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

We do not have to yield to the sin in our flesh, but sin will be in our flesh until we are changed, or resurrected, as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):51** Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

But our righteousness is already “**perfect**” in the sense that God has justified us, and put His own righteousness down to our account as we read in **Romans 3 (NASB):21** But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; 26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

But as we are progressively sanctified, and our character is changed, we will have on the breastplate of righteousness as Paul commands in **Ephesians 6 (KJV):14** Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

#### (8.) The Eighth Breviate.

VIII. “Again, this question must be asked,” he says, “how God wishes man to be,—with sin, or without sin? Beyond doubt, He does not wish him to be with sin. We must reflect how great would be the impious blasphemy for it to be said that man has it in his power to be with sin, which God does not wish; and for it to be denied that he has it in his power to be without sin, which God wishes: just as if God had created any man for such a result as this,—that he should be able to be what He would not have him, and unable to be what He would have him; and that he should lead an existence contrary to His will, rather than one which should be in accordance therewith.” This has been in fact already answered; but I see that it is necessary for me to make here an additional remark, that we are saved by hope. “But hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” (Romans 8:24-25) **Full righteousness, therefore, will only then be reached, when fullness of health is attained; and this fullness of health shall be when there is fullness of love, for “love is the fulfilling of the law;” (Romans 13:10) and then shall come fullness of love, when “we shall see Him even as He is.” (1 John 3:2) Nor will any addition to love be possible more, when faith shall have reached the fruition of sight.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he states another premise of Coelestius, a follower of Pelagius, ““Again, this question must be asked,” he says, “how God wishes man to be,—with



sin, or without sin? Beyond doubt, He does not wish him to be with sin. We must reflect how great would be the impious blasphemy for it to be said that man has it in his power to be with sin, which God does not wish; and for it to be denied that he has it in his power to be without sin, which God wishes: just as if God had created any man for such a result as this,—that he should be able to be what He would not have him, and unable to be what He would have him; and that he should lead an existence contrary to His will, rather than one which should be in accordance therewith.””

Again there is logic in the argument of Coelestius, but there is no reference to Scripture, and there is no basis in Scripture for his argument. When we accept Christ, God justifies us by our faith in Jesus Christ, and we now have a standing of righteousness before God, for He imputes, or puts down to our account, His very own righteousness.

Augustine then responds, “This has been in fact already answered; but I see that it is necessary for me to make here an additional remark, that we are saved by hope. “But hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” (Romans 8:24-25)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):24** For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Augustine then concludes, “Full righteousness, therefore, will only then be reached, when fullness of health is attained; and this fullness of health shall be when there is fullness of love, for “love is the fulfilling of the law;” (Romans 13:10) and then shall come fullness of love, when “we shall see Him even as He is.” (1 John 3:2) Nor will any addition to love be possible more, when faith shall have reached the fruition of sight.”

He refers to **Romans 13 (KJV):10** Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

And to **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

And in context to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):7** (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

We are imperfect now, but when He comes we will be glorified as we read in **Philippians 3 (KJV):20** For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

When He comes, the perfect will have come, as we read in **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):10** But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

But after we believe, and God has justified us, we have a standing before God as righteous ones. We now skip to the Fourteenth Breviate.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Man’s Perfection in Righteousness, Chapter VI, page 163**

(14.) The Fourteenth Breviate.

XIV. “Again the question must be asked,” he says, “If man’s nature is good, as nobody but Marcion or Manichæus will venture to deny, in what way is it good if it is impossible for it to be free from evil? For that all sin is evil who can gainsay?” **We answer, that man’s nature is both good, and is also able to be free from evil. Therefore do we earnestly pray, “Deliver us from evil.” (Matthew 6:13)** This deliverance, indeed, is not fully wrought, so long as the soul is oppressed by the body, which is hastening to corruption. (Wisdom 9:15) This process, however, is being effected by grace through faith, so that it may be said by and by, “O death, where is thy struggle? Where is thy sting, O death? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law;” (1 Corinthians 15:55-56) because the law by prohibiting sin only increases the desire for it, unless the Holy Ghost spreads abroad that love, which shall then be full and perfect, when we shall see face to face.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he states another premise of Coelestius, a follower of Pelagius, ““Again the question must be asked,” he says, “If man’s nature is good, as nobody but Marcion or Manichæus will venture to deny, in what way is it good if it is impossible for it to be free from evil? For that all sin is evil who can gainsay?”

Again, Coelestius’ argument is logical, but does not refer to Scripture in any context.

Augustine then replies, **“We answer, that man’s nature is both good, and is also able to be free from evil. Therefore do we earnestly pray, “Deliver us from evil.” (Matthew 6:13)”**

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Augustine argues that, because in the Lord’s prayer we pray to be delivered from evil, man’s nature must be good. Now because Augustine equated the soul with the spirit, he did not understand that man, when he is born again, has a new spirit as in **Ezekiel 36 (KJV):26** A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

Because we are born of the spirit when we accept Christ, we have a new spirit, and a new divine nature in our spirits, so we are good in our spirit. But in our soul we are becoming good as we walk in the light, and we are cleansed of our old ways.

Augustine continues, **“This deliverance, indeed, is not fully wrought, so long as the soul is oppressed by the body, which is hastening to corruption. (Wisdom 9:15)”**

He refers again to **Wisdom 9 (Septuagint):15** For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things.

He then concludes, **“This process, however, is being effected by grace through faith, so that it may be said by and by, “O death, where is thy struggle? Where is thy sting, O death? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law;” (1 Corinthians 15:55-56) because the law by prohibiting sin only increases the desire for it, unless the Holy Ghost spreads abroad that love, which shall then be full and perfect, when we shall see face to face.”**

Again he refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):55** O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

This process of sanctification **“is being effected by grace through faith”**, for the grace of God abounds toward us, as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):6** To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption

through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

And in **Philippians 2 (KJV):13** For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

When we shall see face to face, the perfect will have come, and we shall be like Him, being glorified.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Man's Perfection in Righteousness, Chapter VIII, page 164**

Chapter VIII.—(17.) It is One Thing to Depart from the Body, Another Thing to Be Liberated from the Body of This Death.

He next proposes to establish his point by the testimony of Holy Scripture. Let us carefully observe what kind of defense he makes. "There are passages," says he, "which prove that man is commanded to be without sin." Now our answer to this is: Whether such commands are given is not at all the point in question, for the fact is clear enough; but whether the thing which is evidently commanded be itself at all possible of accomplishment in the body of this death, wherein "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so that we cannot do the things that we would." (Galatians 5:17) **Now from this body of death not every one is liberated who ends the present life, but only he who in this life has received grace, and given proof of not receiving it in vain by spending his days in good works.** For it is plainly one thing to depart from the body, which all men are obliged to do in the last day of their present life, and another to be delivered from the body of this death,—which God's grace alone, through our Lord Jesus Christ, imparts to His faithful saints. **It is after this life, indeed, that the reward of perfection is bestowed, but only upon those by whom in their present life has been acquired the merit of such a recompense. For no one, after going hence, shall arrive at fullness of righteousness, unless, whilst here, he shall have run his course by hungering and thirsting after it. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." (Matthew 5:6)**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he states another premise of Coelestius, a follower of Pelagius, ""He next proposes to establish his point by the testimony of Holy Scripture. Let us carefully observe what kind of defense he makes. "There are passages," says he, "which prove that man is commanded to be without sin.""

Man is commanded not to sin, but not "to be without sin", for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God as in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

But when we who have received Christ shall see Him, we will be like Him.

Augustine then responds, "Now our answer to this is: Whether such commands are given is not at all the point in question, for the fact is clear enough; but whether the thing which is evidently commanded be itself at all possible of accomplishment in the body of this death, wherein "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so that we

cannot do the things that we would.” (Galatians 5:17)”

Again he refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):17** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Keeping the commandments is mentioned many times in the Old Testament, an example of which is in **Deuteronomy 4 (KJV):2** Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

And Jesus spoke as in **Matthew 19 (KJV):17** And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

And we read in **Exodus 20 (KJV):20** And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

And in **Romans 6 (KJV):12** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

And in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

But to Augustine, “the point in question” is “whether the thing which is evidently commanded be itself at all possible of accomplishment in the body of this death, wherein “the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so that we cannot do the things that we would.” Sin is in our flesh as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

So it is not possible now for man “to be without sin”, for it is in his members, his flesh. This is because of Adam, who is the federal head of the human race. In Adam all die as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):21** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

He then continues, “Now from this body of death not every one is liberated who ends the present life, but only he who in this life has received grace, and given proof of not receiving it in vain by spending his days in good works.”

Augustine seems to equivocate here, for he then says, “For it is plainly one thing to depart from the body, which all men are obliged to do in the last day of their present life, and another to be delivered from the body of this death,—which God’s grace alone, through our Lord Jesus Christ, imparts to His faithful saints.”

I suppose the keywords are “faithful saints”, that is, “he who in this life has received grace, and given proof of not receiving it in vain by spending his days in good works.”

He then continues, “It is after this life, indeed, that the reward of perfection is bestowed, but only upon those by whom in their present life has been acquired the merit of such a recompense.”

He then explains, “For no one, after going hence, shall arrive at fullness of righteousness, unless, whilst here, he shall have run his course by hungering and thirsting after it. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.” (Matthew 5:6)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):6** Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

But good works do not save us, as Paul revealed in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

If we do good works we will be rewarded at the judgment seat of Christ as in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

The process of this judgment is revealed in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):13** Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

So what did Jesus mean when He said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled"?

Jesus was explaining what salt and light looked like as we read in context in **Matthew 5 (KJV):1** And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, 3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. 10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. 13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

These are not qualifications for entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. But they are qualities of those who have salt, and their candles lit by the Holy Spirit when they are born again. They will then be rewarded in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus then continues in **Matthew 5 (KJV):17** Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say unto you, That except



your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

What was required to enter the kingdom of heaven? Jesus told us in **John 3 (KJV):3** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Jesus then explains how these things can be, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):14** And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

And in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

We are born again when we believe in Jesus Christ. This is how we enter the kingdom of heaven. After that, we will receive rewards for good works, but we are not saved by good works. When we believe in Jesus Christ, God justifies us, and we have a standing as righteous ones. We then grow in grace and knowledge and become spiritual. Augustine did not understand our standing of righteousness before God, who justifies us. He was hindered by the ritual of many traditions in the Catholic Church in his time.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Man's Perfection in Righteousness, Chapter XVII, page 173**

Chapter XVII.—(38.) The Seventh Passage. Who May Be Called Immaculate. How It is that in God's Sight No Man is Justified.

“They also, says he, “quote the text: ‘For in thy sight shall no man living be justified.’” (Psalm 143:2) And his affected answer to this passage amounts to nothing else than the showing how texts of Holy Scripture seem to clash with one another, whereas it is our duty rather to demonstrate their agreement. These are his words: “We must confront them with this answer, from the testimony of the evangelist concerning holy Zacharias and Elisabeth, when he says, ‘And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.’” (Luke 1:6) Now both these righteous persons had, of course, read amongst these very commandments the method of cleansing their own sins. For, according to what is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews of “every high priest taken from among men,”

(Hebrews 5:1) Zacharias used no doubt to offer sacrifices even for his own sins. The meaning, however, of the phrase “*blameless*,” which is applied to him, we have already, as I suppose, sufficiently explained. “And,” he adds, “the blessed apostle says, ‘That we should be holy, and without blame before Him.’” (Ephesians 1:4) This, according to him, is said that we should be so, if those persons are to be understood by “*blameless*” who are altogether without sin. If, however, they are “*blameless*” who are without blame or censure, then it is impossible for us to deny that there have been, and still are, such persons even in this present life; for it does not follow that a man is without sin because he has not a blot of accusation. Accordingly the apostle, when selecting ministers for ordination, does not say, “If any be *sinless*,” for he would be unable to find any such; but he says, “If any be without accusation,” (Titus 1:6) for such, of course, he would be able to find. But our opponent does not tell us how, in accordance with his views, we ought to understand the Scripture, “For in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” (Psalm 143:2) The meaning of these words is plain enough, receiving as it does additional light from the preceding clause: “Enter not,” says the Psalmist, “into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” It is judgment which he fears, therefore he desires that mercy which triumphs over judgment. (James 2:13) **For the meaning of the prayer, “Enter not into judgment with Thy servant,” is this: “Judge me not according to Thyself,” who art without sin; “for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” This without doubt is understood as spoken of the present life, whilst the predicate “shall not be justified” has reference to that perfect state of righteousness which belongs not to this life.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he states another premise of Coelestius, a follower of Pelagius, ““They also, says he, “quote the text: ‘For in thy sight shall no man living be justified.’” (Psalm 143:2)”

He refers to **Psalm 143 (KJV):2** And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

That is, no man of himself is justified. Augustine then responds, “And his affected answer to this passage amounts to nothing else than the showing how texts of Holy Scripture seem to clash with one another, whereas it is our duty rather to demonstrate their agreement. These are his words: “We must confront them with this answer, from the testimony of the evangelist concerning holy Zacharias and Elisabeth, when he says, ‘And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.’” (Luke 1:5-6)”

He refers to **Luke 1 (KJV):5** There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Augustine then responds, “Now both these righteous persons had, of course, read amongst these very commandments the method of cleansing their own sins. For, according to what is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews of “every high priest taken from among men,” (Hebrews 5:1) Zacharias used no doubt to offer sacrifices even for his own sins.”

He refers in context to **Hebrews 5 (KJV):1** For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: 2 Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that

he himself also is compassed with infirmity. 3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

Augustine then continues, “The meaning, however, of the phrase “*blameless*,” which is applied to him, we have already, as I suppose, sufficiently explained. “And,” he adds, “the blessed apostle says, ‘That we should be holy, and without blame before Him.’” (Ephesians 1:4)

He refers to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):4** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Augustine continues, “This, according to him, is said that we should be so, if those persons are to be understood by “*blameless*” who are altogether without sin. If, however, they are “*blameless*” who are without blame or censure, then it is impossible for us to deny that there have been, and still are, such persons even in this present life; for it does not follow that a man is without sin because he has not a blot of accusation. Accordingly the apostle, when selecting ministers for ordination, does not say, “If any be *sinless*,” for he would be unable to find any such; but he says, “If any be without accusation,” (Titus 1:6) for such, of course, he would be able to find.”

He refers to **Titus 1 (Douay Rheims):6** If any be without crime, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be without crime, as the steward of God: not proud, not subject to anger, nor given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre:

And to **Titus 1 (KJV):6** If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

The word “blameless” in the Greek is **ἀνέγκλητος** (pronounced *anegklētos*) and is formed of **ἄλφα** (pronounced *alpha*) (G1) (as a negative particle) and a derivative of **ἐγκαλέω** (pronounced *enkaleo*) (G1458), and it “signifies that which cannot be called to account (from a, negative, n, euphonic, and enkaleo, to call in), i.e., with nothing laid to one’s charge (as the result of a public investigation)”. **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. I, page 131.**

It is translated as “above reproach” in **Titus 1 (NASB):6** namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. 7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain.

Augustine then continues, “But our opponent does not tell us how, in accordance with his views, we ought to understand the Scripture, “For in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” (Psalm 143:2)”

And it is so worded in **Psalms 143 (KJV):2** And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

He continues, “The meaning of these words is plain enough, receiving as it does additional light from the preceding clause: “Enter not,” says the Psalmist, “into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” It is judgment which he fears, therefore he desires that mercy which triumphs over judgment. (James 2:13).”

He refers of course to **James 2 (KJV):13** For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

He then concludes, “For the meaning of the prayer, “Enter not into judgment with Thy

servant,” is this: “Judge me not according to Thyself,” who art without sin; “for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” This without doubt is understood as spoken of the present life, whilst the predicate “shall not be justified” has reference to that perfect state of righteousness which belongs not to this life.”

The meaning of Psalm 143:2 is that no man is without sin, and therefore, no man living in the Lord’s sight is justified of themselves. We are only justified by God when we have faith. Augustine has it right.

Our justification is as in **Romans 3 (KJV):22** Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

And we then stand in grace as in **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Grace of Christ, Chapter 55, page 236**

Chapter 55 [L.]—Ambrose Witnesses that Perfect Purity is Impossible to Human Nature.

He ought, moreover, carefully to note that, in the very same context from which he quoted that passage of Ambrose’s, which seemed so satisfactory for his purpose, he also said this: “To be spotless from the beginning is an impossibility to human nature.” In this sentence the venerable Ambrose does undoubtedly predicate feebleness and infirmity of that natural “capacity,” which Pelagius refuses faithfully to regard as corrupted by sin, and therefore boastfully extols. **Beyond question, this runs counter to this man’s will and inclination, although it does not contravene the truthful confession of the apostle, wherein he says: “We too were once by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” (Ephesians 2:3) For through the sin of the first man, which came from his free will, our nature became corrupted and ruined; and nothing but God’s grace alone, through Him who is the Mediator between God and men, and our Almighty Physician, succours it.** Now, since we have already prolonged this work too far in treating of the assistance of the divine grace towards our justification, by which God cooperates in all things for good with those who love Him, (Romans 8:28) and whom He first loved (1 John 4:19)—giving to them that He might receive from them: we must commence another treatise, as the Lord shall enable us, on the subject of sin also, which by one man has entered into the world, along with death, and so has passed upon all men, (Romans 5:12) setting forth as much as shall seem needful and sufficient, in opposition to those persons who have broken out into violent and open error, contrary to the truth here stated.

**Commentary:** Augustine opens, as he says, “He ought, moreover, carefully to note that, in the very same context from which he quoted that passage of Ambrose’s, which seemed so satisfactory for his purpose, he also said this: “To be spotless from the beginning is an impossibility to human nature.” In this sentence the venerable Ambrose does undoubtedly predicate feebleness and infirmity of that natural “capacity,” which Pelagius refuses faithfully

to regard as corrupted by sin, and therefore boastfully extols.”

Pelagius did not believe that the believer still possessed a sin nature.

Augustine then continues, “Beyond question, this runs counter to this man’s will and inclination, although it does not contravene the truthful confession of the apostle, wherein he says: “We too were once by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” (Ephesians 2:3)”

He refers to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Augustine then explains, “For through the sin of the first man, which came from his free will, our nature became corrupted and ruined; and nothing but God’s grace alone, through Him who is the Mediator between God and men, and our Almighty Physician, succours it.”

He refers here to **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

He then continues, “Now, since we have already prolonged this work too far in treating of the assistance of the divine grace towards our justification, by which God cooperates in all things for good with those who love Him, (Romans 8:28) and whom He first loved (1 John 4:19)—giving to them that He might receive from them: we must commence another treatise, as the Lord shall enable us, on the subject of sin also, which by one man has entered into the world, along with death, and so has passed upon all men, (Romans 5:12) setting forth as much as shall seem needful and sufficient, in opposition to those persons who have broken out into violent and open error, contrary to the truth here stated.”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

And to **1 John 4 (KJV):19** We love him, because he first loved us.

And to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Augustine is clear here, and in accord with the Scriptures.

## Summary

Again, Augustine has said that the “it” that “is obtained by those who obey God” is the “primeval righteousness”, which is obtained “as a great acquisition”, by those who “do not obey the desires of this evil concupiscence, but crucify in themselves the flesh with its affections and lusts”. This is done “in order that they may be Jesus Christ’s, who on His cross symbolized this, and who gave them power through His grace to become the sons of God.”

Augustine makes it a process whereby we obtain the “primeval righteousness”, and “may be Jesus Christ’s” if we “do not obey the desires of this evil concupiscence, but crucify” in ourselves “the flesh with its affections and lusts”, so that we may receive “power through His grace to become the sons of God.” But the Scriptures are clear that when we believe, we are born again, and we are now the sons of God, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

In his mind, it is as if those who receive Jesus Christ are always becoming sons of God. That is, in his thinkig it is a process that does not complete until one takes his or her final



breath. He believed “that a full and perfect remission of sins takes place only in baptism, that the character of the actual man does not at once undergo a total change, but that the first fruits of the Spirit in such as walk worthily change the old carnal nature into one of like character by a process of renewal, which increases day by day, until the entire old nature is so renovated that the very weakness of the natural body attains to the strength and incorruptibility of the spiritual body”.

Again, the “old carnal nature” in our flesh is not renovated, but it is overcome by the life of the Spirit of God in our spirits when we are born again. The believer undergoes a progressive sanctification in their character, which relates to their soul, as they walk with the Lord in the light of His word. The “old carnal nature” in our flesh will be done away with at the resurrection, when we are changed to be glorified like Christ, as we read in **Philippians 3 (KJV):** 20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Remission of sins is made when we are born again. We then have a standing of righteousness, and only need to confess our sins to be cleansed. The law of sin does remain “in our old carnal nature, as if overcome and destroyed, if it does not, by consenting to unlawful objects, somehow revive, and recover its own reign and dominion.”

However, this will only happen if we do not yield to the inner spirit which has been born again of the Spirit of God. But it is not so that we then lose the grace of God, and somehow become unborn again in our spirits, and need to be born again, again.

In his answer to Coelestius, a follower of Pelagius, Augustine also says, “Our answer to this is, that sin can be avoided, if our corrupted nature be healed by God’s grace, through our Lord Jesus Christ. For, in so far as it is not sound, in so far does it either through blindness fail to see, or through weakness fail to accomplish, that which it ought to do; “for the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh,” (Galatians 5:17) so that a man does not do the things which he would.”

Augustine sort of mixes up the soul and the flesh. He really thinks of the law of sin to be in the soul, rather than in our flesh, as he again responds to Coelestius, “The answer to this is, that sin is not natural; but nature (especially in that corrupt state from which we have become by nature “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:2)) has too little determination of will to avoid sin, unless assisted and healed by God’s grace through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Augustine believed that man’s nature was good, as created by God, but the lust of concupiscence had corrupted man’s state, and needed to be healed. He believed this to be a gradual healing as he says, “We answer, that man’s nature is both good, and is also able to be free from evil. Therefore do we earnestly pray, “Deliver us from evil.” (Matthew 6:13) This deliverance, indeed, is not fully wrought, so long as the soul is oppressed by the body, which is hastening to corruption. (Wisdom 9:15) This process, however, is being effected by grace through faith, so that it may be said by and by, “O death, where is thy struggle? Where is thy sting, O death? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law;” (1 Corinthians 15:55-56) because the law by prohibiting sin only increases the desire for it, unless the Holy Ghost spreads abroad that love, which shall then be full and perfect, when we shall see face to face.”

It is true that complete deliverance from the sinful nature in our flesh will be accomplished at the resurrection. But Augustine does not seem to acknowledge that our salvation has already been secured when we are born again by faith in Jesus Christ. He then makes it a requirement to add merit in order to be worthy, as he says, **“It is after this life, indeed, that the reward of perfection is bestowed, but only upon those by whom in their present life has been acquired the merit of such a recompense. For no one, after going hence, shall arrive at fullness of righteousness, unless, whilst here, he shall have run his course by hungering and thirsting after it. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.” (Matthew 5:6)”**

But we saw that in the sermon on the mount in Matthew 5:1-12, Jesus was describing the qualities of those who have their candles lit, and have salt as we read in **Matthew 5 (KJV):13** Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

And he says, **“For the meaning of the prayer, “Enter not into judgment with Thy servant,” is this: “Judge me not according to Thyself,” who art without sin; “for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” This without doubt is understood as spoken of the present life, whilst the predicate “shall not be justified” has reference to that perfect state of righteousness which belongs not to this life.”**

But again, we “were justified” when we believed, as in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

When were we justified? When we had faith and believed, as we read again in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

And, when we were justified, the righteousness of God was put down to our account as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

It is by grace through faith that we are saved, and that not of ourselves, but it is the gift of God. And after this, we are then “justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”.

## Sacramental Ordinances

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On the Spirit and the Letter, Chapter 36, page 98**

## Chapter 36 [XXI.]—The Law Written in Our Hearts.

What then is God's law written by God Himself in the hearts of men, but the very presence of the Holy Spirit, who is "the finger of God," and by whose presence is shed abroad in our hearts the love which is the fulfilling of the law, (Romans 13:10) and the end of the commandment? (1 Timothy 1:5) **Now the promises of the Old Testament are earthly; and yet (with the exception of the sacramental ordinances which were the shadow of things to come, such as circumcision, the Sabbath and other observances of days, and the ceremonies of certain meats, and the complicated ritual of sacrifices and sacred things which suited "the oldness" of the carnal law and its slavish yoke) it contains such precepts of righteousness as we are even now taught to observe, which were especially expressly drawn out on the two tables without figure or shadow: for instance, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Thou shalt do no murder," "Thou shalt not covet," (Exodus 20:13,14,17) "and whatsoever other commandment is briefly comprehended in the saying, Thou shall love thy neighbour as thyself." (Romans 13:9)** Nevertheless, whereas as in the said Testament earthly and temporal promises are, as I have said, recited, and these are goods of this corruptible flesh (although they prefigure those heavenly and everlasting blessings which belong to the New Testament), what is now promised is a good for the heart itself, a good for the mind, a good of the spirit, that is, an intellectual good; since it is said, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their hearts will I write them," (Jeremiah 31:33)—by which He signified that men would not fear the law which alarmed them externally, but would love the very righteousness of the law which dwelt inwardly in their hearts.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "What then is God's law written by God Himself in the hearts of men, but the very presence of the Holy Spirit, who is "the finger of God," and by whose presence is shed abroad in our hearts the love which is the fulfilling of the law, (Romans 13:10) and the end of the commandment? (1 Timothy 1:5)"

He refers to **Romans 13 (KJV):10** Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

And to **1 Timothy 1 (NASB):5** Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

But also in context to **Romans 2 (KJV):14** For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

He continues and says, **"Now the promises of the Old Testament are earthly;"**

But there are many references to heaven in the Old Testament, such as in **Deuteronomy 26 (KJV):15** Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

And in **1 Kings 8 (KJV):30** And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.

And in **2 Kings 2 (KJV):11** And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

And in **2 Chronicles 6 (KJV):27** Then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, when thou hast taught them the good way, wherein they should walk; and send rain upon thy land, which thou hast given unto thy people for an inheritance.

And in **Psalms 11 (KJV):4** The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

And in **Psalms 14 (KJV):2** The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.

And in **Daniel 2 (KJV):28** But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;

And there are many more. But for the most part, the promises of the Old Testament relate to the time when the kingdom will be set up on earth as we read in **Daniel 2 (KJV):44** And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Augustine then continues, “and yet (with the exception of the sacramental ordinances which were the shadow of things to come,”

He refers in part to **Hebrews 10 (KJV):1** For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

But the word “sacramental” is not found in this verse. Merriam-Webster says that the word “sacrament” is “a Christian rite (such as baptism or the Eucharist) that is believed to have been ordained by Christ and that is held to be a means of divine grace or to be a sign or symbol of a spiritual reality”.

Augustine also used this word to describe the ordinances in the New Testament, which he does not mention here.

Augustine then continues, as he defines them to be, “such as circumcision, the Sabbath and other observances of days, and the ceremonies of certain meats, and the complicated ritual of sacrifices and sacred things which suited “the oldness” of the carnal law and its slavish yoke)”.

By “slavish yoke”, he refers in part to **Acts 15 (KJV):10** Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Augustine then continues, referring to the Old Testament, “it contains such precepts of righteousness as we are even now taught to observe, which were especially expressly drawn out on the two tables without figure or shadow: for instance, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” “Thou shalt do no murder,” “Thou shalt not covet,” (Exodus 20:13,14,17) “and whatsoever other commandment is briefly comprehended in the saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Romans 13:9)”

He refers to **Exodus 31 (KJV):18** And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.

And in context to the ten commandments in **Exodus 20 (KJV):1** And God spake all these words, saying, 2 I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; 6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. 7 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. 8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: 10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: 11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. 12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. 13 Thou shalt not kill. 14 Thou shalt not commit adultery. 15 Thou shalt not steal. 16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. 17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

And to **Romans 13 (KJV):9** For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Augustine then continues, “Nevertheless, whereas as in the said Testament earthly and temporal promises are, as I have said, recited, and these are goods of this corruptible flesh (although they prefigure those heavenly and everlasting blessings which belong to the New Testament), what is now promised is a good for the heart itself, a good for the mind, a good of the spirit, that is, an intellectual good; since it is said, “I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their hearts will I write them,” (Jeremiah 31:33)—by which He signified that men would not fear the law which alarmed them externally, but would love the very righteousness of the law which dwelt inwardly in their hearts.”

He refers to **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):33** But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Now this promise was made to the house of Israel, and is still to be accomplished for Israel. But the New Covenant has begun for the Church as Jesus spoke in **Luke 22 (NASB):20** And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.



The New Covenant began with Jesus' death on the cross. So we can agree with Augustine here, that the Old Testament promises "prefigure those heavenly and everlasting blessings which belong to the New Testament".

Now when he mentions "**sacramental ordinances which were the shadow of things to come**", we read of these in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):** 1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? Because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Augustine's conclusion is good, as he says, "by which He signified that men would not fear the law which alarmed them externally, but would love the very righteousness of the law which dwelt inwardly in their hearts."

We will read next of a great sacrament, or mystery.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate XXV. Chapter VI. 15–44, paragraph 9, page 163**

9. "And when the multitudes had found Him." Behold, He presents Himself to the people from whom He had escaped into the mountain, afraid that He should be taken of them by force. **In every way He proves to us and gives us to know that all these things are said in a mystery, and done in a great sacrament (or mystery) to signify something important.** Behold, that is He who had escaped the crowds unto the mountain; is He not speaking with the same crowds? Let them hold Him now; let them now make Him a king. "And when they had found Him on the other side of the sea, they said unto Him, Rabbi, when camest Thou hither?"

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "'And when the multitudes had found Him.'" "Behold, He presents Himself to the people from whom He had escaped into the mountain, afraid that He should be taken of them by force. **In every way He proves to us and gives us to know that all these things are said in a mystery, and done in a great sacrament (or mystery) to signify something important.**"

A "**sacrament**" in Augustine's thinking is a "**mystery**" which is "**to signify something important.**"

He continues, "Behold, that is He who had escaped the crowds unto the mountain; is He not speaking with the same crowds? Let them hold Him now; let them now make Him a king."

He refers in context to **John 6 (KJV):14** Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. 15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

Augustine continues, ““And when they had found Him on the other side of the sea, they said unto Him, Rabbi, when camest Thou hither?””

He refers in context to **John 6 (KJV):25** And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? 26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate LXXX. Chapter XV. 1–3, paragraph 3, page 344-345**

3. “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Why does He not say, Ye are clean through the baptism wherewith ye have been washed, but “through the word which I have spoken unto you,” save only that in the water also it is the word that cleanseth? Take away the word, and the water is neither more nor less than water. The word is added to the element, and there results the Sacrament, as if itself also a kind of visible word. For He had said also to the same effect, when washing the disciples’ feet, “He that is washed needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.” And whence has water so great an efficacy, as in touching the body to cleanse the soul, save by the operation of the word; and that not because it is uttered, but because it is believed? For even in the word itself the passing sound is one thing, the abiding efficacy another. “This is the word of faith which we preach,” says the apostle, “that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus is the Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:8-10) Accordingly, we read in the Acts of the Apostles, “Purifying their hearts by faith;” (Acts 15:9) and, says the blessed Peter in his epistle, “Even as baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer (Literally, “questioning,” interrogatio, 1 Peter 3:21) of a good conscience.” “This is the word of faith which we preach,” whereby baptism, doubtless, is also consecrated, in order to its possession of the power to cleanse. For Christ, who is the vine with us, and the husbandman with the Father, “loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.” And then read the apostle, and see what he adds: “That He might sanctify it, cleansing it with the washing of water by the word.” (Ephesians 5:25-26) The cleansing, therefore, would on no account be attributed to the fleeting and perishable element, were it not for that which is added, “by the word.” This word of faith possesses such virtue in the Church of God, that through the medium of him who in faith presents, and blesses, and sprinkles it, He cleanseth even the tiny infant, although itself unable as yet with the heart to believe unto righteousness, and to make confession with the mouth unto salvation. All this is done by means of the word, whereof the Lord saith, “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Now ye are clean through the word which I

have spoken unto you.””

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):3** Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

He continues, “Why does He not say, Ye are clean through the baptism wherewith ye have been washed, but “through the word which I have spoken unto you,” save only that in the water also it is the word that cleanseth? Take away the word, and the water is neither more nor less than water. The word is added to the element, and there results the Sacrament, as if itself also a kind of visible word. For He had said also to the same effect, when washing the disciples’ feet, “He that is washed needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.””

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):10** Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

He continues, “And whence has water so great an efficacy, as in touching the body to cleanse the soul, save by the operation of the word; and that not because it is uttered, but because it is believed? For even in the word itself the passing sound is one thing, the abiding efficacy another. “This is the word of faith which we preach,” says the apostle, “that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus is the Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:8-10)”

He refers in context to **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

He continues, “Accordingly, we read in the Acts of the Apostles, “Purifying their hearts by faith;” (Acts 15:9) and, says the blessed Peter in his epistle, “Even as baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer (Literally, “questioning,” interrogatio, 1 Peter 3:21) of a good conscience.””

He refers to **Acts 15 (KJV):9** And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

And in context to **1 Peter 3 (KJV):18** For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

He continues, ““This is the word of faith which we preach,” whereby baptism, doubtless, is also consecrated, in order to its possession of the power to cleanse.”

He refers again to **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

The “word of faith” does not cleanse things, nor does it consecrate rituals such as baptism. But the “word of faith” preached brings about our new birth as we read in **James 1**

**(KJV):18** Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

We are then baptized to show that we have believed, and that we have received the word that was preached.

Augustine continues, “For Christ, who is the vine with us, and the husbandman with the Father, “loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.” And then read the apostle, and see what he adds: “That He might sanctify it, cleansing it with the washing of water by the word.” (Ephesians 5:25-26)”

He refers in context to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

The word of God cleanses us just as Augustine has pointed out in his reference above to **John 15 (KJV):1** I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. 3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

But he continued above and said, “Why does He not say, Ye are clean through the baptism wherewith ye have been washed, but “through the word which I have spoken unto you,” save only that in the water also it is the word that cleanseth?”

So the word cleanses without water also, just as the word of God says in John 15:3. Nothing is mentioned about water in chapter 15 of John. Yet His word still cleanses them, that is, the word of truth as we read in **John 17 (KJV):17** Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

He continues, “The cleansing, therefore, would on no account be attributed to the fleeting and perishable element, were it not for that which is added, “by the word.” This word of faith possesses such virtue in the Church of God, that through the medium of him who in faith presents, and blesses, and sprinkles it, He cleanseth even the tiny infant, although itself unable as yet with the heart to believe unto righteousness, and to make confession with the mouth unto salvation. All this is done by means of the word, whereof the Lord saith, “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.””

He refers again to **John 15 (KJV):3** Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

We see here how strongly Augustine and the Catholic Church in his time believed in baptismal regeneration, that is, regeneration by water baptism. He could not see that in this very verse, it is the word that cleans without water. The word that Jesus spoke is the word of God.

It is our faith that saves us. And faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):17** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

The cleansing comes, not by water, but by the word of God as we read in **Psalms 119 (KJV):9** Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.

It is not by performing some ritual that we are cleansed, but by taking heed to the word of God. Now the word of God is a light to our path and a lamp to our feet as we read in **Psalms 119 (KJV):105** Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

There is an initial cleansing when we are born again, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

This initial cleansing relates to our faith for salvation, as Augustine referred to above, and as we read again in **Romans 10 (KJV):9** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Nothing is said about water in this verse, or baptism. Once we have been born again in our spirit, as we walk in this light of the word of God, we are progressively cleansed in our soul as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):6** If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

This cleansing relates to our fellowship with the Lord, moment by moment. Once we believe in Jesus we are born again, and we are saved. But our fellowship with the Lord is then dependent on our walking in the light of His word. Augustine did not understand this principle.

## Martyrdom

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Soul and Its Origin, Book I, Chapter 11, page 319

Chapter 11.—Martyrdom for Christ Supplies the Place of Baptism. The Faith of the Thief Who Was Crucified Along with Christ Taken as Martyrdom and Hence for Baptism.

Accordingly, the thief, who was no follower of the Lord previous to the cross, but His confessor upon the cross, from whose case a presumption is sometimes taken, or attempted, against the sacrament of baptism, is reckoned by St. Cyprian among the martyrs who are baptized in their own blood, as happens to many unbaptized persons in times of hot persecution. For to the fact that he confessed the crucified Lord so much weight is attributed and so much availing value assigned by Him who knows how to weigh and value such evidence, as if he had been crucified for the Lord. Then, indeed, his faith on the cross flourished when that of the disciples failed, and that without recovery if it had not bloomed again by the resurrection of Him before the terror of whose death it had drooped. They despaired of Him when dying,—he hoped when joined with Him in dying; they fled from the author of life,—he prayed to his companion in punishment; they grieved as for the death of a man,—he believed that after death He was to be a king; they forsook the sponsor of their salvation,—he honoured the companion of His cross. There was discovered in him the full measure of a martyr, who then believed in Christ when they fell away who were destined to be martyrs. All this, indeed, was manifest to the eyes of the Lord, who at once bestowed so great felicity on one who, though not baptized, was yet washed clean in the blood, as it were, of martyrdom. But even of ourselves, who cannot



reflect with how much faith, how much hope, how much charity he might have undergone death for Christ when living, who begged life of Him when dying? Besides all this, there is the circumstance, which is not incredibly reported, that the thief who then believed as he hung by the side of the crucified Lord was sprinkled, as in a most sacred baptism, with the water which issued from the wound of the Saviour's side. I say nothing of the fact that nobody can prove, since none of us knows that he had not been baptized previous to his condemnation. However, let every man take this in the sense he may prefer; only let no rule about baptism affecting the Saviour's own precept be taken from this example of the thief; and let no one promise for the case of unbaptized infants, between damnation and the kingdom of heaven, some middle place of rest and happiness, such as he pleases and where he pleases. For this is what the heresy of Pelagius promised them: he neither fears damnation for infants, whom he does not regard as having any original sin, nor does he give them the hope of the kingdom of heaven, since they do not approach to the sacrament of baptism. As for this man, however, although he acknowledges that infants are involved in original sin, he yet boldly promises them, even without baptism, the kingdom of heaven. This even the Pelagians had not the boldness to do, though asserting infants to be absolutely without sin. See, then, what a network of presumptuous opinion he entangles, unless he regret having committed such views to writing.

**Commentary:** First of all, Augustine is writing to Renatus, the monk, against the books of Vincentius Victor, who was of the Rogatist movement.

### **Wikipedia says:**

The **Rogatists** were a religious movement within early Christianity that separated in the 4th century from the proto-Catholics and Donatists over the use of violence in the church. Much of what we know about the Rogatists comes from the writings of Augustine, against both them and the Donatists.

Rogatus, Donatist Bishop of Cartenna, in Mauretania Caesariensis established a new sect, modifying Donatist ideas, for a less extreme and Pacifist format. His followers were denominated Rogatists, after him Rogatus was replaced by Vincentius.

The schism in the 360s rose over the use of violence in the church with the Rogatists claiming "No one should be compelled to follow righteousness."

Augustine countered saying that he too had thought that way but was convinced of the need for compulsion by the success of the imperial laws, and that Vincentius would use force if he had the power to do so. Augustine tried to show from the scripture that the use of force could be shown.

Augustine also wrote that the Donatists returned to the Catholic church with "thanks they would not be offering willingly, had they not first, even against their will been severed from that impious association", arguing a familiar line that coercion was beneficial for the recipient. Later Augustine wrote *The nature and origin of the Soul* to address the teachings of Vincent Victor, a Rogatist disciple of Vincentius. In 407 Vincent Victor had written to Augustine appealing to him to not persecute the Rogatist congregations.

Augustine wrote back... you certainly seem to us less fierce, since you do not run wild in savage bands of Circumcellions, but no wild animal is called tame if it injures no one because it lacks teeth or claws. You say you do not want to act savagely; I suspect that you cannot. He also cited that the Rogatists had sought court action for return of their churches seized by Donatists, to which Vincent Victor replied they were only seeking return of their goods not accuse someone in order that he might be coerced into conversion.

Their key tenets of belief were

- a commitment to absolute pacificism
- a commitment to sacramental and personal purity.

Augustine begins as he says, “Accordingly, the thief, who was no follower of the Lord previous to the cross, but His confessor upon the cross, from whose case a presumption is sometimes taken, or attempted, against the sacrament of baptism, is reckoned by St. Cyprian among the martyrs who are baptized in their own blood, as happens to many unbaptized persons in times of hot persecution.”

Is martyrdom then something that merits salvation? Nothing we do, including baptism, will merit salvation. It is simply by our faith in Jesus Christ that we receive Him. This is what the thief on the cross did in **Luke 23 (KJV):39** And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

The thieves were not there willingly. They were there for “the due reward of our deeds”. One of the malefactors “railed on him”. The other feared God, and he realized that Jesus was innocent. His faith is evident when “he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” And so, Jesus promised him that today he would be with him in paradise, also known as Abraham’s bosom, where, after He died, He went to preach deliverance to the righteous dead, and take them to heaven. We will explain this in the next section.

Augustine then continues, “For to the fact that he confessed the crucified Lord so much weight is attributed and so much availing value assigned by Him who knows how to weigh and value such evidence, as if he had been crucified for the Lord.”

Augustine speaks of the writing of Vincentius Victor.

He then continues, as he compares the faith of the thief to the faith of the disciples before Jesus’ death and resurrection, as he says, “Then, indeed, his faith on the cross flourished when that of the disciples failed, and that without recovery if it had not bloomed again by the resurrection of Him before the terror of whose death it had drooped. They despaired of Him when dying,—he hoped when joined with Him in dying; they fled from the author of life,—he prayed to his companion in punishment; they grieved as for the death of a man,—he believed that after death He was to be a king; they forsook the sponsor of their salvation,—he honoured the companion of His cross. There was discovered in him the full measure of a martyr, who then believed in Christ when they fell away who were destined to be martyrs.”

How true are his words. Augustine then continues, “All this, indeed, was manifest to the

eyes of the Lord, who at once bestowed so great felicity on one who, though not baptized, was yet washed clean in the blood, as it were, of martyrdom.”

Yes, the thief was washed clean by his faith in Jesus Christ.

Augustine then continues, “But even of ourselves, who cannot reflect with how much faith, how much hope, how much charity he might have undergone death for Christ when living, who begged life of Him when dying? Besides all this, there is the circumstance, which is not incredibly reported, that the thief who then believed as he hung by the side of the crucified Lord was sprinkled, as in a most sacred baptism, with the water which issued from the wound of the Saviour’s side. I say nothing of the fact that nobody can prove, since none of us knows that he had not been baptized previous to his condemnation.”

No record of the thief is found before this account in the Scripture. Regardless, baptism is not mentioned in regards to him in the Scripture. But his faith is evident.

Augustine then continues, “However, let every man take this in the sense he may prefer; only let no rule about baptism affecting the Saviour’s own precept be taken from this example of the thief;”

There are other Scriptures that clearly state that baptism in water does not save us. Only faith in Jesus Christ saves us. That we are not saved by getting baptized, or by any good work, is clear from the Scriptures.

Augustine continues, “and let no one promise for the case of unbaptized infants, between damnation and the kingdom of heaven, some middle place of rest and happiness, such as he pleases and where he pleases. For this is what the heresy of Pelagius promised them: he neither fears damnation for infants, whom he does not regard as having any original sin, nor does he give them the hope of the kingdom of heaven, since they do not approach to the sacrament of baptism.”

The followers of Pelagius were clearly in error, but Limbo, the place where unbaptized infants were eventually thought to go at death, was later a dogma of the Catholic Church. We will discuss this more under the heading, **Catholic**.

Augustine then concludes, speaking of Vincentius Victor, “As for this man, however, although he acknowledges that infants are involved in original sin, he yet boldly promises them, even without baptism, the kingdom of heaven. This even the Pelagians had not the boldness to do, though asserting infants to be absolutely without sin. See, then, what a network of presumptuous opinion he entangles, unless he regret having committed such views to writing.”

Augustine also wrote against Vincentius Victor’s “contention, “that the soul is not spirit, but body”” in **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Soul and Its Origin, Book I, Chapter 5, page 317.**

This is clearly in error, as Augustine points out.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XXII, Chapter 10, page 491-492**

Chapter 10.—That the Martyrs Who Obtain Many Miracles in Order that the True God May Be Worshipped, are Worthy of Much Greater Honor Than the Demons, Who Do Some Marvels that They Themselves May Be Supposed to Be God.

Here perhaps our adversaries will say that their gods also have done some wonderful things, if now they begin to compare their gods to our dead men. Or will they also say that they have gods taken from among dead men, such as Hercules, Romulus, and many others whom they fancy to have been received into the number of the gods? **But our martyrs are not our gods; for we know that the martyrs and we have both but one God, and that the same. Nor yet are the miracles which they maintain to have been done by means of their temples at all comparable to those which are done by the tombs of our martyrs.** If they seem similar, their gods have been defeated by our martyrs as Pharaoh's magi were by Moses. In reality, the demons wrought these marvels with the same impure pride with which they aspired to be the gods of the nations; but the martyrs do these wonders, or rather God does them while they pray and assist, in order that an impulse may be given to the faith by which we believe that they are not our gods, but have, together with ourselves, one God. **In fine, they built temples to these gods of theirs, and set up altars, and ordained priests, and appointed sacrifices; but to our martyrs we build, not temples as if they were gods, but monuments as to dead men whose spirits live with God. Neither do we erect altars at these monuments that we may sacrifice to the martyrs, but to the one God of the martyrs and of ourselves; and in this sacrifice they are named in their own place and rank as men of God who conquered the world by confessing Him, but they are not invoked by the sacrificing priest. For it is to God, not to them, he sacrifices, though he sacrifices at their monument; for he is God's priest, not theirs. The sacrifice itself, too, is the body of Christ, which is not offered to them, because they themselves are this body.** Which then can more readily be believed to work miracles? They who wish themselves to be reckoned gods by those on whom they work miracles, or those whose sole object in working any miracle is to induce faith in God, and in Christ also as God? They who wished to turn even their crimes into sacred rites, or those who are unwilling that even their own praises be consecrated, and seek that everything for which they are justly praised be ascribed to the glory of Him in whom they are praised? For in the Lord their souls are praised. Let us therefore believe those who both speak the truth and work wonders. For by speaking the truth they suffered, and so won the power of working wonders. And the leading truth they professed is that Christ rose from the dead, and first showed in His own flesh the immortality of the resurrection which He promised should be ours, either in the beginning of the world to come, or in the end of this world.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "Here perhaps our adversaries will say that their gods also have done some wonderful things, if now they begin to compare their gods to our dead men. Or will they also say that they have gods taken from among dead men, such as Hercules, Romulus, and many others whom they fancy to have been received into the number of the gods? **But our martyrs are not our gods; for we know that the martyrs and we have both but one God, and that the same. Nor yet are the miracles which they maintain to have been done by means of their temples at all comparable to those which are done by the tombs of our martyrs.**"

So Augustine believes that **"miracles...are done by the tombs of our martyrs."**

He continues, "If they seem similar, their gods have been defeated by our martyrs as Pharaoh's magi were by Moses. In reality, the demons wrought these marvels with the same impure pride with which they aspired to be the gods of the nations; but the martyrs do these wonders, or rather God does them while they pray and assist, in order that an impulse may be

given to the faith by which we believe that they are not our gods, but have, together with ourselves, one God.”

Nothing is said in the Scriptures about the prayers of martyrs. But this was a belief in the Catholic Church in the time of Augustine. He continues, as he explains, “In fine, they built temples to these gods of theirs, and set up altars, and ordained priests, and appointed sacrifices; but to our martyrs we build, not temples as if they were gods, but monuments as to dead men whose spirits live with God. Neither do we erect altars at these monuments that we may sacrifice to the martyrs, but to the one God of the martyrs and of ourselves; and in this sacrifice they are named in their own place and rank as men of God who conquered the world by confessing Him, but they are not invoked by the sacrificing priest. For it is to God, not to them, he sacrifices, though he sacrifices at their monument; for he is God’s priest, not theirs. The sacrifice itself, too, is the body of Christ, which is not offered to them, because they themselves are this body.”

So in the time of Augustine, the Catholic Church, or universal church, had built monuments to the martyrs, and altars where they may sacrifice “to the one God of the martyrs and of ourselves”. And the priest sacrifices to God, and not to the martyrs, “though he sacrifices at their monument; for he is God’s priest, not theirs”. And the sacrifice “is the body of Christ, which is not offered to them, because they themselves are this body.”

Augustine then continues, as he argues, “Which then can more readily be believed to work miracles? They who wish themselves to be reckoned gods by those on whom they work miracles, or those whose sole object in working any miracle is to induce faith in God, and in Christ also as God? They who wished to turn even their crimes into sacred rites, or those who are unwilling that even their own praises be consecrated, and seek that everything for which they are justly praised be ascribed to the glory of Him in whom they are praised? For in the Lord their souls are praised. Let us therefore believe those who both speak the truth and work wonders. For by speaking the truth they suffered, and so won the power of working wonders. And the leading truth they professed is that Christ rose from the dead, and first showed in His own flesh the immortality of the resurrection which He promised should be ours, either in the beginning of the world to come, or in the end of this world.”

Irenaeus was the bishop of the Church in Lyons, France in about 177 AD to 202 AD, and he wrote **Against Heresies**. In this book, which was actually five books together, he wrote the following about the justification for priests in the Church:

- “And all the apostles of the Lord are priests, who do inherit here neither lands nor houses, but serve God and the altar continually.”
- “Of whom Moses also says in Deuteronomy, when blessing Levi, “Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not known thee; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, and he disinherited his own sons: he kept Thy commandments, and observed Thy covenant,” referring to Deuteronomy 33:8-10.
- “But who are they that have left father and mother, and have said adieu to all their neighbours, on account of the word of God and His covenant, unless the disciples of the Lord? Of whom again Moses says, “They shall have no inheritance, for the Lord Himself is their inheritance,” referring to Numbers 18:10.



- “And again, “The priests the Levites shall have no part in the whole tribe of Levi, nor substance with Israel; their substance is the offerings (fructifications) of the Lord: these shall they eat,” referring to Deuteronomy 18:1-2;
- To His disciples He said, who had a priesthood of the Lord, **3893 Literally, “the Lord’s Levitical substance”—*Domini Leviticam substantiam*.** to whom it was lawful when hungry to eat the ears of corn, “For the workman is worthy of his meat,” referring to Matthew 10:9-10.

**Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume I, Against Heresies, Book 4: Chapter VIII, page 470-471**

Philip Schaff states, “The idea and institution of a special priesthood, distinct from the body of the people, with the accompanying notion of sacrifice and altar, passed imperceptibly from Jewish and heathen reminiscences and analogies into the Christian church. The majority of Jewish converts adhered tenaciously to the Mosaic institutions and rites, and a considerable part never fully attained to the height of spiritual freedom proclaimed by Paul, or soon fell away from it. He opposed legalistic and ceremonial tendencies in Galatia and Corinth; and although sacerdotalism does not appear among the errors of his Judaizing opponents, the Levitical priesthood, with its three ranks of high priest, priest, and Levite, naturally furnished an analogy for the threefold ministry of bishop, priest, and deacon, and came to be regarded as typical of it. Still less could the Gentile Christians, as a body, at once emancipate themselves from their traditional notions of priesthood, altar, and sacrifice, on which their former religion was based. Whether we regard the change as an apostasy from a higher position attained, or as a reaction of old ideas never fully abandoned, the change is undeniable, and can be traced to the second century. The church could not long occupy the ideal height of the apostolic age, and as the pentecostal illumination passed away with the death of the apostles, the old reminiscences began to reassert themselves.” **History of the Church, Volume II, Clergy and Laity, page 123, Philip Schaff.**

There is no justification for the continuation of a special priesthood in the New Testament. In the New Testament, all of the apostles were priests just as all believers. That is, all the righteous, according to the faith of Abraham, possess the sacerdotal rank as stated in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):4** To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, **5** Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. **6** Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. **7** Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, **8** And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. **9** But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; **10** Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

All the righteous are priests and offer sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. What are these sacrifices? In the New Testament, they are the following:

1. The sacrifice of praise to God, the fruit of lips that give thanks to his name as in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):15** By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.
2. To do good and to share as in **Hebrews 13 (NASB):16** And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.
3. The presentation of our bodies as living sacrifices as in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.<sup>2</sup> And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Now, one of the reasons for believing in a special sacerdotal order in the New Testament was the belief that someone had to offer the sacrifice of the Eucharist, for Communion was thought to be a ritual where the bread and wine were changed into the body and blood of the Lord at the invocation of the priest. Irenaeus states that it is the invocation of God which changes the bread and wine into a heavenly reality as we read in **Adversus Heresies, Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 5**, where he says, “For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.”

And so in Augustine’s time, we have an altar, and a priest making the sacrifice of the Eucharist to God. And there was an emphasis on ritual. With this understanding, it is not hard to see how they also had progressed to believing that honoring the martyrs could somehow get the martyrs to intercede with the Lord, and ask for a miracle. It was more easy to believe that the Lord would listen to the prayer of one who had suffered death for His name, than to trust in one’s own prayers.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate LXXXIV. Chapter XV. 13, paragraph 1-2, page 349-351**

1. The Lord, beloved brethren, hath defined that fullness of love which we ought to bear to one another, when He said: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Inasmuch, then, as He had said before, “This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you;” and appended to these words what you have just been hearing, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;” there follows from this as a consequence, what this same Evangelist John says in his epistle, “That as Christ laid down His life for us, even so we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren;” (1 John 3:16) loving one another in truth, as He hath loved us, who laid down His life for us. Such also is doubtless the meaning of what we read in the Proverbs of Solomon: “If thou sittest down to supper at the table of a ruler, consider wisely what is set before thee; and so put to thy hand, knowing that thou art bound to make similar preparations.” (Proverbs 23:1-2) For what is the table of the ruler, but that from which we take the body and blood of Him who laid down His life for us? And what is it to sit thereat, but to approach in humility? And what is it to consider intelligently what is set before thee, but worthily to reflect on the magnitude of the

favor? And what is it, so to put to thy hand, as knowing that thou art bound to make similar preparations, but as I have already said, that, as Christ laid down His life for us, so we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren? For as the Apostle Peter also says, “Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps.” (1 Peter 2:21) This is to make similar preparations. This it was that the blessed martyrs did in their burning love; and if we celebrate their memories in no mere empty form, and, in the banquet whereat they themselves were filled to the full, approach the table of the Lord, we must, as they did, be also ourselves making similar preparations. **For on these very grounds we do not commemorate them at that table in the same way, as we do others who now rest in peace, as that we should also pray for them, but rather that they should do so for us, that we may cleave to their footsteps; because they have actually attained that fullness of love, than which, our Lord hath told us, there cannot be a greater. For such tokens of love they exhibited for their brethren, as they themselves had equally received at the table of the Lord.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “The Lord, beloved brethren, hath defined that fullness of love which we ought to bear to one another, when He said: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.””

He refers in context to **John 15 (KJV):12** This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

He continues, “Inasmuch, then, as He had said before, “This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you;” and appended to these words what you have just been hearing, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;” there follows from this as a consequence, what this same Evangelist John says in his epistle, “That as Christ laid down His life for us, even so we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren;” (1 John 3:16) loving one another in truth, as He hath loved us, who laid down His life for us.”

He refers to **1 John 3 (KJV):16** Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

He continues, “Such also is doubtless the meaning of what we read in the Proverbs of Solomon: “If thou sittest down to supper at the table of a ruler, consider wisely what is set before thee; and so put to thy hand, knowing that thou art bound to make similar preparations.” (Proverbs 23:1-2)”

He refers to **Proverbs 23 (KJV):1** When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee: 2 And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.

He continues, “For what is the table of the ruler, but that from which we take the body and blood of Him who laid down His life for us? And what is it to sit there at, but to approach in humility? And what is it to consider intelligently what is set before thee, but worthily to reflect on the magnitude of the favor? And what is it, so to put to thy hand, as knowing that thou art bound to make similar preparations, but as I have already said, that, as Christ laid down His life for us, so we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren? For as the Apostle Peter also says, “Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps.” (1 Peter 2:21)”

He refers to **1 Peter 2 (KJV):21** For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

He continues, “This is to make similar preparations. This it was that the blessed martyrs did in their burning love; and if we celebrate their memories in no mere empty form, and, in the banquet whereat they themselves were filled to the full, approach the table of the Lord, we must, as they did, be also ourselves making similar preparations. **For on these very grounds we do not commemorate them at that table in the same way, as we do others who now rest in peace, as that we should also pray for them, but rather that they should do so for us, that we may cleave to their footsteps; because they have actually attained that fullness of love, than which, our Lord hath told us, there cannot be a greater. For such tokens of love they exhibited for their brethren, as they themselves had equally received at the table of the Lord.**”

So Augustine is saying that “**we do not commemorate them**”, the martyrs, “**at that table in the same way, as we do others who now rest in peace, as that we should also pray for them.**” That is, they prayed for the dead who were not martyrs. “**But**”, he says, “**rather that they should do so for us, that we may cleave to their footsteps**”. That is, they commemorated the martyrs in order that the martyrs would pray for them.

Commemoration of the martyrs led to praying to the martyrs. This is a distraction from our fellowship with the Lord. It leads away from fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith as we are told to do in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):2** Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

We are not to pray to anyone but the Lord. Let us continue to read his next paragraph.

2. But let us not be supposed to have so spoken as if on such grounds we might possibly arrive at an equality with Christ the Lord, if for His sake we have undergone witness-bearing even unto blood. He had power to lay down His life, and to take it again; but we have no power to live as long as we wish; and die we must, however unwilling: He, by dying, straightway slew death in Himself; we, by His death, are delivered from death: His flesh saw no corruption; (Acts 2:31) ours, after corruption, shall in the end of the world be clothed by Him with incorruption: He had no need of us, in order to work out our salvation; we, without Him, can do nothing: He gave Himself as the vine, to us the branches; we, apart from Him, can have no life. **Lastly, although brethren die for brethren, yet no martyr’s blood is ever shed for the remission of the sins of brethren, as was the case in what He did for us; and in this respect He bestowed not on us aught for imitation, but something for congratulation. In as far, then, as the martyrs have shed their blood for the brethren, so far have they exhibited such tokens of love as they themselves perceived at the table of the Lord. (One might imitate Him in dying, but no one could, in redeeming.) In all else, then, that I have said, although it is out of my power to mention everything, the martyr of Christ is far inferior to Christ Himself. But if any one shall set himself in comparison, I say, not with the power, but with the innocence of Christ, and (I would not say) in thinking that he is healing the sins of others, but at least that he has no sins of his own, even so far is his avidity overstepping the requirements of the method of salvation; it is a matter of considerable moment for him, only he attains not his desire. And well it is that he is admonished in that passage of the Proverbs, which immediately goes on to say, “But if thy greed is too great, be not desirous of his dainties; for it is better that thou take nothing thereof, than that thou shouldst take more than is befitting. For such things,” it is added, “have a life of**

deceit,” that is, of hypocrisy. For in asserting his own sinlessness, he cannot prove, but only pretend, that he is righteous. And so it is said, “For such have a deceiving life.” There is only One who could at once have human flesh and be free from sin. Appropriately are we commanded that which follows; and such a word and proverb is well adapted to human weakness, when it is said, “Lay not thyself out, seeing thou art poor, against him that is rich.” For the rich man is Christ, who was never obnoxious to punishment either through hereditary or personal debt and is righteous Himself, and justifies others. Lay not thyself out against Him, thou who art so poor, that thou art manifestly to the eyes of all the daily beggar that thou art in thy prayer for the remission of sins. “But keep thyself,” he says, “from thine own counsel” [“cease from thine own wisdom”—E.V.]. From what, but from this delusive presumption? For He, indeed, inasmuch as He is not only man but also God, can never be chargeable with evil. “For if thou turn thine eye upon Him, He will nowhere be visible.” “Thine eye,” that is, the human eye, wherewith thou distinguishest that which is human; “if thou turn it upon Him, He will nowhere be visible,” because He cannot be seen with such organs of sight as are thine. “For He will provide Himself wings like an eagle’s, and will depart to the house of His overseer,” from which, at all events, He came to us, and found us not such as He Himself was who came. Let us therefore love one another, even as Christ hath loved us, and given Himself for us. (Galatians 2:20) “For greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” And let us be imitating Him in such a spirit of reverential obedience, that we shall never have the boldness to presume on a comparison between Him and ourselves.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “But let us not be supposed to have so spoken as if on such grounds we might possibly arrive at an equality with Christ the Lord, if for His sake we have undergone witness-bearing even unto blood. He had power to lay down His life, and to take it again; but we have no power to live as long as we wish; and die we must, however unwilling: He, by dying, straightway slew death in Himself; we, by His death, are delivered from death: His flesh saw no corruption; (Acts 2:31) ours, after corruption, shall in the end of the world be clothed by Him with incorruption:”

He refers to **Acts 2 (KJV):31** He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

And in context to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):53** For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

He continues, “He had no need of us, in order to work out our salvation; we, without Him, can do nothing: He gave Himself as the vine, to us the branches; we, apart from Him, can have no life. **Lastly, although brethren die for brethren, yet no martyr’s blood is ever shed for the remission of the sins of brethren, as was the case in what He did for us; and in this respect He bestowed not on us aught for imitation, but something for congratulation. In as far, then, as the martyrs have shed their blood for the brethren, so far have they exhibited such tokens of love as they themselves perceived at the table of the Lord. (One might imitate Him in dying, but no one could, in redeeming.) In all else, then, that I have said, although it is out of my power to mention everything, the martyr of Christ is far inferior to Christ Himself. But if any one shall set himself in comparison, I say, not with the power, but with the innocence of Christ, and (I**



would not say) in thinking that he is healing the sins of others, but at least that he has no sins of his own, even so far is his avidity overstepping the requirements of the method of salvation; it is a matter of considerable moment for him, only he attains not his desire.”

Note that “avidity” is defined as “the quality or state of being avid:

a: keen eagerness b: consuming greed”. (Merriam Webster)

Yes, “no martyr’s blood is ever shed for the remission of the sins of brethren”, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

There is only redemption in Christ Jesus.

He continues, “And well it is that he is admonished in that passage of the Proverbs, which immediately goes on to say, “But if thy greed is too great, be not desirous of his dainties; for it is better that thou take nothing thereof, than that thou shouldst take more than is befitting. For such things,” it is added, “have a life of deceit,” that is, of hypocrisy. For in asserting his own sinlessness, he cannot prove, but only pretend, that he is righteous. And so it is said, “For such have a deceiving life.” There is only One who could at once have human flesh and be free from sin. Appropriately are we commanded that which follows; and such a word and proverb is well adapted to human weakness, when it is said, “Lay not thyself out, seeing thou art poor, against him that is rich.””

He refers to **Proverbs 23 (Septuagint):4** If thou art poor, measure not thyself with a rich man; but refrain thyself in thy wisdom.

And in context to **Proverbs 23 (KJV):1** When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee: 2 And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite. 3 Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat.

Augustine continues, “For the rich man is Christ, who was never obnoxious to punishment either through hereditary or personal debt and is righteous Himself, and justifies others. Lay not thyself out against Him, thou who art so poor, that thou art manifestly to the eyes of all the daily beggar that thou art in thy prayer for the remission of sins.””

But we are not beggars before the Lord for He has forgiven us and made propitiation for all our sins so that we come boldly before the throne of grace as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):16** Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

He continues, ““But keep thyself,” he says, “from thine own counsel” [“cease from thine own wisdom”—E.V.]. From what, but from this delusive presumption?”

He refers to **Proverbs 23 (KJV):4** Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.

He continues, “For He, indeed, inasmuch as He is not only man but also God, can never be chargeable with evil. “For if thou turn thine eye upon Him, He will nowhere be visible.” “Thine eye,” that is, the human eye, wherewith thou distinguishest that which is human; “if thou turn it upon Him, He will nowhere be visible,” because He cannot be seen with such organs of sight as are thine. “For He will provide Himself wings like an eagle’s, and will depart to the house of His overseer,” from which, at all events, He came to us, and found us not such as He Himself was who came.”

He refers to **Proverbs 23 (Septuagint):5** If thou shouldest fix thine eye upon him, he will disappear; for wings like an eagle's are prepared for him, and he returns to the house of his master.

He continues, "Let us therefore love one another, even as Christ hath loved us, and given Himself for us. (Galatians 2:20)"

He refers to **Galatians 2 (KJV):20** I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

He continues, "'For greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'"

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):13** Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

He concludes, "And let us be imitating Him in such a spirit of reverential obedience, that we shall never have the boldness to presume on a comparison between Him and ourselves."

We can agree with Augustine here. Though we may come boldly before the throne of His grace, we are not presumptuous to compare ourselves with Him, as if we were sinless.

## Purgatory

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XXI, Chapter 13, page 463-464

Chapter 13.—Against the Opinion of Those Who Think that the Punishments of the Wicked After Death are Purgatorial.

The Platonists, indeed, while they maintain that no sins are unpunished, suppose that all punishment is administered for remedial purposes, be it inflicted by human or divine law, in this life or after death; for a man may be scathless here, or, though punished, may yet not amend. Hence that passage of Virgil, where, when he had said of our earthly bodies and mortal members, that our souls derive—"Hence wild desires and groveling fears, And human laughter, human tears; Immured in dungeon-seeming night, They look abroad, yet see no light," goes on to say: "Nay, when at last the life has fled, And left the body cold and dead, Ee'n then there passes not away The painful heritage of clay; Full many a long-contracted stain Perforce must linger deep in grain. So penal sufferings they endure For ancient crime, to make them pure; Some hang aloft in open view, For winds to pierce them through and through, While others purge their guilt deep-dyed In burning fire or whelming tide." (Aeneid, vi. 733) They who are of this opinion would have all punishments after death to be purgatorial; and as the elements of air, fire, and water are superior to earth, one or other of these may be the instrument of expiating and purging away the stain contracted by the contagion of earth. So Virgil hints at the air in the words, "Some hang aloft for winds to pierce;" at the water in "whelming tide;" and at fire in the expression "in burning fire." For our part, we recognize that even in this life some punishments are purgatorial,—not, indeed, to those whose life is none the better, but rather the worse for them, but to those who are constrained by them to amend their life. All other

punishments, whether temporal or eternal, inflicted as they are on every one by divine providence, are sent either on account of past sins, or of sins presently allowed in the life, or to exercise and reveal a man's graces. They may be inflicted by the instrumentality of bad men and angels as well as of the good. For even if any one suffers some hurt through another's wickedness or mistake, the man indeed sins whose ignorance or injustice does the harm; but God, who by His just though hidden judgment permits it to be done, sins not. **But temporary punishments are suffered by some in this life only, by others after death, by others both now and then; but all of them before that last and strictest judgment. But of those who suffer temporary punishments after death, all are not doomed to those everlasting pains which are to follow that judgment; for to some, as we have already said, what is not remitted in this world is remitted in the next, that is, they are not punished with the eternal punishment of the world to come.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he quotes the Platonists, and says, "The Platonists, indeed, while they maintain that no sins are unpunished, suppose that all punishment is administered for remedial purposes, be it inflicted by human or divine law, in this life or after death; for a man may be scathless (unharméd) here, or, though punished, may yet not amend. Hence that passage of Virgil, where, when he had said of our earthly bodies and mortal members, that our souls derive—

"Hence wild desires and groveling fears,  
And human laughter, human tears;  
Immured in dungeon-seeming night,  
They look abroad, yet see no light,"  
goes on to say:  
"Nay, when at last the life has fled,  
And left the body cold and dead,  
Ee'n then there passes not away  
The painful heritage of clay;  
Full many a long-contracted stain

Perforce must linger deep in grain.  
So penal sufferings they endure  
For ancient crime, to make them pure;  
Some hang aloft in open view,  
For winds to pierce them through and  
through,  
While others purge their guilt deep-dyed  
In burning fire or whelming tide."  
(Aeneid, vi. 733)

So it appears that the idea of purgatory has its roots in Greek philosophy. Augustine continues as he comments, "They who are of this opinion would have all punishments after death to be purgatorial; and as the elements of air, fire, and water are superior to earth, one or other of these may be the instrument of expiating and purging away the stain contracted by the contagion of earth. So Virgil hints at the air in the words, "Some hang aloft for winds to pierce;" at the water in "whelming tide;" and at fire in the expression "in burning fire.""

Augustine then states the Catholic view, as he continues, "For our part, we recognize that even in this life some punishments are purgatorial,—not, indeed, to those whose life is none the better, but rather the worse for them, but to those who are constrained by them to amend their life. All other punishments, whether temporal or eternal, inflicted as they are on every one by divine providence, are sent either on account of past sins, or of sins presently allowed in the life, or to exercise and reveal a man's graces."

So purgatorial punishments may occur in this life, so that "those who are constrained by

them” may “amend their life”. And “All other punishments, whether temporal or eternal” are for past or present sins, or “to exercise and reveal a man’s graces”, such as, we may surmise, as happened to Job.

Augustine continues, “They may be inflicted by the instrumentality of bad men and angels as well as of the good. For even if any one suffers some hurt through another’s wickedness or mistake, the man indeed sins whose ignorance or injustice does the harm; but God, who by His just though hidden judgment permits it to be done, sins not.”

God disciplines every son whom He receives, as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):6** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

He then concludes, “**But temporary punishments are suffered by some in this life only, by others after death, by others both now and then; but all of them before that last and strictest judgment. But of those who suffer temporary punishments after death, all are not doomed to those everlasting pains which are to follow that judgment; for to some, as we have already said, what is not remitted in this world is remitted in the next, that is, they are not punished with the eternal punishment of the world to come.**”

So the Catholic or universal church in Augustine’s time believed in purgatory, that is, “**temporary punishments after death**”. But purgatory has no foundation in the Scriptures, not even a mention.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XXI, Chapter 16, page 465-466**

Chapter 16.—The Laws of Grace, Which Extend to All the Epochs of the Life of the Regenerate.

But such is God’s mercy towards the vessels of mercy which He has prepared for glory, that even the first age of man, that is, infancy, which submits without any resistance to the flesh, and the second age, which is called boyhood, and which has not yet understanding enough to undertake this warfare, and therefore yields to almost every vicious pleasure (because though this age has the power of speech, and may therefore seem to have passed infancy, the mind is still too weak to comprehend the commandment), **yet if either of these ages has received the sacraments of the Mediator, then, although the present life be immediately brought to an end, the child, having been translated from the power of darkness to the kingdom of Christ, shall not only be saved from eternal punishments, but shall not even suffer purgatorial torments after death. For spiritual regeneration of itself suffices to prevent any evil consequences resulting after death from the connection with death which carnal generation forms.** But when we reach that age which can now comprehend the commandment, and submit to the dominion of law, we must declare war upon vices, and wage this war keenly, lest we be landed in damnable sins. And if vices have not gathered strength, by habitual victory they are more easily overcome and subdued; but if they have been used to conquer and rule, it is only with difficulty and labor they are mastered. And indeed this victory cannot be sincerely and truly gained but by delighting in true righteousness, and it is faith in Christ that gives this. For if the law be present with its command, and the Spirit be absent with His help, the presence of the prohibition serves only to increase the desire to sin, and adds the guilt of transgression. Sometimes, indeed, patent vices

are overcome by other and hidden vices, which are reckoned virtues, though pride and a kind of ruinous self-sufficiency are their informing principles. Accordingly vices are then only to be considered overcome when they are conquered by the love of God, which God Himself alone gives, and which He gives only through the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who became a partaker of our mortality that He might make us partakers of His divinity. But few indeed are they who are so happy as to have passed their youth without committing any damnable sins, either by dissolute or violent conduct, or by following some godless and unlawful opinions, but have subdued by their greatness of soul everything in them which could make them the slaves of carnal pleasures. The greater number having first become transgressors of the law that they have received, and having allowed vice to have the ascendancy in them, then flee to grace for help, and so, by a penitence more bitter, and a struggle more violent than it would otherwise have been, they subdue the soul to God, and thus give it its lawful authority over the flesh, and become victors. **Whoever, therefore, desires to escape eternal punishment, let him not only be baptized, but also justified in Christ, and so let him in truth pass from the devil to Christ. And let him not fancy that there are any purgatorial pains except before that final and dreadful judgment. We must not, however deny that even the eternal fire will be proportioned to the deserts of the wicked, so that to some it will be more, and to others less painful, whether this result be accomplished by a variation in the temperature of the fire itself, graduated according to every one's merit, or whether it be that the heat remains the same, but that all do not feel it with equal intensity of torment.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "But such is God's mercy towards the vessels of mercy which He has prepared for glory,..."

He refers in context to **Romans 9 (KJV):22** What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

Augustine then continues, "that even the first age of man, that is, infancy, which submits without any resistance to the flesh, and the second age, which is called boyhood, and which has not yet understanding enough to undertake this warfare, and therefore yields to almost every vicious pleasure (because though this age has the power of speech, and may therefore seem to have passed infancy, the mind is still too weak to comprehend the commandment), **yet if either of these ages has received the sacraments of the Mediator, then, although the present life be immediately brought to an end, the child, having been translated from the power of darkness to the kingdom of Christ, shall not only be saved from eternal punishments, but shall not even suffer purgatorial torments after death. For spiritual regeneration of itself suffices to prevent any evil consequences resulting after death from the connection with death which carnal generation forms.**"

Augustine here speaks of the age of accountability. Infancy and boyhood would not have reached this age as he has defined them. But still he requires them to have received the **"sacraments of the Mediator"**. And those below the age of accountability **"shall not only be saved from eternal punishments, but shall not even suffer purgatorial torments after death"**.



And Augustine then continues, speaking of the age of accountability, “But when we reach that age which can now comprehend the commandment, and submit to the dominion of law, we must declare war upon vices, and wage this war keenly, lest we be landed in damnable sins.”

By “damnable sins”, he means sins by which one may lose their salvation.

He continues, “And if vices have not gathered strength, by habitual victory they are more easily overcome and subdued; but if they have been used to conquer and rule, it is only with difficulty and labor they are mastered. And indeed this victory cannot be sincerely and truly gained but by delighting in true righteousness, and it is faith in Christ that gives this. For if the law be present with its command, and the Spirit be absent with His help, the presence of the prohibition serves only to increase the desire to sin, and adds the guilt of transgression.”

The law only gives us knowledge of sin as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

He continues, “Sometimes, indeed, patent vices are overcome by other and hidden vices, which are reckoned virtues, though pride and a kind of ruinous self-sufficiency are their informing principles. Accordingly vices are then only to be considered overcome when they are conquered by the love of God, which God Himself alone gives, and which He gives only through the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who became a partaker of our mortality that He might make us partakers of His divinity.”

Augustine speaks from experience. But he has found the victory to be “faith in Christ”, and the “love of God, which God Himself alone gives, and which He gives only through the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who became a partaker of our mortality that He might make us partakers of His divinity.”

And so we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

He continues, “But few indeed are they who are so happy as to have passed their youth without committing any damnable sins, either by dissolute or violent conduct, or by following some godless and unlawful opinions, but have subdued by their greatness of soul everything in them which could make them the slaves of carnal pleasures. The greater number having first become transgressors of the law that they have received, and having allowed vice to have the ascendancy in them, then flee to grace for help, and so, by a penitence more bitter, and a struggle more violent than it would otherwise have been, they subdue the soul to God, and thus give it its lawful authority over the flesh, and become victors.”

He then concludes, “Whoever, therefore, desires to escape eternal punishment, let him not only be baptized, but also justified in Christ, and so let him in truth pass from the devil to Christ. And let him not fancy that there are any purgatorial pains except before that final and dreadful judgment. We must not, however deny that even the eternal fire will be proportioned to the deserts of the wicked, so that to some it will be more, and to others less painful, whether this result be accomplished by a variation in the temperature of the fire itself, graduated according to every one’s merit, or whether it be that the heat remains the same, but that all do not feel it with equal intensity of torment.”

It seems that Augustine did not understand that it is by faith alone that we are justified, as he says above, “Whoever, therefore, desires to escape eternal punishment, let him not only be baptized, but also justified in Christ, and so let him in truth pass from the devil to Christ.”

The very righteousness of God has been put down to our account when we believe in Jesus Christ as we read again in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ is unto all that believe. And the Scripture also says that we were washed, sanctified, and justified when we believed as we read in context in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):9** Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Whatever we were before we believed in Jesus Christ, we are not now. We have been washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

He that believes in Jesus is not condemned, as we read again in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

We have a standing with God as those who are righteous. Now in the White Throne Judgment, which is the judgment of the wicked dead, they will be judged by their works, as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Only those who did not believe will be in this judgment. And since they will be judged by their works, they will have “their part in the lake which burneth with fire” as we read in **Revelation 21 (KJV):8** But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XXI, Chapter 26, page 473-475**

Chapter 26.—What It is to Have Christ for a Foundation, and Who They are to Whom Salvation

as by Fire is Promised.

But, say they, the Catholic Christians have Christ for a foundation, and they have not fallen away from union with Him, no matter how depraved a life they have built on this foundation, as wood, hay, stubble; and accordingly the well-directed faith by which Christ is their foundation will suffice to deliver them some time from the continuance of that fire, though it be with loss, since those things they have built on it shall be burned. Let the Apostle James summarily reply to them: “If any man say he has faith, and have not works, can faith save him?” (James 2:14) And who then is it, they ask, of whom the Apostle Paul says, “But he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire?” 1 Corinthians 3:15) Let us join them in their inquiry; and one thing is very certain, that it is not he of whom James speaks, else we should make the two apostles contradict one another, if the one says, “Though a man’s works be evil, his faith will save him as by fire,” while the other says, “If he have not good works, can his faith save him?”

We shall then ascertain who it is who can be saved by fire, if we first discover what it is to have Christ for a foundation. And this we may very readily learn from the image itself. In a building the foundation is first. Whoever, then, has Christ in his heart, so that no earthly or temporal things—not even those that are legitimate and allowed—are preferred to Him, has Christ as a foundation. But if these things be preferred, then even though a man seem to have faith in Christ, yet Christ is not the foundation to that man; and much more if he, in contempt of wholesome precepts, seek forbidden gratifications, is he clearly convicted of putting Christ not first but last, since he has despised Him as his ruler, and has preferred to fulfill his own wicked lusts, in contempt of Christ’s commands and allowances. Accordingly, if any Christian man loves a harlot, and, attaching himself to her, becomes one body, he has not now Christ for a foundation. But if any one loves his own wife, and loves her as Christ would have him love her, who can doubt that he has Christ for a foundation? But if he loves her in the world’s fashion, carnally, as the disease of lust prompts him, and as the Gentiles love who know not God, even this the apostle, or rather Christ by the apostle, allows as a venial fault. And therefore even such a man may have Christ for a foundation. For so long as he does not prefer such an affection or pleasure to Christ, Christ is his foundation, though on it he builds wood, hay, stubble; and therefore he shall be saved as by fire. For the fire of affliction shall burn such luxurious pleasures and earthly loves, though they be not damnable, because enjoyed in lawful wedlock. And of this fire the fuel is bereavement, and all those calamities which consume these joys. Consequently the superstructure will be loss to him who has built it, for he shall not retain it, but shall be agonized by the loss of those things in the enjoyment of which he found pleasure. But by this fire he shall be saved through virtue of the foundation, because even if a persecutor demanded whether he would retain Christ or these things, he would prefer Christ. Would you hear, in the apostle’s own words, who he is who builds on the foundation gold, silver, precious stones? “He that is unmarried,” he says, “careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 7:32) Would you hear who he is that buildeth wood, hay, stubble? “But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.” (1 Corinthians 7:33) “Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it,”—the day, no doubt, of tribulation—“because,” says he, “it shall be revealed by fire.” (1 Corinthians 3:13) He calls tribulation fire, just as it is elsewhere said, “The furnace

proves the vessels of the potter, and the trial of affliction righteous men.” (Ecclesiasticus 27:5) And “The fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide”—for a man’s care for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord, abides—“which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward,”—that is, he shall reap the fruit of his care. “But if any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss,”—for what he loved he shall not retain:—“but he himself shall be saved,”—for no tribulation shall have moved him from that stable foundation,—“yet so as by fire;” (1 Corinthians 3:14-15) for that which he possessed with the sweetness of love he does not lose without the sharp sting of pain. Here, then, as seems to me, we have a fire which destroys neither, but enriches the one, brings loss to the other, proves both.

But if this passage [of Corinthians] is to interpret that fire of which the Lord shall say to those on His left hand, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,” (Matthew 25:41) so that among these we are to believe there are those who build on the foundation wood, hay, stubble, and that they, through virtue of the good foundation, shall after a time be liberated from the fire that is the award of their evil deserts, what then shall we think of those on the right hand, to whom it shall be said, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you,” (Matthew 25:34) unless that they are those who have built on the foundation gold, silver, precious stones? But if the fire of which our Lord speaks is the same as that of which the apostle says, “Yet so as by fire,” then both—that is to say, both those on the right as well as those on the left—are to be cast into it. For that fire is to try both, since it is said, “For the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” (1 Corinthians 3:13) If, therefore, the fire shall try both, in order that if any man’s work abide—*i.e.*, if the superstructure be not consumed by the fire—he may receive a reward, and that if his work is burned he may suffer loss, certainly that fire is not the eternal fire itself. For into this latter fire only those on the left hand shall be cast, and that with final and everlasting doom; but that former fire proves those on the right hand. But some of them it so proves that it does not burn and consume the structure which is found to have been built by them on Christ as the foundation; while others of them it proves in another fashion, so as to burn what they have built up, and thus cause them to suffer loss, while they themselves are saved because they have retained Christ, who was laid as their sure foundation, and have loved Him above all. But if they are saved, then certainly they shall stand at the right hand, and shall with the rest hear the sentence, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;” and not at the left hand, where those shall be who shall not be saved, and shall therefore hear the doom, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.” For from that fire no man shall be saved, because they all shall go away into eternal punishment, where their worms shall not die, nor their fire be quenched, in which they shall be tormented day and night for ever.

But if it be said that in the interval of time between the death of this body and that last day of judgment and retribution which shall follow the resurrection, the bodies of the dead shall be exposed to a fire of such a nature that it shall not affect those who have not in this life indulged in such pleasures and pursuits as shall be consumed like wood, hay, stubble, but shall affect those others who have carried with them structures of that kind; if it be said that such worldliness, being venial, shall be consumed in the fire of tribulation either here only, or here and hereafter both, or here that it may not be hereafter,—this I do not contradict, because possibly it is true. For perhaps even the death of the body is itself a part of this tribulation, for it

results from the first transgression, so that the time which follows death takes its color in each case from the nature of the man's building. The persecutions, too, which have crowned the martyrs, and which Christians of all kinds suffer, try both buildings like a fire, consuming some, along with the builders themselves, if Christ is not found in them as their foundation, while others they consume without the builders, because Christ is found in them, and they are saved, though with loss; and other buildings still they do not consume, because such materials as abide for ever are found in them. In the end of the world there shall be in the time of Antichrist tribulation such as has never before been. How many edifices there shall then be, of gold or of hay, built on the best foundation, Christ Jesus, which that fire shall prove, bringing joy to some, loss to others, but without destroying either sort, because of this stable foundation! But whosoever prefers, I do not say his wife, with whom he lives for carnal pleasure, but any of those relatives who afford no delight of such a kind, and whom it is right to love,—whosoever prefers these to Christ, and loves them after a human and carnal fashion, has not Christ as a foundation, and will therefore not be saved by fire, nor indeed at all; for he shall not possibly dwell with the Saviour, who says very explicitly concerning this very matter, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." (Matthew 10:37) **But he who loves his relations carnally, and yet so that he does not prefer them to Christ, but would rather want them than Christ if he were put to the proof, shall be saved by fire, because it is necessary that by the loss of these relations he suffer pain in proportion to his love.** And he who loves father, mother, sons, daughters, according to Christ, so that he aids them in obtaining His kingdom and cleaving to Him, or loves them because they are members of Christ, God forbid that this love should be consumed as wood, hay, stubble, and not rather be reckoned a structure of gold, silver, precious stones. For how can a man love those more than Christ whom he loves only for Christ's sake?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, **"But, say they, the Catholic Christians have Christ for a foundation, and they have not fallen away from union with Him, no matter how depraved a life they have built on this foundation, as wood, hay, stubble; and accordingly the well-directed faith by which Christ is their foundation will suffice to deliver them some time from the continuance of that fire, though it be with loss, since those things they have built on it shall be burned."**

And this is according to the Scripture. But he continues, as he then argues, **"Let the Apostle James summarily reply to them: "If any man say he has faith, and have not works, can faith save him?" (James 2:14)"**

He refers to **James 2 (KJV):14** What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?

Augustine then continues his argument, **"And who then is it, they ask, of whom the Apostle Paul says, "But he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire?" 1 Corinthians 3:15)"**

He refers to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

And Augustine continues, **"Let us join them in their inquiry; and one thing is very certain, that it is not he of whom James speaks, else we should make the two apostles contradict one another, if the one says, "Though a man's works be evil, his faith will save him as by fire," while the other says, "If he have not good works, can his faith save him?""**



Now Augustine proceeds to explain, as he then says, “We shall then ascertain who it is who can be saved by fire, if we first discover what it is to have Christ for a foundation. And this we may very readily learn from the image itself. In a building the foundation is first. Whoever, then, has Christ in his heart, so that no earthly or temporal things—not even those that are legitimate and allowed—are preferred to Him, has Christ as a foundation.”

This goes along with the thinking of the early Church in Augustine’s time. You became a catechumen before being baptized so that you could reach a certain level of sanctification so that you would not fall away too quickly, if at all.

Augustine then continues, “But if these things be preferred, then even though a man seem to have faith in Christ, yet Christ is not the foundation to that man; and much more if he, in contempt of wholesome precepts, seek forbidden gratifications, is he clearly convicted of putting Christ not first but last, since he has despised Him as his ruler, and has preferred to fulfill his own wicked lusts, in contempt of Christ’s commands and allowances.”

This is why Paul tells us to test ourselves as we read in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

The Scripture says that those who will be saved are as in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Confessing with our mouth the Lord Jesus is surrendering to who He is. He is Lord and He is God.

Augustine continues, as he then argues, “Accordingly, if any Christian man loves a harlot, and, attaching himself to her, becomes one body, he has not now Christ for a foundation.”

Is this really a test if someone has Christ for a foundation? Jesus simply said as in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Fornication is having sex with someone you are not married to, and therefore it is a sin. And Paul called the Corinthians out on this sin as we read in **1 Corinthians 5 (KJV):1** It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Paul delivered “such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh”. This would be related to the judgment of God upon the one who sinned. This is what is meant by Paul when he speaks of being saved, “yet so as by fire” in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

God chastens his sons and daughters for carnality, as he did this man. He suffered for his choices, but he later repented of his sin as we read in **2 Corinthians 2 (KJV):6** Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. 7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. 8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. 9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. 10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; 11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Augustine then continues, “**But if any one loves his own wife, and loves her as Christ would have him love her, who can doubt that he has Christ for a foundation? But if he loves her in the world’s fashion, carnally, as the disease of lust prompts him, and as the Gentiles love who know not God, even this the apostle, or rather Christ by the apostle, allows as a venial fault. And therefore even such a man may have Christ for a foundation. For so long as he does not prefer such an affection or pleasure to Christ, Christ is his foundation, though on it he builds wood, hay, stubble; and therefore he shall be saved as by fire.**”

Augustine is speaking of the belief of the Catholic Church in his time that sex in marriage was only to be done to procreate, that is, to have children. It was not to be done simply for pleasure, which in his thinking was a venial fault. A venial fault is a venial sin where you still have Christ for a foundation, and you don’t lose your salvation. But marriage is honorable in all as we read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):4** Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Jesus spoke of the marriage relationship as becoming one flesh as we read in **Mark 10 (KJV):6** But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

The intimacy of the marriage relationship is to be maintained as we read in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):3** Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

Augustine continues as he says, “For the fire of affliction shall burn such luxurious pleasures and earthly loves, though they be not damnable, because enjoyed in lawful wedlock. And of this fire the fuel is bereavement, and all those calamities which consume these joys. Consequently the superstructure will be loss to him who has built it, for he shall not retain it, but shall be agonized by the loss of those things in the enjoyment of which he found pleasure. But by this fire he shall be saved through virtue of the foundation, because even if a persecutor demanded whether he would retain Christ or these things, he would prefer Christ.”

Again, to Augustine, sex in marriage was only for the purpose of having children. But Paul makes no such requirement as we read in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):1** Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, to

avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

He then says that he speaks this allowance for marriage by permission in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):6** But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

The allowance or permission he is giving is to be married. In verse 3 above we read, “Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: likewise also the wife unto the husband.” The only reason the husband and wife were not to come together was to give themselves “to fasting and prayer” in verse 5.

Augustine then continues. “Would you hear, in the apostle’s own words, who he is who builds on the foundation gold, silver, precious stones? “He that is unmarried,” he says, “careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 7:32) Would you hear who he is that buildeth wood, hay, stubble? “But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.” (1 Corinthians 7:33)”

This is a complete misinterpretation of these verses. He is taking them out of context. But let us read them in context as in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):32** But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: 33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. 34 There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. 35 And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

Marriage can be a distraction, but it does not mean that those who are married only build wood hay, and stubble on the foundation of Jesus Christ. Paul then says that those who marry do not sin as we continue in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):36** But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. 37 Nevertheless he that standeth steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. 38 So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.

As married people, we are not to be distracted from caring “for the things of the Lord”. We must fix our eyes on Jesus, and love our spouse with the love of the Lord. In this way, we please the Lord, and our wives. The Lord must always be first. But our marriage is second, and all else comes after that. Paul is not saying that married people cannot please the Lord. He says that those who marry do not sin by marrying. It is not a damnable sin, or a venial sin. It is not a sin at all.

Augustine then continues as he says, “Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it,”—the day, no doubt, of tribulation—“because,” says he, “it shall be revealed by fire.” (1 Corinthians 3:13)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):13** Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

The day of “tribulation” is spoken of in **Matthew 24 (KJV):21** For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

But this is not the time when the righteous will be judged. The time when the righteous will be judged is spoken of by Paul in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

After the first resurrection and the Church is raptured, this judgment will occur just before the tribulation period of seven years, when Israel shall be tried, as is prophesied in **Ezekiel 22 (KJV):19** Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. 20 As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. 21 Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. 22 As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you.

It is also called the time of Jacob’s trouble in **Jeremiah 29 (KJV):4** And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5 For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. 8 For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: 9 But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

Augustine did not understand this timing of the judgments. And so he continues as he says, “**He calls tribulation fire, just as it is elsewhere said, “The furnace proves the vessels of the potter, and the trial of affliction righteous men.” (Ecclesiasticus 27:5)**”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 27 (Douay Rheims):5** The furnace trieth the potter's vessels, and the trial of affliction just men.

And we read in **Ecclesiasticus 27 (KJV):5** The furnace proveth the potter's vessels; so the trial of man is in his reasoning.

Augustine connects the tribulation period with the fire that shall try every man’s work mentioned in 1 Corinthians 3:13, but that is not the time when our works will be judged. The works of the righteous will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ.

But he continues, “**And “The fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide”—for a man’s care for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord, abides—“which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward,”—that is, he shall reap the fruit of his care. “But if any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss,”—for what he loved he shall not retain:—“ but he himself shall be saved,”—for no tribulation shall have moved him from that stable foundation,—“yet so as by fire;” (1 Corinthians 3:14-15) for that which he possessed with the sweetness of love he does not lose without the sharp sting of pain. Here, then, as seems to me, we have a fire which destroys neither, but enriches the one, brings loss to the other, proves both.**”

To Augustine, those who were married could not build anything but wood, hay, or stubble. But let us look at the context of what Paul is speaking of to the Corinthians. Paul speaks to them as to carnal brethren, that is, babes in Christ, as we begin in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

In Augustine's time, one had to be a catechumen to rid themselves of carnality, before they could be baptized. This was the preparation for baptism, where they would be regenerated, or born again. They did not understand that regeneration occurs when a person believes from the heart as we read again in **Romans 10 (KJV)**:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

It doesn't mention baptism here. It is God who knows our hearts, and not man. And He is the one who gives us birth as we read in **John 1 (KJV)**:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

So although the Corinthians were carnal, they were still saved as Paul, who was a minister by whom they believed, confirms in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

Paul says that he and Apollos were ministers by whom they believed, that is, they believed in Jesus and were saved. We continue to read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**:8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

So Jesus Christ is the foundation of God's building. And whatever we build has to be in agreement with Jesus Christ. We find this agreement when we rightly divide the word of God, and we walk in the light of it. It is not what we do for God, but what He does through us that we are rewarded for, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV)**:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Paul also taught that married people can labor for the Lord, as we read in **1 Timothy 3 (ESV)**:2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, soberminded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach...



And in **1 Timothy 3 (ESV):12** Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well.

We continue to read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

In Augustine's time, it was thought that the fire one had to go through at death was purgatory. This was a place where the righteous dead supposedly went to be purged of the guilt of sin before they were allowed to go to heaven. There is no such place mentioned in Scripture.

Paul is speaking of the fire that "shall try every man's work of what sort it is", that is, he is speaking of the judgment seat of Christ when we as believers will be judged for the things done in the body, whether good or bad, as we read again in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

This will occur after the rapture of the Church, and just before the tribulation period. We continue to read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):16** Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

The Corinthians were temples of the Spirit of God, who dwelt in them. But if we continue in sin, we will come under the discipline of the Lord, which may include physical death as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):27** Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Many were weak, and some were sickly among the Corinthians, and some even slept, that is, they died because of the chastening of the Lord, in order that they "should not be condemned with the world". There is a sin unto death as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):16** If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. 18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

The sin unto death was for physical death, but not spiritual death. This punishment came upon Ananias and Sapphira for lying to God, as we read in **Acts 5 (KJV):1** But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied

unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. 6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. 12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

In the time of the apostles, many signs and wonders were wrought among the people by their hands. And great grace was upon them all as we read in **Acts 4 (KJV):33** And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

Ananias and Sapphira built only wood, hay, and stubble on the foundation, but they were still saved, though as by fire.

Paul continues as he concludes in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):18** Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. 20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. 21 Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; 22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; 23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

The Corinthians had been bought with a price. They were not their own. It is incumbent upon us to live a holy life, or face the discipline of our heavenly Father.

But Augustine continues as he then argues, “But if this passage [of Corinthians] is to interpret that fire of which the Lord shall say to those on His left hand, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,” (Matthew 25:41) so that among these we are to believe there are those who build on the foundation wood, hay, stubble, and that they, through virtue of the good foundation, shall after a time be liberated from the fire that is the award of their evil deserts, what then shall we think of those on the right hand, to whom it shall be said, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you,” (Matthew 25:34) unless that they are those who have built on the foundation gold, silver, precious stones?

Augustine is quoting from **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

And **Matthew 25 (KJV):34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

But he ignores the context of this passage. To understand the time the Lord is speaking of here in this passage, we must begin reading in **Matthew 25 (KJV):31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from

another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

This judgment will occur on earth. This event is known as the judgment of the nations, which will occur in verse 31 above when “the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him,” and when He “shall he sit upon the throne of his glory”. This event will occur immediately after the tribulation of seven years, and before the thousand year reign of Christ. The basis of this judgment will be how the nations treated the Jews during the tribulation. The nations who gave food to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty, and took in strangers, and clothed the naked, and visited the sick, and came to those in prison, will inherit the kingdom prepared “from the foundation of the world”, as we continue to read in **Matthew 25 (KJV)**: 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

The brethren in this context are the Jews during the tribulation period. But those who did not do these things will cease from being nations, and be cast into everlasting fire as we continue to read in **Matthew 25 (KJV)**: 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Augustine thought these verses referred to the final judgment which is mentioned in Revelation 20:11-15. But the setting in this judgment is totally different as we shall see.

Augustine then continues, “**But if the fire of which our Lord speaks is the same as that of which the apostle says, “Yet so as by fire,” then both—that is to say, both those on the right as well as those on the left—are to be cast into it. For that fire is to try both, since it is said, “For the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” (1 Corinthians 3:13)**”

We must understand that the Scriptures make a difference between the time of the judgment of the righteous dead, and the judgment of the wicked dead. The time of the judgment of the righteous dead is just after the first resurrection which is spoken of in **Revelation 20 (KJV)**: 1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand

years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

After the battle of Armageddon, which is described in Revelation, chapter 19, the devil, and Satan, shall be bound for a thousand years, and cast into the bottomless pit in verses 1 to 3 above. The souls that have come out of the tribulation period who accepted Christ, and did not worship “the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands” as in verse 4 above, will be resurrected and reign with Christ along with all of the saints who were raptured at the beginning of the tribulation period. The rapture was the harvest proper, while in the tribulation there will be gleanings, as it were. The words, “the rest of the dead” in verse 5 above speaks of the wicked dead who will be raised at the white throne judgment. This occurs after the thousand years, as mentioned in **Revelation 20 (KJV):** 7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

After this event the devil will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and the great white throne judgment will take place. This event will take place in heaven, as we continue in **Revelation 20 (KJV):** 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

In this judgment the wicked dead are judged according to their works in verses 12 and 13. This is because they did not accept Christ.

Augustine then continues, as he then says, “If, therefore, the fire shall try both, in order that if any man’s work abide—*i.e.*, if the superstructure be not consumed by the fire—he may receive a reward, and that if his work is burned he may suffer loss, certainly that fire is not the eternal fire itself. For into this latter fire only those on the left hand shall be cast, and that with final and everlasting doom; but that former fire proves those on the right hand. But some of them it so proves that it does not burn and consume the structure which is found to have been built by them on Christ as the foundation; while others of them it proves in another fashion, so

as to burn what they have built up, and thus cause them to suffer loss, while they themselves are saved because they have retained Christ, who was laid as their sure foundation, and have loved Him above all. But if they are saved, then certainly they shall stand at the right hand, and shall with the rest hear the sentence, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;” and not at the left hand, where those shall be who shall not be saved, and shall therefore hear the doom, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.” For from that fire no man shall be saved, because they all shall go away into eternal punishment, where their worms shall not die, nor their fire be quenched, in which they shall be tormented day and night for ever.

Notice that the judgment in Matthew 25:31-46 takes place on earth, when the Son shall “sit upon the throne of his glory”. The judgment in Revelation 20:7-15 is in heaven, and the throne is a “great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.” These are two different judgments. Augustine did not understand this.

Augustine then continues, and says, “But if it be said that in the interval of time between the death of this body and that last day of judgment and retribution which shall follow the resurrection, the bodies of the dead shall be exposed to a fire of such a nature that it shall not affect those who have not in this life indulged in such pleasures and pursuits as shall be consumed like wood, hay, stubble, but shall affect those others who have carried with them structures of that kind; if it be said that such worldliness, being venial, shall be consumed in the fire of tribulation either here only, or here and hereafter both, or here that it may not be hereafter,—this I do not contradict, because possibly it is true.”

Augustine confuses the judgments. He does not understand that there are two resurrections, and that the resurrection of the just is at a different time than the judgment of the wicked. He also does not understand that Jesus is the propitiation, or satisfaction, for our sins and the sins of the whole world as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Jesus is the only propitiation for sin. This idea of purgatory after death as a punishment for venial sins comes from Greek philosophy and pagan religions.

Nothing is said in the Scriptures about the bodies of the righteous dead being subject to fire. It is their works that are judged by the fire, to determine what sort they are as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):13** Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

Augustine confuses the word fire that will try our works with the everlasting fire of hell and the lake of fire. They are not the same. The fire that will try our works is speaking figuratively of that which will stand the test of God’s holiness as it were.

Augustine then continues, “For perhaps even the death of the body is itself a part of this tribulation, for it results from the first transgression, so that the time which follows death takes its color in each case from the nature of the man’s building.”

Again, Augustine is confusing the time of “this tribulation” with the great tribulation, and afterwards the judgments. Jesus mentions this time, as we read again in **Matthew 24 (KJV):21** For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.



Daniel also mentioned this time in **Daniel 12 (KJV):1** And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

This relates to the great tribulation which Israel as a nation will have to endure, but they “shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”

This will also be the time which will occur after the rapture, and the first resurrection, but Daniel’s vision includes all the way to the end of both judgments, as we continue in **Daniel 12 (KJV):2** And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. 4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Augustine thought that these verses related to a single judgment. He continues, as he then says, “The persecutions, too, which have crowned the martyrs, and which Christians of all kinds suffer, try both buildings like a fire, consuming some, along with the builders themselves, if Christ is not found in them as their foundation, while others they consume without the builders, because Christ is found in them, and they are saved, though with loss; and other buildings still they do not consume, because such materials as abide for ever are found in them. In the end of the world there shall be in the time of Antichrist tribulation such as has never before been. How many edifices there shall then be, of gold or of hay, built on the best foundation, Christ Jesus, which that fire shall prove, bringing joy to some, loss to others, but without destroying either sort, because of this stable foundation!”

He is correct that there will be a “time of Antichrist tribulation such as has never before been”. But he places this time “In the end of the world”. He does not understand that this takes place, according to the Scriptures, just before the thousand year reign of Christ.

He then asserts, “But whosoever prefers, I do not say his wife, with whom he lives for carnal pleasure, but any of those relatives who afford no delight of such a kind, and whom it is right to love,—whosoever prefers these to Christ, and loves them after a human and carnal fashion, has not Christ as a foundation, and will therefore not be saved by fire, nor indeed at all; for he shall not possibly dwell with the Saviour, who says very explicitly concerning this very matter, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” (Matthew 10:37)”

He refers to **Matthew 10 (KJV):37** He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Augustine is taking this verse out of context. We read in context as in **Matthew 10 (KJV):34** Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. 37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

Jesus is showing us what surrender to Him will require. We have to be willing to receive Him even if it means the disapproval of our parents, or a family member, and even our own children. He is not making it a condition of salvation, so that at some point after we accept Christ, we ever love our son or daughter more than Him, and thus we sin, and lose our salvation.

But Augustine continues, as he then says, “But he who loves his relations carnally, and yet so that he does not prefer them to Christ, but would rather want them than Christ if he were put to the proof, shall be saved by fire, because it is necessary that by the loss of these relations he suffer pain in proportion to his love.”

We will suffer for our own choices, which we make without the Lord. But our suffering will be in this lifetime, and not after death.

He then concludes, “And he who loves father, mother, sons, daughters, according to Christ, so that he aids them in obtaining His kingdom and cleaving to Him, or loves them because they are members of Christ, God forbid that this love should be consumed as wood, hay, stubble, and not rather be reckoned a structure of gold, silver, precious stones. For how can a man love those more than Christ whom he loves only for Christ’s sake?”

It seems that Augustine has just approved of those married people who have sons and daughters, and raise them to accept Christ, and he agrees that they will be rewarded accordingly. In other words, they didn’t just build wood, hay, and stubble.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Predestination of the Saints, Chapter 24, page 509-510**

Chapter 24.—That No One is Judged According to What He Would Have Done If He Had Lived Longer.

For who can hear that infants, baptized in the condition of mere infancy, are said to depart from this life by reason of their future merits, and that others not baptized are said to die in the same age because their future merits are foreknown,—but as evil; so that God rewards or condemns in them not their good or evil life, but no life at all? The apostle, indeed, fixed a limit which man’s incautious suspicion, to speak gently, ought not to transgress, for he says, “We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive according to the things which he has done by means of the body, whether it be good or evil.” (2 Corinthians 5:10) “Has done,” he said; and he did not add, “or would have done.” But I know not whence this thought should have entered the minds of such men, that infants’ future merits (which shall not be) should be punished or honoured. But why is it said that a man is to be judged according to those things which he has done by means of the body, when many things are done by the mind alone, and not by the body, nor by any member of the body; and for the most part things of such importance, that a most righteous punishment would be due to such thought, such as,—to say nothing of others,—that “The fool hath said in his heart there is no God”? (Psalm 14:1) What, then, is the meaning of, “According to those things that he hath done by means of the body,” except according to those things which he has done during that time in which he was in the body, so that we may understand “by means of the body” as meaning “throughout the season of bodily life”? But after the body, no one will be in the body except at the last

resurrection,—not for the purpose of establishing any claims of merit, but for the sake of receiving recompenses for good merits, and enduring punishments for evil merits. But in this intermediate period between the putting off and the taking again of the body, the souls are either tormented or they are in repose, according to those things which they have done during the period of the bodily life. And to this period of the bodily life moreover pertains, what the Pelagians deny, but Christ's Church confesses, original sin; and according to whether this is by God's grace loosed, or by God's judgment not loosed, when infants die, they pass, on the one hand, by the merit of regeneration from evil to good, or on the other, by the merit of their origin from evil to evil. The Catholic faith acknowledges this, and even some heretics, without any contradiction, agree to this. But in the height of wonder and astonishment I am unable to discover whence men, whose intelligence your letters show to be by no means contemptible, could entertain the opinion that any one should be judged not according to the merits that he had as long as he was in the body, but according to the merits which he would have had if he had lived longer in the body; and I should not dare to believe that there were such men, if I could venture to disbelieve you. But I hope that God will interpose, so that when they are admonished they may at once perceive, that if those sins which, as is said, would have been, can rightly be punished by God's judgment in those who are not baptized, they may also be rightly remitted by God's grace in those who are baptized. For whoever says that future sins can only be punished by God's judgment, but cannot be pardoned by God's mercy, ought to consider how great a wrong he is doing to God and His grace; as if future sin could be foreknown, and could not be foregone. And if this is absurd, it is the greater reason that help should be afforded to those who would be sinners if they lived longer, when they die in early life, by means of that laver wherein sins are washed away.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he asks, "For who can hear that infants, baptized in the condition of mere infancy, are said to depart from this life by reason of their future merits, and that others not baptized are said to die in the same age because their future merits are foreknown,—but as evil; so that God rewards or condemns in them not their good or evil life, but no life at all? The apostle, indeed, fixed a limit which man's incautious suspicion, to speak gently, ought not to transgress, for he says, "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive according to the things which he has done by means of the body, whether it be good or evil." (2 Corinthians 5:10)"

He refers to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

This judgment relates only to the righteous, who will be rewarded according to "the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad".

Augustine is correct. We are not judged according to what we would have done, but according to what we have actually done.

He then continues, "Has done," he said; and he did not add, "or would have done." But I know not whence this thought should have entered the minds of such men, that infants' future merits (which shall not be) should be punished or honoured. But why is it said that a man is to be judged according to those things which he has done by means of the body, when many things are done by the mind alone, and not by the body, nor by any member of the body;"

He speaks of lustful thoughts, for example, which the mind may dwell on and not put off, as in **Matthew 5 (KJV):28** But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

But does Augustine not realize the obvious, that while a man is thinking, he is in the body? We shall see that he does as we continue.

Augustine then continues, “and for the most part things of such importance, that a most righteous punishment would be due to such thought, such as,—to say nothing of others,—that “The fool hath said in his heart there is no God”? (Psalm 14:1)”

He refers to **Psalm 14 (KJV):1** The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.

He then continues, “What, then, is the meaning of, “According to those things that he hath done by means of the body,” except according to those things which he has done during that time in which he was in the body, so that we may understand “by means of the body” as meaning “throughout the season of bodily life”?

And that is the correct meaning. He then continues, “**But after the body, no one will be in the body except at the last resurrection,—not for the purpose of establishing any claims of merit, but for the sake of receiving recompenses for good merits, and enduring punishments for evil merits. But in this intermediate period between the putting off and the taking again of the body, the souls are either tormented or they are in repose, according to those things which they have done during the period of the bodily life.**”

He speaks of purgatory here. But part of the problem is that he does not understand that there is more than one resurrection spoken of in the Scriptures. The righteous will be resurrected in the first resurrection. This is spoken of in **Revelation 20 (KJV):5** But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

This is also spoken of as “the resurrection of the just” in **Luke 14 (KJV):14** And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

These saints will be judged at the judgment seat of Christ as in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

The millennium will then begin, and they will reign with Christ for a thousand years. The first resurrection is like a great harvest, and there will be gleanings during the millennium, for one who dies an hundred years old shall be thought a child, as we read in **Isaiah 65 (KJV):20** There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

But at the great white throne judgment, there are no righteous dead being judged. This judgment is according to their works as we read again in **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their

works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

This judgment relates to the second death as in **Revelation 20 (KJV)**:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Augustine then continues, “And to this period of the bodily life moreover pertains, what the Pelagians deny, but Christ’s Church confesses, original sin;”

So the Pelagians did not believe in original sin. But the Scriptures are clear as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV)**:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

And in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV)**:21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

And in **Ephesians 2 (KJV)**:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Augustine continues, “and according to whether this is by God’s grace loosed, or by God’s judgment not loosed, when infants die, they pass, on the one hand, by the merit of regeneration from evil to good, or on the other, by the merit of their origin from evil to evil. The Catholic faith acknowledges this, and even some heretics, without any contradiction, agree to this. But in the height of wonder and astonishment I am unable to discover whence men, whose intelligence your letters show to be by no means contemptible, could entertain the opinion that any one should be judged not according to the merits that he had as long as he was in the body, but according to the merits which he would have had if he had lived longer in the body; and I should not dare to believe that there were such men, if I could venture to disbelieve you.”

So Augustine is right to correct those who believe we are judged for things we would have done, had we lived longer in the body. The Scriptures clearly state that we are judged for things done while in the body. We have this life only to make good with God. There are no second chances.

Augustine then continues, “But I hope that God will interpose, so that when they are admonished they may at once perceive, that if those sins which, as is said, would have been, can rightly be punished by God’s judgment in those who are not baptized, they may also be rightly remitted by God’s grace in those who are baptized. For whoever says that future sins can only be punished by God’s judgment, but cannot be pardoned by God’s mercy, ought to consider how great a wrong he is doing to God and His grace; as if future sin could be foreknown, and could not be foregone. And if this is absurd, it is the greater reason that help should be afforded to those who would be sinners if they lived longer, when they die in early life, by means of that laver wherein sins are washed away.”

Baptismal regeneration is not Scriptural. But God’s mercy is an attribute of God. We can trust in His mercy.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine  
Sermons on New Testament Lessons, paragraph 9, page 287**

Sermon VIII. [LVIII. Ben.] Again on the Lord’s Prayer, Matthew vi. To the Competentes.



9. “Lead us not into temptation:” (Matthew 6:13) forgive what we have done already, and grant that we may not commit any more sins. For whosoever is overcome by temptation, committeth sin. Thus the Apostle James saith, “Let no man say when he is tempted, he is tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” (James 1:13-15) Therefore that thou be not drawn away by thy lust; consent not to it. It hath no means of conceiving, but by thee. Thou hast consented, hast as it were in thine heart admitted her embrace. Lust has risen up, deny thyself to her, follow her not. It is a lust unlawful, impure, and shameful, it will alienate thee from God. Give it not then the embrace of thy consent, lest thou have to bewail the birth; for if thou consent, that is, when thou hast embraced her, she conceives, “and when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.” Dost thou not yet fear? “Sin bringeth forth death;” at least, fear death. If thou fear not sin, yet fear that whereunto it leads. Sin is sweet; but death is bitter. **This is the infelicity of men; that for which they sin, they leave here when they die, and the sin themselves they carry with them. Thou dost sin for money, it must be left here: or for a country seat; it must be left here: or for some woman’s sake; she must be left here; and whatsoever it be for which thou dost sin, when thou shalt have closed thine eyes in death, thou must leave it here; yet the sin itself which thou committest, thou carriest with thee.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Lead us not into temptation:” (Matthew 6:13) forgive what we have done already, and grant that we may not commit any more sins.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 6 (KJV):** 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

He continues, “For whosoever is overcome by temptation, committeth sin. Thus the Apostle James saith, “Let no man say when he is tempted, he is tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” (James 1:13-15)”

He refers to **James 1 (KJV):** 13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

He continues, “Therefore that thou be not drawn away by thy lust; consent not to it. It hath no means of conceiving, but by thee. Thou hast consented, hast as it were in thine heart admitted her embrace. Lust has risen up, deny thyself to her, follow her not. It is a lust unlawful, impure, and shameful, it will alienate thee from God. Give it not then the embrace of thy consent, lest thou have to bewail the birth; for if thou consent, that is, when thou hast embraced her, she conceives, “and when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.” Dost thou not yet fear? “Sin bringeth forth death;” at least, fear death. If thou fear not sin, yet fear that whereunto it leads. Sin is sweet; but death is bitter. **This is the infelicity of men; that for which they sin, they leave here when they die, and the sin themselves they carry with them. Thou dost**

sin for money, it must be left here: or for a country seat; it must be left here: or for some woman's sake; she must be left here; and whatsoever it be for which thou dost sin, when thou shalt have closed thine eyes in death, thou must leave it here; yet the sin itself which thou committest, thou carriest with thee."

This is the basis of purgatory. Unconfessed sin is carried with us at death. This must be cleansed by the fire of purgatory, so they believed. But this teaching reveals a lack of understanding of our justification. When we believe, we are justified by God because of our faith. This means we have a standing before God as righteous ones. If we persist in sin, God will discipline us because He is a good Father. This may include sickness, weakness, and even death, but not a loss of salvation if we had a genuine faith. Jesus is the propitiation for our sins as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

And in **1 John 2 (KJV):2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

And in **1 John 4 (KJV):10** Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

There will only ever be one offering for sin as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):8** Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

There will only ever be one offering for sin, and this Jesus Christ did "once for all". The priests in the Old Testament could never take away sins by their offerings. Neither can we by anything we do, or any offering we make. If we sin, we have an advocate with the Father as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

It is not by giving alms, or doing good works, that we are forgiven of our sins. If we confess our sins He is faithful as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm XXXVIII, paragraph 2, page 103**

2. "O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine indignation; neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure" (ver. 1). For it will be that some shall be chastened in God's "hot displeasure," and rebuked in His "indignation." And haply not all who are "rebuked" will be "chastened;" yet are there some that are to be saved in the chastening. So it is to be indeed, because it is called "chastening," but yet it shall be "so as by fire." But there are to be some who will be "rebuked,"

and will not be “corrected.” For he will at all events “rebuke” those to whom He will say, “I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat.” (Matthew 25:42) ... “Neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure;” so that Thou mayest cleanse me in this life, and make me such, that I may after that stand in no need of the cleansing fire, for those “who are to be saved, yet so as by fire.” (1 Corinthians 3:15) Why? Why, but because they “build upon the foundation, wood, stubble, and hay.” Now they should build on it, “gold, silver, and precious stones;” (1 Corinthians 3:12) and should have nothing to fear from either fire: not only that which is to consume the ungodly for ever, but also that which is to purge those who are to escape through the fire. **For it is said, “he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.” And because it is said, “he shall be saved,” that fire is thought lightly of. For all that, though we should be “saved by fire,” yet will that fire be more grievous than anything that man can suffer in this life whatsoever.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine indignation; neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure” (ver. 1).”

He refers to **Psalms 38 (KJV):1** O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

He continues, “For it will be that some shall be chastened in God’s “hot displeasure,” and rebuked in His “indignation.” And haply not all who are “rebuked” will be “chastened;” yet are there some that are to be saved in the chastening. So it is to be indeed, because it is called “chastening,” but yet it shall be “so as by fire.” But there are to be some who will be “rebuked,” and will not be “corrected.” For he will at all events “rebuke” those to whom He will say, “I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat.” (Matthew 25:42) ...”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):42** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

He continues, ““Neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure;” so that Thou mayest cleanse me in this life, and make me such, that I may after that stand in no need of the cleansing fire, for those “who are to be saved, yet so as by fire.” (1 Corinthians 3:15)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

He continues, “Why? Why, but because they “build upon the foundation, wood, stubble, and hay.” Now they should build on it, “gold, silver, and precious stones;” (1 Corinthians 3:12) and should have nothing to fear from either fire: not only that which is to consume the ungodly for ever, but also that which is to purge those who are to escape through the fire.”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

He concludes, **“For it is said, “he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.” And because it is said, “he shall be saved,” that fire is thought lightly of. For all that, though we should be “saved by fire,” yet will that fire be more grievous than anything that man can suffer in this life whatsoever.”**

He alludes to purgatory here. However, if we have been born again, we will be absent from the body, and present with the Lord as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):6** Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

If we only build wood, hay, or stubble on the foundation of Jesus Christ, we will suffer for the choices we make in this life, but we will still be saved, yet, as by the foolishness of our own choices, it will be as by fire. But the fire will be in this life, not in the next, and not in purgatory.

## Alms

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine Sermons on New Testament Lessons, paragraph 10, page 293

Sermon X. [LX. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel, Matthew vi. 19, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,” etc. An exhortation to alms-deeds.

10. I see that you are surprised as I am. And indeed it is a marvellous thing. But I gather as best I can the reason of this thing so strange, and I will not conceal it from you. **It is written, “As water quencheth fire, so alms quencheth sin.” (Ecclesiasticus 3:30) Again it is written, “Shut up alms in the heart of a poor man, and it shall make supplication for thee before the Lord.” (Ecclesiasticus 29:12) Again it is written, “Hear, O king, my counsel, and redeem thy sins by alms.” (Daniel 4:24) And many other testimonies of the Divine oracles are there, whereby it is shown that alms avail much to the quenching and effacing of sins.** Wherefore to those whom He is about to condemn, yea, rather to those whom He is about to crown, He will impute alms only, as though He would say, “It were a hard matter for me not to find occasion to condemn you, were I to examine and weigh you accurately and with much exactness to scrutinize your deeds; but, “Go into the kingdom, for I was hungry, and ye gave Me meat.” Ye shall therefore go into the kingdom, not because ye have not sinned, but because ye have redeemed your sins by alms. And again to the others, “Go ye into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” They too, guilty as they are, old in their sins, late in their fear for them, in what respect, when they turn their sins over in their mind, could they dare to say that they are undeservedly condemned, that this sentence is pronounced against them undeservedly by so righteous a Judge? In considering their consciences, and all the wounds of their souls, in what respect could they dare to say, We are unjustly condemned. Of whom it was said before in Wisdom, “Their own iniquities shall convince them to their face.” (Wisdom 4:20) Without doubt they will see that they are justly condemned for their sins and wickednesses; yet it will be as though He said to them, “It is not in consequence of this that ye think, but ‘because I was hungry, and ye gave Me no meat.’” **For if turning away from all these your deeds, and turning to Me, ye had redeemed all those crimes and sins by alms, those alms would now deliver you, and absolve you from the guilt of so great offences; for, “Blessed are the merciful, for to them shall be shown mercy.” (Matthew 5:7)** But now go away into everlasting fire. “He shall have

judgment without mercy, who hath showed no mercy.” (James 2:13)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “I see that you are surprised as I am. And indeed it is a marvellous thing. But I gather as best I can the reason of this thing so strange, and I will not conceal it from you. **It is written, “As water quencheth fire, so alms quencheth sin.” (Ecclesiasticus 3:30)”**

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 3 (KJV):30** Water will quench a flaming fire; and alms maketh an atonement for sins.

He continues, **“Again it is written, “Shut up alms in the heart of a poor man, and it shall make supplication for thee before the Lord.” (Ecclesiasticus 29:12)”**

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 29 (Douay Rheims):15** Shut up alms in the heart of the poor, and it shall obtain help for thee against all evil.

Or to **Ecclesiasticus 29 (KJV):12** Shut up alms in thy storehouses: and it shall deliver thee from all affliction.

He continues, **“Again it is written, “Hear, O king, my counsel, and redeem thy sins by alms.” (Daniel 4:24)”**

He refers to **Daniel 4 (Douay Rheims):24** Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to thee, and redeem thou thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor: perhaps he will forgive thy offences.

And possibly to **Daniel 4 (Septuagint):24** Therefore, O king, let my counsel please thee, and atone for thy sins by alms, and thine iniquities by compassion on the poor: it may be God will be longsuffering to thy trespasses.

But we read also in context in **Daniel 4 (KJV):24** This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king: 25 That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. 26 And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule. 27 Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

But Ecclesiasticus is an apochryphal book, and “is a work of ethical teachings, from approximately 200 to 175 BCE, written by the Jewish scribe Ben Sira of Jerusalem, on the inspiration of his father Joshua son of Sirach, sometimes called Jesus son of Sirach or Yeshua ben Eliezer ben Sira. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sirach>

The book was written when the Jewish nation was in a state of apostasy. It is not included in the Protestant canon. And besides this, the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):4** For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

There is only one who has redeemed, or made an atonement for sins, and that is Jesus Christ by His own blood, as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):11** But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands,



that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

And in **Romans 5 (KJV):9** Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. 11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

It is impossible for alms to atone for sins. This has already been done by the blood of Jesus Christ, who offered Himself once for our sins, “having obtained eternal redemption for us” in Hebrews 9:12 above.

Augustine continues, “**And many other testimonies of the Divine oracles are there, whereby it is shown that alms avail much to the quenching and effacing of sins.** Wherefore to those whom He is about to condemn, yea, rather to those whom He is about to crown, He will impute alms only, as though He would say, “It were a hard matter for me not to find occasion to condemn you, were I to examine and weigh you accurately and with much exactness to scrutinize your deeds; but, “Go into the kingdom, for I was hungry, and ye gave Me meat.””

Augustine is referring to the judgment of the nations in Matthew 25:31-46. The early Church in his time lumped all the judgments into one final judgment. They did not notice that the time of this judgment is after the great Tribulation of 7 years, and before the start of the millennium, when the Son of man shall come in His glory, and He shall sit upon the throne of his glory. And before Him shall be gathered all nations. So this is a judgment of the nations, which shall be judged on how they treated Christ’s brethren, the Jews, during the tribulation period of 7 years. The basis of this judgment is how the nations treated Christ’s brethren, the Jews, during the tribulation.

The righteous are never to be judged by their works for salvation, but by their faith in Jesus Christ as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):4** But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

It is all about what He has done for us as we read in **Acts 4 (KJV):12** Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Augustine speaks of “alms” as good works. The word “alms” is found in **Matthew 6 (KJV):1** Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have

no reward of your Father which is in heaven. 2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: 4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

The word translated “alms” in the Greek in the **King James Version** is ἐλεημοσύνη (pronounced e-le-ā-mo-sū'-nā), from G1656; compassionateness, i.e. (as exercised towards the poor) beneficence, or (concretely) a benefaction:—alms(-deeds). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 1654.**

This Greek word is a derivative of ἔλεος (pronounced e'-le-os), of uncertain affinity; compassion (human or divine, especially active):—(+ tender) mercy. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 1656.**

It is translated 28 times by mercy in the King James Version of the Bible.

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G1656>

However, the New American Standeard Bible is translated from a better Greek original, and is as we read in **Matthew 6 (NASB):1** “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. 2 “So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

The word translated “righteousness” in the Greek is δικαιοσύνη (pronounced dē-kī-o-sū'-nā), from G1342; equity (of character or act); specially (Christian) justification:—righteousness. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 1343.**

This Greek word is a derivative of δίκαιος (pronounced dē'-kī-os), from G1349; equitable (in character or act); by implication, innocent, holy (absolutely or relatively):—just, meet, right(-eous). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 1342.**

And this Greek word is a derivative of δίκη (pronounced dē'-kā), probably from G1166; right (as self-evident), i.e. justice (the principle, a decision, or its execution):—judgment, punish, vengeance. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 1349.**

Augustine continues, “Ye shall therefore go into the kingdom, not because ye have not sinned, but because ye have redeemed your sins by alms. And again to the others, “Go ye into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” They too, guilty as they are, old in their sins, late in their fear for them, in what respect, when they turn their sins over in their mind, could they dare to say that they are undeservedly condemned, that this sentence is pronounced against them undeservedly by so righteous a Judge? In considering their consciences, and all the wounds of their souls, in what respect could they dare to say, We are unjustly condemned. Of whom it was said before in Wisdom, “Their own iniquities shall convince them to their face.” (Wisdom 4:20)”

He refers to **Wisdom 4 (KJV):20** And when they cast up the accounts of their sins, they shall come with fear: and their own iniquities shall convince them to their face.

At the judgment of the nations, the sheep nations will go into the kingdom of one thousand years, but the goat nations will be cast “into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and

his angels”, as in **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

This kingdom of a thousand years is mentioned in **Revelation 20 (KJV):1** And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

The sheep nations which shall go into the kingdom are not necessarily composed of all righteous individuals. There will still be unrighteous individuals as is evident when Satan shall be loosed at the end of the thousand years as we continue in **Revelation 20 (KJV):7** And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

But it is not about alms. There is only one way to be righteous, and that is to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ. All who have faith in Jesus Christ shall go into life eternal. But there will be a judgment of the nations as to how they treated Israel during the tribulation of seven years. That is, the judgment will be based upon their treatment of the Jews during the tribulation.

Augustine continues, “Without doubt they will see that they are justly condemned for their sins and wickednesses; yet it will be as though He said to them, “It is not in consequence of this that ye think, but ‘because I was hungry, and ye gave Me no meat.’” **For if turning away from all these your deeds, and turning to Me, ye had redeemed all those crimes and sins by alms, those alms would now deliver you, and absolve you from the guilt of so great offences; for, “Blessed are the merciful, for to them shall be shown mercy.” (Matthew 5:7)”**

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):7** Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

He concludes, “But now go away into everlasting fire. “He shall have judgment without mercy, who hath showed no mercy.” (James 2:13)”

He refers to **James 2 (KJV):13** For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

But the righteous are saved by grace through faith. The giving of alms does not atone for sin. Jesus offered the one and only sacrifice for us as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):12** But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God**  
**Book XXI, Chapter 27, page 475-478**

Chapter 27.—Against the Belief of Those Who Think that the Sins Which Have Been Accompanied with Almsgiving Will Do Them No Harm.

It remains to reply to those who maintain that those only shall burn in eternal fire who neglect alms-deeds proportioned to their sins, resting this opinion on the words of the Apostle James, “He shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy.” (James 2:13) Therefore, they say, he that hath showed mercy, though he has not reformed his dissolute conduct, but has lived wickedly and iniquitously even while abounding in alms, shall have a merciful judgment, so that he shall either be not condemned at all, or shall be delivered from final judgment after a time. And for the same reason they suppose that Christ will discriminate between those on the right hand and those on the left, and will send the one party into His kingdom, the other into eternal punishment, on the sole ground of their attention to or neglect of works of charity. Moreover, they endeavor to use the prayer which the Lord Himself taught as a proof and bulwark of their opinion, that daily sins which are never abandoned can be expiated through alms-deeds, no matter how offensive or of what sort they be. For, say they, as there is no day on which Christians ought not to use this prayer, so there is no sin of any kind which, though committed every day, is not remitted when we say, “Forgive us our debts,” if we take care to fulfill what follows, “as we forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12) For, they go on to say, the Lord does not say, “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you your little daily sins,” but “will forgive you your sins.” Therefore, be they of any kind or magnitude whatever, be they perpetrated daily and never abandoned or subdued in this life, they can be pardoned, they presume, through alms-deeds.

But they are right to inculcate the giving of alms proportioned to past sins; for if they said that any kind of alms could obtain the divine pardon of great sins committed daily and with habitual enormity, if they said that such sins could thus be daily remitted, they would see that their doctrine was absurd and ridiculous. For they would thus be driven to acknowledge that it were possible for a very wealthy man to buy absolution from murders, adulteries, and all manner of wickedness, by paying a daily alms of ten paltry coins. And if it be most absurd and insane to make such an acknowledgment, and if we still ask what are those fitting alms of which even the forerunner of Christ said, “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance,” (Matthew 3:8) undoubtedly it will be found that they are not such as are done by men who undermine their life by daily enormities even to the very end. **For they suppose that by giving to the poor a small fraction of the wealth they acquire by extortion and spoliation they can propitiate Christ, so that they may with impunity commit the most damnable sins, in the persuasion that they have bought from Him a license to transgress, or rather do buy a daily indulgence.** And if they for one crime have distributed all their goods to Christ’s needy members, that could profit them nothing unless they desisted from all similar actions, and attained charity which worketh no evil. He therefore who does alms-deeds proportioned to his sins must first begin with himself. For it is not reasonable that a man who exercises charity towards his neighbor should not do so towards himself, since he hears the Lord saying, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,”



(Matthew 22:39) and again, “Have compassion on thy soul, and please God.” (Ecclesiasticus 30:23) He then who has not compassion on his own soul that he may please God, how can he be said to do alms-deeds proportioned to his sins? To the same purpose is that written, “He who is bad to himself, to whom can he be good?” (Ecclesiasticus 14:5) **We ought therefore to do alms that we may be heard when we pray that our past sins may be forgiven, not that while we continue in them we may think to provide ourselves with a license for wickedness by alms-deeds.**

The reason, therefore, of our predicting that He will impute to those on His right hand the alms-deeds they have done, and charge those on His left with omitting the same, is that He may thus show the efficacy of charity for the deletion of past sins, not for impunity in their perpetual commission. And such persons, indeed, as decline to abandon their evil habits of life for a better course cannot be said to do charitable deeds. For this is the purport of the saying, “Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.” (Matthew 25:45) He shows them that they do not perform charitable actions even when they think they are doing so. For if they gave bread to a hungry Christian because he is a Christian, assuredly they would not deny to themselves the bread of righteousness, that is, Christ Himself; for God considers not the person to whom the gift is made, but the spirit in which it is made. He therefore who loves Christ in a Christian extends alms to him in the same spirit in which he draws near to Christ, not in that spirit which would abandon Christ if it could do so with impunity. For in proportion as a man loves what Christ disapproves does he himself abandon Christ. **For what does it profit a man that he is baptized, if he is not justified? Did not He who said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of God,” (John 3:5) say also, “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven?” (Matthew 5:20) Why do many through fear of the first saying run to baptism, while few through fear of the second seek to be justified?** As therefore it is not to his brother a man says, “Thou fool,” if when he says it he is indignant not at the brotherhood, but at the sin of the offender,—for otherwise he were guilty of hell fire,—so he who extends charity to a Christian does not extend it to a Christian if he does not love Christ in him. Now he does not love Christ who refuses to be justified in Him. Or, again, if a man has been guilty of this sin of calling his brother Fool, unjustly reviling him without any desire to remove his sin, his alms-deeds go a small way towards expiating this fault, unless he adds to this the remedy of reconciliation which the same passage enjoins. For it is there said, “Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” (Matthew 5:23-24) **Just so it is a small matter to do alms-deeds, no matter how great they be, for any sin, so long as the offender continues in the practice of sin.**

Then as to the daily prayer which the Lord Himself taught, and which is therefore called the Lord’s prayer, it obliterates indeed the sins of the day, when day by day we say, “Forgive us our debts,” and when we not only say but act out that which follows, “as we forgive our debtors; (Matthew 6:12) but we utter this petition because sins have been committed, and not that they may be. For by it our Saviour designed to teach us that, however righteously we live in this life of infirmity and darkness, we still commit sins for the remission of which we ought to pray, while we must pardon those who sin against us that we ourselves also may be pardoned. The Lord then did not utter the words, “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Father will also



forgive you your trespasses,” (Matthew 6:14) in order that we might contract from this petition such confidence as should enable us to sin securely from day to day, either putting ourselves above the fear of human laws, or craftily deceiving men concerning our conduct, but in order that we might thus learn not to suppose that we are without sins, even though we should be free from crimes; as also God admonished the priests of the old law to this same effect regarding their sacrifices, which He commanded them to offer first for their own sins, and then for the sins of the people. For even the very words of so great a Master and Lord are to be intently considered. For He does not say, If ye forgive men their sins, your Father will also forgive you your sins, no matter of what sort they be, but He says, your sins; for it was a daily prayer He was teaching, and it was certainly to disciples already justified He was speaking. What, then, does He mean by “your sins,” but those sins from which not even you who are justified and sanctified can be free? While, then, those who seek occasion from this petition to indulge in habitual sin maintain that the Lord meant to include great sins, because He did not say, He will forgive you your small sins, but “your sins,” we, on the other hand, taking into account the character of the persons He was addressing, cannot see our way to interpret the expression “your sins” of anything but small sins, because such persons are no longer guilty of great sins. Nevertheless not even great sins themselves—sins from which we must flee with a total reformation of life—are forgiven to those who pray, unless they observe the appended precept, “as ye also forgive your debtors.” For if the very small sins which attach even to the life of the righteous be not remitted without that condition, how much further from obtaining indulgence shall those be who are involved in many great crimes, if, while they cease from perpetrating such enormities, they still inexorably refuse to remit any debt incurred to themselves, since the Lord says, “But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses?” (Matthew 6:15) For this is the purport of the saying of the Apostle James also, “He shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy.” (James 2:13) For we should remember that servant whose debt of ten thousand talents his lord cancelled, but afterwards ordered him to pay up, because the servant himself had no pity for his fellow servant, who owed him an hundred pence. (Matthew 18:23) The words which the Apostle James subjoins, “And mercy rejoiceth against judgment,” (James 2:13) find their application among those who are the children of the promise and vessels of mercy. For even those righteous men, who have lived with such holiness that they receive into the eternal habitations others also who have won their friendship with the mammon of unrighteousness, (Luke 16:9) became such only through the merciful deliverance of Him who justifies the ungodly, imputing to him a reward according to grace, not according to debt. For among this number is the apostle, who says, “I obtained mercy to be faithful.” (1 Corinthians 7:25)

But it must be admitted, that those who are thus received into the eternal habitations are not of such a character that their own life would suffice to rescue them without the aid of the saints, and consequently in their case especially does mercy rejoice against judgment. And yet we are not on this account to suppose that every abandoned profligate, who has made no amendment of his life, is to be received into the eternal habitations if only he has assisted the saints with the mammon of unrighteousness,—that is to say, with money or wealth which has been unjustly acquired, or, if rightfully acquired, is yet not the true riches, but only what iniquity counts riches, because it knows not the true riches in which those persons abound, who even receive others also into eternal habitations. There is then a certain kind of life, which is

neither, on the one hand, so bad that those who adopt it are not helped towards the kingdom of heaven by any bountiful alms-giving by which they may relieve the wants of the saints, and make friends who could receive them into eternal habitations, nor, on the other hand, so good that it of itself suffices to win for them that great blessedness, if they do not obtain mercy through the merits of those whom they have made their friends. And I frequently wonder that even Virgil should give expression to this sentence of the Lord, in which He says, “Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that they may receive you into everlasting habitations;” (Luke 16:9) and this very similar saying, “He that receiveth a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man’s reward.” (Matthew 10:41) For when that poet described the Elysian fields, in which they suppose that the souls of the blessed dwell, he placed there not only those who had been able by their own merit to reach that abode, but added,— “And they who grateful memory won By services to others done;” (AEn. vi. 664) that is, they who had served others, and thereby merited to be remembered by them. Just as if they used the expression so common in Christian lips, where some humble person commends himself to one of the saints, and says, Remember me, and secures that he do so by deserving well at his hand. But what that kind of life we have been speaking of is, and what those sins are which prevent a man from winning the kingdom of God by himself, but yet permit him to avail himself of the merits of the saints, it is very difficult to ascertain, very perilous to define. For my own part, in spite of all investigation, I have been up to the present hour unable to discover this. And possibly it is hidden from us, lest we should become careless in avoiding such sins, and so cease to make progress. For if it were known what these sins are which, though they continue, and be not abandoned for a higher life, do yet not prevent us from seeking and hoping for the intercession of the saints, human sloth would presumptuously wrap itself in these sins, and would take no steps to be disentangled from such wrappings by the deft energy of any virtue, but would only desire to be rescued by the merits of other people, whose friendship had been won by a bountiful use of the mammon of unrighteousness. But now that we are left in ignorance of the precise nature of that iniquity which is venial, even though it be persevered in, certainly we are both more vigilant in our prayers and efforts for progress, and more careful to secure with the mammon of unrighteousness friends for ourselves among the saints.

But this deliverance, which is effected by one’s own prayers, or the intercession of holy men, secures that a man be not cast into eternal fire, but not that, when once he has been cast into it, he should after a time be rescued from it. For even those who fancy that what is said of the good ground bringing forth abundant fruit, some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold, is to be referred to the saints, so that in proportion to their merits some of them shall deliver thirty men, some sixty, some an hundred,—even those who maintain this are yet commonly inclined to suppose that this deliverance will take place at, and not after the day of judgment. Under this impression, some one who observed the unseemly folly with which men promise themselves impunity on the ground that all will be included in this method of deliverance, is reported to have very happily remarked, that we should rather endeavor to live so well that we shall be all found among the number of those who are to intercede for the liberation of others, lest these should be so few in number, that, after they have delivered one thirty, another sixty, another a hundred, there should still remain many who could not be

delivered from punishment by their intercessions, and among them every one who has vainly and rashly promised himself the fruit of another's labor. But enough has been said in reply to those who acknowledge the authority of the same sacred Scriptures as ourselves, but who, by a mistaken interpretation of them, conceive of the future rather as they themselves wish, than as the Scriptures teach. And having given this reply, I now, according to promise, close this book.

**Commentary:** Before we comment on this chapter, we note that it is not possible to know the meaning of everything Augustine says, or meant. But let us strive to know as much as we can by reading it in the context in which it is written.

Now Augustine begins as he says, "It remains to reply to those who maintain that those only shall burn in eternal fire who neglect alms-deeds proportioned to their sins, resting this opinion on the words of the Apostle James, "He shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy." (James 2:13)"

He refers to **James 2 (KJV):13** For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

Augustine continues as he then writes, "Therefore, they say, he that hath showed mercy, though he has not reformed his dissolute conduct, but has lived wickedly and iniquitously even while abounding in alms, shall have a merciful judgment, so that he shall either be not condemned at all, or shall be delivered from final judgment after a time."

So some counted alms as good works, which they believed to have merit to make up for bad works, that is, sins after baptism. But they had to do "alms-deeds proportioned to their sins".

Augustine continues, as he then writes, "And for the same reason they suppose that Christ will discriminate between those on the right hand and those on the left, and will send the one party into His kingdom, the other into eternal punishment, on the sole ground of their attention to or neglect of works of charity."

So Augustine counts alms-deeds as "works of charity". And he is again referring to Matthew 25:31-46 which is referring to the judgment of the nations. In this judgment, the Lord will decide which nations will go into the kingdom after the great tribulation. The nations which had mercy on the Jews would go into the kingdom. The others will be cast into everlasting fire. The righteous nations will be rewarded on the "ground of their attention to or neglect of works of charity" to the Jews in this judgment, according to Augustine. Works of charity would correspond to the giving of meat to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, taking a stranger in, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and those in prison. This was not the final judgment as Augustine believed however. This was only a judgment after the tribulation to determine which nations would go into the Kingdom during the thousand year reign of Christ.

Augustine continues as he then says, "Moreover, they endeavor to use the prayer which the Lord Himself taught as a proof and bulwark of their opinion, that daily sins which are never abandoned can be expiated through alms-deeds, no matter how offensive or of what sort they be. For, say they, as there is no day on which Christians ought not to use this prayer, so there is no sin of any kind which, though committed every day, is not remitted when we say, "Forgive us our debts," if we take care to fulfill what follows, "as we forgive our debtors." (Matthew 6:12)"

We see the seeds of the granting of indulgences here, which prompted Martin Luther to begin the reformation.

Now Augustine is referring to the Lord's prayer, in context, in **Matthew 6 (KJV):9** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. 14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Augustine then says, "For, they go on to say, the Lord does not say, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will forgive you your little daily sins," but "will forgive you your sins."

He refers to verses 14 and 15 above. He then reasons, as he says, "Therefore, be they of any kind or magnitude whatever, be they perpetrated daily and never abandoned or subdued in this life, they can be pardoned, they presume, through alms-deeds."

Augustine then continues as he argues, "But they are right to inculcate the giving of alms proportioned to past sins;"

Note that the word "inculcate" means "to teach and impress by frequent repetitions or admonitions". (**Merriam Webster**)

So Augustine agrees that the saints should be taught "the giving of alms proportioned to past sins".

He continues, "for if they said that any kind of alms could obtain the divine pardon of great sins committed daily and with habitual enormity, if they said that such sins could thus be daily remitted, they would see that their doctrine was absurd and ridiculous."

But this was what the sale of indulgences was based on in the 1500s which prompted Martin Luther to issue his 95 theses. Augustine is opposed to this as was Martin Luther. They are in agreement.

Augustine then explains, "For they would thus be driven to acknowledge that it were possible for a very wealthy man to buy absolution from murders, adulteries, and all manner of wickedness, by paying a daily alms of ten paltry coins. And if it be most absurd and insane to make such an acknowledgment, and if we still ask what are those fitting alms of which even the forerunner of Christ said, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance," (Matthew 3:8) undoubtedly it will be found that they are not such as are done by men who undermine their life by daily enormities even to the very end."

Augustine refers to John the Baptist's words in **Matthew 3 (KJV):8** Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

The word "repentance" in the Greek is **μετάνοια** (pronounced me-tä'-noi-ä), "from G3340 (subjectively) compunction (for guilt, including reformation); by implication, reversal (of (another's) decision):—repentance." **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3341.**

This word, **μετάνοια** (pronounced me-tä'-noi-ä) is a derivative of **μετανοέω** (pronounced me-tä-no-e'-oh), "from G3326 and G3539; to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider (morally, feel compunction):—repent." **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3340.**

So to repent means to think differently, that is, to have a change of mind about something. In the Hebrew it means to turn from, or return. So repentance in the Biblical sense means to have a change of mind about our sin, and to turn from it, and turn to the Lord. So the giving of alms, or doing any good work without turning from our sin is not repentance.

So Augustine is correct to argue against those who would give alms, but who have not truly repented.

He continues, “For they suppose that by giving to the poor a small fraction of the wealth they acquire by extortion and spoliation they can propitiate Christ, so that they may with impunity commit the most damnable sins, in the persuasion that they have bought from Him a license to transgress, or rather do buy a daily indulgence.”

We can agree with Augustine here in that the giving of alms without repentance profits the giver nothing.

Augustine continues, “And if they for one crime have distributed all their goods to Christ’s needy members, that could profit them nothing unless they desisted from all similar actions, and attained charity which worketh no evil.”

He refers to **Romans 13 (KJV):10** Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

He continues, “He therefore who does alms-deeds proportioned to his sins must first begin with himself. For it is not reasonable that a man who exercises charity towards his neighbor should not do so towards himself, since he hears the Lord saying, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” (Matthew 22:39) and again, “Have compassion on thy soul, and please God.” (Ecclesiasticus 30:23)” He then who has not compassion on his own soul that he may please God, how can he be said to do alms-deeds proportioned to his sins? To the same purpose is that written, “He who is bad to himself, to whom can he be good?” (Ecclesiasticus 14:5)”

He refers to **Matthew 22 (KJV):39** And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

And to **Ecclesiasticus 30 (KJV):23** Love thine own soul, and comfort thy heart, remove sorrow far from thee: for sorrow hath killed many, and there is no profit therein.

And to **Ecclesiasticus 14 (KJV):5** He that is evil to himself, to whom will he be good? He shall not take pleasure in his goods.

Augustine makes a good point here. Sin leads only to pain and difficult circumstances. We must love ourselves, and do good to ourselves, as well as to others, for we read in **Proverbs 28 (KJV):13** He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

He continues, “We ought therefore to do alms that we may be heard when we pray that our past sins may be forgiven, not that while we continue in them we may think to provide ourselves with a license for wickedness by alms-deeds.”

The giving of alms are not necessary for the Lord to hear our prayers. We are to give as God has prospered us as we read in **1 Corinthians 16 (KJV):2** Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

Augustine then concludes that, “The reason, therefore, of our predicting that He will impute to those on His right hand the alms-deeds they have done, and charge those on His left



with omitting the same, is that He may thus show the efficacy of charity for the deletion of past sins, not for impunity in their perpetual commission.”

But here Augustine is exceeding what is written in the Scriptures. Nowhere in the Scriptures does it say that “**alms-deeds**” delete “**past sins**”. To deal with our sins, we need only to confess them as the apostle John reveals in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

The basis of this forgiveness is also revealed in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

The basis of the forgiveness of our sins is the blood of Jesus Christ. His blood is “the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world,” as in 1 John 2:2 above.

We are to walk in the light as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Augustine then continues, “And such persons, indeed, as decline to abandon their evil habits of life for a better course cannot be said to do charitable deeds. For this is the purport of the saying, “Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.” (Matthew 25:45) He shows them that they do not perform charitable actions even when they think they are doing so. For if they gave bread to a hungry Christian because he is a Christian, assuredly they would not deny to themselves the bread of righteousness, that is, Christ Himself; for God considers not the person to whom the gift is made, but the spirit in which it is made. He therefore who loves Christ in a Christian extends alms to him in the same spirit in which he draws near to Christ, not in that spirit which would abandon Christ if it could do so with impunity. For in proportion as a man loves what Christ disapproves does he himself abandon Christ.”

Augustine refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):45** Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

And Augustine is in agreement with the Scripture here, in that he says they must “abandon their evil habits of life for a better course”, as we read again in **Proverbs 28 (KJV):13** He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

This is the definition of repentance. That is, we must have a change of mind about our sin, and agree with God, and confess it, and turn from it, that is, forsake it. And the spirit in which we give is important also, as we read in **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):3** And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Augustine then continues, “**For what does it profit a man that he is baptized, if he is not justified? Did not He who said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he shall not**

enter into the kingdom of God,” (John 3:5) say also, “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven?” (Matthew 5:20) Why do many through fear of the first saying run to baptism, while few through fear of the second seek to be justified?

Augustine refers to **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

And to **Matthew 5 (KJV):20** For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And as we have said before, when Jesus refers to being born of water in John 3:5, he is referring to the physical birth. And Augustine is not clear here, when he speaks of being justified. There is a sense in which we are doing righteousness when we walk in the light after we have believed and been born again. But we are also justified by God when we have faith in Jesus Christ, and we are born again, and we are given a standing as righteous ones. What Jesus is alluding to in Matthew 5:20 is the unbelief of the scribes and Pharisees. They did not have this standing of righteousness. They had not been justified because they did not believe in Jesus. Therefore, our righteousness must exceed their righteousness simply because they have none. We must have the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ as Paul reveals in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; **22** Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: **23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **24** Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Once we have believed in Jesus Christ, we are justified by God, and we are given a standing of righteousness, God having imputed His righteousness to our account. After this justification, we are to walk in the light and do righteous deeds.

Augustine then says, “As therefore it is not to his brother a man says, “Thou fool,” if when he says it he is indignant not at the brotherhood, but at the sin of the offender,—for otherwise he were guilty of hell fire,—so he who extends charity to a Christian does not extend it to a Christian if he does not love Christ in him.”

He refers here to **Matthew 5 (KJV):22** But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Augustine basically agrees with the Scripture here, as he then continues, “Now he does not love Christ who refuses to be justified in Him. Or, again, if a man has been guilty of this sin of calling his brother Fool, unjustly reviling him without any desire to remove his sin, his alms-deeds go a small way towards expiating this fault, unless he adds to this the remedy of reconciliation which the same passage enjoins. For it is there said, “Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” (Matthew 5:23-24) **Just so it is a small matter to do alms-deeds, no matter how great they be, for any sin, so long as the offender continues in the practice of sin.”**

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):23** Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Again he is in agreement with the Scripture. We must confess and forsake our sin. Otherwise, the good that we do does not profit us if we have not love, as we read again in context in **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):1** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Augustine then says, “Then as to the daily prayer which the Lord Himself taught, and which is therefore called the Lord’s prayer, it obliterates indeed the sins of the day, when day by day we say, “Forgive us our debts,” and when we not only say but act out that which follows, “as we forgive our debtors;” (Matthew 6:12) but we utter this petition because sins have been committed, and not that they may be. For by it our Saviour designed to teach us that, however righteously we live in this life of infirmity and darkness, we still commit sins for the remission of which we ought to pray, while we must pardon those who sin against us that we ourselves also may be pardoned. The Lord then did not utter the words, “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Father will also forgive you your trespasses,” (Matthew 6:14) in order that we might contract from this petition such confidence as should enable us to sin securely from day to day, either putting ourselves above the fear of human laws, or craftily deceiving men concerning our conduct, but in order that we might thus learn not to suppose that we are without sins, even though we should be free from crimes;” as also God admonished the priests of the old law to this same effect regarding their sacrifices, which He commanded them to offer first for their own sins, and then for the sins of the people.”

He is referring, in context, to **Hebrews 7 (KJV):26** For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

We are not to think that we can “sin securely from day to day”, as Augustine says. God disciplines those who are His sons and daughters as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):6** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Augustine then continues, “For even the very words of so great a Master and Lord are to be intently considered. For He does not say, If ye forgive men their sins, your Father will also forgive you your sins, no matter of what sort they be, but He says, your sins; for it was a daily prayer He was teaching, and it was certainly to disciples already justified He was speaking.”

Augustine refers again to **Matthew 6 (KJV):14** For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

And Augustine acknowledges here the justification that had taken place in the disciples who had believed in Jesus Christ.

He continues as he then says, “What, then, does He mean by “your sins,” but those sins from which not even you who are justified and sanctified can be free?”

In context, in the Scripture we understand that, when we are born again, we are justified and sanctified, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

But what sins does he refer to for which not even those “who are justified and sanctified can be free”? He is basing his assertion on **Matthew 6 (KJV):15** But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Let us continue to read his writing, as he then says, “While, then, those who seek occasion from this petition to indulge in habitual sin maintain that the Lord meant to include great sins, because He did not say, He will forgive you your small sins, but “your sins,” we, on the other hand, taking into account the character of the persons He was addressing, cannot see our way to interpret the expression “your sins” of anything but small sins, because such persons are no longer guilty of great sins.”

In Augustine’s time, there were “small sins”, or venial sins, as Augustine mentions in Chapter 26 when he said, “**Accordingly, if any Christian man loves a harlot, and, attaching himself to her, becomes one body, he has not now Christ for a foundation. But if any one loves his own wife, and loves her as Christ would have him love her, who can doubt that he has Christ for a foundation? But if he loves her in the world’s fashion, carnally, as the disease of lust prompts him, and as the Gentiles love who know not God, even this the apostle, or rather Christ by the apostle, allows as a venial fault. And therefore even such a man may have Christ for a foundation. For so long as he does not prefer such an affection or pleasure to Christ, Christ is his foundation, though on it he builds wood, hay, stubble; and therefore he shall be saved as by fire.**” **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God, Book XXI, Chapter 26, page 473-475**

To have a venial fault was to still have Christ as a foundation. In the case of married believers, it was those who love their wives “**in the world’s fashion, carnally, as the disease of lust prompts him, and as the Gentiles love who know not God**”, which “**even this the apostle, or rather Christ by the apostle, allows as a venial fault**”. That is, they had sex with their wives, not just to procreate and have children, but for simple pleasure and intimacy. This he thought was a venial fault. But a mortal sin is one where you have lost your salvation, as he says that “**any Christian man**” who “**loves a harlot, and, attaching himself to her, becomes one body, he has not now Christ for a foundation**”. In other words, this one has lost their salvation.

Here again we see the teaching of the Catholic Church in the time of Augustine. There were “great sins”, that is, “damnable” or mortal sins, and “small sins”, that is, venial sins. But Jesus did not say great or small, but only “your trespasses”, that is, your sins in Matthew 6:15 above.

Augustine then continues, “Nevertheless not even great sins themselves—sins from which we must flee with a total reformation of life—are forgiven to those who pray, unless they observe the appended precept, “as ye also forgive your debtors.” **For if the very small sins which attach even to the life of the righteous be not remitted without that condition, how much further from obtaining indulgence shall those be who are involved in many great crimes, if, while they cease from perpetrating such enormities, they still inexorably refuse to remit any**

debt incurred to themselves, since the Lord says, “But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses?” (Matthew 6:15)

True repentance does involve forgiving others their trespasses. But Augustine is not clear about the believer’s standing in Christ. The one who believes in Jesus Christ, and confesses Him as Lord, has been born again, and has been justified. That is, God has put His righteousness down to their account.

An illustration of justification is given in **Deuteronomy 25 (KJV):1** If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.

So the judges shall justify the righteous. That is, the righteous shall be declared not guilty by the judge. So as far as the state goes, the righteous now have a standing before the state as righteous ones, free from guilt. This is much the same way that justification works for the believing sinner, for we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

God now treats the believing sinner as a son, or daughter. We now have a standing as sons and daughters of God. If we sin, we do not lose our sonship because a provision has been made for us. We have an advocate with the Father as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Jesus Christ is the only propitiation for our sins. If we now sin, our standing does not change. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we continue in sin, we can count on our Father’s discipline, which may include weakness, sickness, and even physical death, but not spiritual death as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):29** For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

This is not to justify any who would continue in sin. We must test ourselves, as Paul encourages in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Reprobates are those who have never truly believed, and been born again.

Augustine continues, “For this is the purport of the saying of the Apostle James also, “He shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy.” (James 2:13)”

He refers to **James 2 (KJV):13** For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

Augustine continues, “For we should remember that servant whose debt of ten thousand talents his lord cancelled, but afterwards ordered him to pay up, because the servant himself had no pity for his fellow servant, who owed him an hundred pence. (Matthew 18:23)”



He refers in context to **Matthew 18 (KJV):23** Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. 24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? 34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. 35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

We pay a heavy price for unforgiveness. But if we have truly believed, our standing will not change. But we can count on the Lord's discipline if we continue in sin.

Augustine then continues, "The words which the Apostle James subjoins, "And mercy rejoiceth against judgment," (James 2:13) find their application among those who are the children of the promise and vessels of mercy."

He refers again to **James 2 (KJV):13** For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

And to **Romans 9 (KJV):8** That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

And to **Romans 9 (KJV):23** And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory...

He then continues, "For even those righteous men, who have lived with such holiness that they receive into the eternal habitations others also who have won their friendship with the mammon of unrighteousness, (Luke 16:9) became such only through the merciful deliverance of Him who justifies the ungodly, imputing to him a reward according to grace, not according to debt. For among this number is the apostle, who says, "I obtained mercy to be faithful." (1 Corinthians 7:25)"

The mammon of unrighteousness in mentioned in **Luke 16 (KJV):9** And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

It is difficult to know exactly what he means by his statement, "For even those righteous men, who have lived with such holiness that they receive into the eternal habitations others also who have won their friendship with the mammon of unrighteousness".

But Augustine definitely agrees with the Scriptures when he says that those righteous men "became such only through the merciful deliverance of Him who justifies the ungodly, imputing to him a reward according to grace, not according to debt," for it is by grace we are

saved as in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

And the apostle was “among this number”, that is, one of the righteous, as he also refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):25** Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

Augustine then continues, as he asserts, “But it must be admitted, that those who are thus received into the eternal habitations are not of such a character that their own life would suffice to rescue them without the aid of the saints, and consequently in their case especially does mercy rejoice against judgment.”

However, we are not saved by the aid of anyone but Jesus Christ. His blood cleanses all sin, past present, and future, as John reveals in **1 John 2 (KJV):2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

There is no other name under heaven by which we are saved as Peter reveals in **Acts 4 (KJV):12** Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Augustine then says, “And yet we are not on this account to suppose that every abandoned profligate, who has made no amendment of his life, is to be received into the eternal habitations if only he has assisted the saints with the mammon of unrighteousness,—that is to say, with money or wealth which has been unjustly acquired, or, if rightfully acquired, is yet not the true riches, but only what iniquity counts riches, because it knows not the true riches in which those persons abound, who even receive others also into eternal habitations.”

We are not saved by our works, of any kind, but we will receive a reward for good works, once we are saved, that is, once we have been born again. And we do not “receive others also into eternal habitations” because of our good works. Augustine understands that salvation is by grace, but he seems to switch back and forth between works, or merit, and grace.

He then continues, “There is then a certain kind of life, which is neither, on the one hand, so bad that those who adopt it are not helped towards the kingdom of heaven by any bountiful alms-giving by which they may relieve the wants of the saints, and make friends who could receive them into eternal habitations, nor, on the other hand, so good that it of itself suffices to win for them that great blessedness, if they do not obtain mercy through the merits of those whom they have made their friends.”

This makes our salvation dependent on the mercy and merits of others. Again, there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, as in Acts 4:12. We “are not helped towards the kingdom of heaven by any bountiful alms-giving by which they may relieve the wants of the saints”. Jesus offered Himself once for our sins as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):26** For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

And in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):12** Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Jesus has “obtained eternal redemption for us”. It was Jesus who was once offered to put away sin as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):26** For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin

by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

And in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):10** By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

When Jesus said it was finished, our salvation was complete. This is as we read in **John 19 (KJV):30** When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

Jesus paid it all. This was not completely understood in Augustine's time.

Augustine continues, "And I frequently wonder that even Virgil should give expression to this sentence of the Lord, in which He says, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that they may receive you into everlasting habitations;" (Luke 16:9) and this very similar saying, "He that receiveth a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward." (Matthew 10:41)"

He refers to **Luke 16 (KJV):9** And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

But a better translation is in **Luke 16 (NASB):9** And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings.

And to **Matthew 10 (KJV):41** He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

That is, the one who receives a prophet or a righteous man will be blessed for their good deed, just as a prophet or righteous man would. But it is our believing in Jesus Christ that saves us.

Augustine then continues, referring to Virgil, "For when that poet described the Elysian fields, in which they suppose that the souls of the blessed dwell, he placed there not only those who had been able by their own merit to reach that abode, but added,— "And they who grateful memory won By services to others done;" (AENEID. Book VI. Line 664) that is, they who had served others, and thereby merited to be remembered by them."

So he is saying that if we serve others, we thereby are "merited to be remembered by them."

He then continues, "Just as if they used the expression so common in Christian lips, where some humble person commends himself to one of the saints, and says, Remember me, and secures that he do so by deserving well at his hand."

So a humble Christian serves another, and asks to be remembered. But it is our faith in Jesus Christ that saves us. There is no other.

He then continues, "But what that kind of life we have been speaking of is, and what those sins are which prevent a man from winning the kingdom of God by himself, but yet permit him to avail himself of the merits of the saints, it is very difficult to ascertain, very perilous to define. For my own part, in spite of all investigation, I have been up to the present hour unable to discover this. And possibly it is hidden from us, lest we should become careless

in avoiding such sins, and so cease to make progress. For if it were known what these sins are which, though they continue, and be not abandoned for a higher life, do yet not prevent us from seeking and hoping for the intercession of the saints, human sloth would presumptuously wrap itself in these sins, and would take no steps to be disentangled from such wrappings by the deft energy of any virtue, but would only desire to be rescued by the merits of other people, whose friendship had been won by a bountiful use of the mammon of unrighteousness. But now that we are left in ignorance of the precise nature of that iniquity which is venial, even though it be persevered in, certainly we are both more vigilant in our prayers and efforts for progress, and more careful to secure with the mammon of unrighteousness friends for ourselves among the saints.”

So he is saying he is not sure what these venial sins are “which prevent a man from winning the kingdom of God by himself”, but he has decided that we are to be “both more vigilant in our prayers and efforts for progress, and more careful to secure with the mammon of unrighteousness friends for ourselves among the saints.”

He then continues as he says, “But this deliverance, which is effected by one’s own prayers, or the intercession of holy men, secures that a man be not cast into eternal fire, but not that, when once he has been cast into it, he should after a time be rescued from it.”

Yes, there is no deliverance from hell as Jesus reveals in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man in **Luke 16 (KJV):22** And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

There are no second chances. Augustine then continues, “For even those who fancy that what is said of the good ground bringing forth abundant fruit, some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold, is to be referred to the saints, so that in proportion to their merits some of them shall deliver thirty men, some sixty, some an hundred,—even those who maintain this are yet commonly inclined to suppose that this deliverance will take place at, and not after the day of judgment.”

What he is saying is that there were some in Augustine’s time who believed that, through the merits of the saints, and because of their merits, they could gain access for them into heaven. And so those who claim this do not believe that it is a get out of jail free card, but is only effective come the day of judgment.

And he is referring to the parable of the sower in **Matthew 13 (KJV):3** And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; 4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: 5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and



choked them: 8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. 9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Jesus explains this parable in **Matthew 13 (KJV)**: 18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. 20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. 22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

The word of the kingdom, the Gospel message, is the seed that is sown. Jesus speaks of those who receive the seed as the different kinds of hearers, that is, some by the way side, some in stony places, some among the thorns, and some on the good ground. Nothing in this parable is speaking of deliverance by merits or prayers of the saints. The fruit that Jesus speaks of includes souls that are saved as a result of hearing the Gospel preached, and the work of planting churches, and watering what has been planted as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**: 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

This fruit will continue until we all come in the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the son of God as Paul reveals in **Ephesians 4 (KJV)**: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Fruit comes in many forms. It is not just about winning souls, but also about helping saints grow in “the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ”. Jesus did not say, “**some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold, is to be referred to the saints, so that in proportion to their merits some of them shall deliver thirty men, some sixty, some an hundred**”, as Augustine says above. Jesus is speaking of the fruit in all its different forms which saints will bear, “some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty”, as in verse Matthew 13:23 above. We don’t deliver others by our merits, but we may win souls for Christ, and help the saints grow in grace and knowledge. We may also encourage others in the faith, and show mercy to those in need.

But Augustine continues, “Under this impression, some one who observed the unseemly folly with which men promise themselves impunity on the ground that all will be included in this method of deliverance, is reported to have very happily remarked, that we should rather endeavor to live so well that we shall be all found among the number of those who are to intercede for the liberation of others, lest these should be so few in number, that, after they have delivered one thirty, another sixty, another a hundred, there should still remain many who could not be delivered from punishment by their intercessions, and among them every one who has vainly and rashly promised himself the fruit of another’s labor.”

This type of intercession, the belief that one can deliver others “from punishment by their intercessions”, began to be a tradition of the Church very early on. Augustine is clearly in accordance with the Scripture in his denial of this intercession by men who “promise



themselves impunity on the ground that all will be included in this method of deliverance”. But he has not totally denied this type of intercession by the righteous. God will answer our prayers for others in accordance with His sovereign will. But our good works are those ordained by God, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Our good works do not merit salvation for ourselves or others.

Augustine concludes, “But enough has been said in reply to those who acknowledge the authority of the same sacred Scriptures as ourselves, but who, by a mistaken interpretation of them, conceive of the future rather as they themselves wish, than as the Scriptures teach. And having given this reply, I now, according to promise, close this book.”

Augustine graciously ends this chapter. But we see that in Augustine’s time, the Gospel message was becoming tainted by the belief in the merits of the saints.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm XXXVIII., paragraph 23, page 110**

23. “And my sorrow is continually before me.” What “sorrow” is that? Perhaps, a sorrow for my scourge. And, in good truth, my brethren, in good truth, let me say unto you, men do mourn for their scourges, not for the causes on account of which they are scourged. Not such was the person here. Listen, my brethren: If any person suffers any loss, he is more ready to say, “I did not deserve to suffer it,” than to consider why he suffered it, mourning the loss of money, not mourning over that of righteousness. If thou hast sinned, mourn for the loss of thy inward treasure. Thou hast nothing in thy house, but perhaps thou art still more empty in heart; but if thine heart is full of its Good, even thy God, why dost thou not say, “The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; as it pleased the Lord was it done. Blessed be the Name of the Lord.” (Job 1:21) Whence then was it that He was grieving? Was it for the “scourging” wherewith He was scourged? God forbid. “And my sorrow” (says He) “is continually before me.” And as if we were to say, “What sorrow? whence comes that sorrow?” he says: “For I declare mine iniquity; and I will have a care for my sin” (ver. 18). See here the reason for the sorrow! It is not a sorrow occasioned by the scourge; not one for the remedy, not for the wound. **For the scourge is a remedy against sins. Hear, brethren; We are Christians, and yet if any one’s son dies, he mourns for him but does not mourn for him if he sins. It is then, when he sees him sinning, that he ought to make mourning for him, to lament over him. It is then he should restrain him, and give him a rule to live by; should impose a discipline upon him: or if he has done so, and the other has not taken heed, then was the time when he ought to have been mourned over; then he was more fatally dead whilst living in luxury, than when, by death, he brought his luxury to its close: at that time, when he was doing such things in thine house, he was not only “dead, but he stank also.” (John 11:39) These things were worthy to be lamented, the others were such as might well be endured; those, I say, were tolerable, these worthy to be mourned over. They were to be mourned over in the same way that you have heard this person mourn over them: “For I declare mine iniquity. I will have a care for my sin.” Be not free from anxiety when you have confessed your sin, as if always able to confess thy sin, and to commit it again. Do thou “declare thine iniquity in such a manner, as to have a care for thy sin.” What is meant by “having a care of thy sin”? To have a care of thy wound. If you were to say, “I will have a care**

of my wound,” what would be meant by it, but I will do my endeavour to have it healed. For this is “to have a care for one’s sin,” to be ever struggling, ever endeavouring, ever exerting one’s self, earnestly and zealously, to heal one’s wound. Behold! thou art from day to day mourning over thy sins; but perhaps thy tears indeed flow, but thy hands are unemployed. Do alms, redeem thy sins, let the poor rejoice of thy bounty, that thou also mayest rejoice of the Grace of God. He is in want; so art thou in want also: he is in want at thy hands; so art thou also in want at God’s hand. Dost thou despise one who needs thy aid; and shall God not despise thee when thou needest His? Do thou therefore supply the needs of him who is in want of thine aid; that God may supply thy needs within. This is the meaning of, “I will have a care for my sin.” I will do all that ought to be done, to blot out and to heal my sin. “And I will have a care for my sin.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, as he says, ““And my sorrow is continually before me.””

He refers in context to **Psalm 38 (KJV):17** For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me. 18 For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

He continues, “What “sorrow” is that? Perhaps, a sorrow for my scourge. And, in good truth, my brethren, in good truth, let me say unto you, men do mourn for their scourges, not for the causes on account of which they are scourged. Not such was the person here. Listen, my brethren: If any person suffers any loss, he is more ready to say, “I did not deserve to suffer it,” than to consider why he suffered it, mourning the loss of money, not mourning over that of righteousness. If thou hast sinned, mourn for the loss of thy inward treasure. Thou hast nothing in thy house, but perhaps thou art still more empty in heart; but if thine heart is full of its Good, even thy God, why dost thou not say, “The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; as it pleased the Lord was it done. Blessed be the Name of the Lord.” (Job 1:21)”

He refers in context to **Job 1 (KJV):18** While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: 19 And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, 21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. 22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

He continues, “Whence then was it that He was grieving? Was it for the “scourging” wherewith He was scourged? God forbid. “And my sorrow” (says He) “is continually before me.” And as if we were to say, “What sorrow? Whence comes that sorrow?” he says: “For I declare mine iniquity; and I will have a care for my sin” (ver. 18).”

He refers again to David’s words in **Psalm 38 (KJV):17** For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me. 18 For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

David was repenting of his sin. Repentance involves feeling sorrow for our sin.

He continues, “See here the reason for the sorrow! It is not a sorrow occasioned by the scourge; not one for the remedy, not for the wound. **For the scourge is a remedy against sins. Hear, brethren; We are Christians, and yet if any one’s son dies, he mourns for him but does not mourn for him if he sins. It is then, when he sees him sinning, that he ought to make mourning for him, to lament over him. It is then he should restrain him, and give him a rule to live by;**

should impose a discipline upon him.”

And this agrees with **Proverbs 13 (NASB):24** He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently.

Augustine continues, “or if he has done so, and the other has not taken heed, then was the time when he ought to have been mourned over; then he was more fatally dead whilst living in luxury, than when, by death, he brought his luxury to its close: at that time, when he was doing such things in thine house, he was not only “dead, but he stank also.” (John 11:39)”

He refers to **John 11 (KJV):39** Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

He continues, “These things were worthy to be lamented, the others were such as might well be endured; those, I say, were tolerable, these worthy to be mourned over. They were to be mourned over in the same way that you have heard this person mourn over them: “For I declare mine iniquity. I will have a care for my sin.””

He most likely refers the **Latin Vulgate in Psalm 37 (Douay Rheims):18** For I am ready for scourges: and my sorrow is continually before me. 19 For I will declare my iniquity: and I will think for my sin.

And to the Septuagint as in **Psalm 38 (KJV):17** For I am ready for plagues, and my grief is continually before me. 18 For I will declare mine iniquity, and be distressed for my sin.

But we read as in **Psalm 38 (KJV):17** For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me. 18 For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

He continues, “Be not free from anxiety when you have confessed your sin, as if always able to confess thy sin, and to commit it again. Do thou “declare thine iniquity in such a manner, as to have a care for thy sin.” What is meant by “having a care of thy sin”? To have a care of thy wound. If you were to say, “I will have a care of my wound,” what would be meant by it, but I will do my endeavour to have it healed. For this is “to have a care for one’s sin,” to be ever struggling, ever endeavouring, ever exerting one’s self, earnestly and zealously, to heal one’s wound. Behold! thou art from day to day mourning over thy sins; but perhaps thy tears indeed flow, but thy hands are unemployed. Do alms, redeem thy sins, let the poor rejoice of thy bounty, that thou also mayest rejoice of the Grace of God.”

There began to be a thinking in the early church that one had to redeem their sins committed after baptism. Doing alms was the method that was encouraged.

Augustine the explains, “He is in want; so art thou in want also: he is in want at thy hands; so art thou also in want at God’s hand. Dost thou despise one who needs thy aid; and shall God not despise thee when thou needest His? Do thou therefore supply the needs of him who is in want of thine aid; that God may supply thy needs within. This is the meaning of, “I will have a care for my sin.” I will do all that ought to be done, to blot out and to heal my sin. “And I will have a care for my sin.””

The blood of Jesus is the only propitiation for all sin as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

But repentance may involve making amends to people we have wronged.

8. For, “if in this life only,” saith the Apostle, “we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” (1 Corinthians 15:19) For what reason were the Martyrs condemned to beasts? What is that good? Can it be declared? by what means, or what tongue can tell it? or what ears can hear it? That indeed, “Neither ear hath heard, nor hath it entered into man’s heart:” (1 Corinthians 2:9) only let us love, only let us grow in grace: ye see, then, that battles are not wanting, and that we fight with our lusts. We fight outwardly with unbelieving and disobedient men; we fight inwardly with carnal suggestions and perturbations: we everywhere as yet fight....What sort of peace then is this? One from Jerusalem, for Jerusalem is interpreted, A vision of Peace. Thus then “mayest thou see the good things that are of Jerusalem,” and that, “all thy life long—and mayest thou see,” not only thy children, but, “thy children’s children.” What meaneth, Thy children? Thy works which thou here dost. Who are thy children’s children? The fruits of thy works. Thou givest alms: these are thy children: for the sake of thine alms thou receivest everlasting life, these are thy children’s children. “Mayest thou see thy children’s children;” and there shall be “peace upon Israel” (ver. 6), the last words of the Psalm....

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, as he says, “For, “if in this life only,” saith the Apostle, “we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” (1 Corinthians 15:19)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):19** If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

He continues, “For what reason were the Martyrs condemned to beasts? What is that good? Can it be declared? By what means, or what tongue can tell it? Or what ears can hear it? That indeed, “Neither ear hath heard, nor hath it entered into man’s heart:” (1 Corinthians 2:9) only let us love, only let us grow in grace:”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):9** But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

And to **2 Peter 3 (KJV):18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

He continues, “ye see, then, that battles are not wanting, and that we fight with our lusts. We fight outwardly with unbelieving and disobedient men; we fight inwardly with carnal suggestions and perturbations: we everywhere as yet fight....What sort of peace then is this? One from Jerusalem, for Jerusalem is interpreted, A vision of Peace. Thus then “mayest thou see the good things that are of Jerusalem,” and that, “all thy life long—and mayest thou see,” not only thy children, but, “thy children’s children.” What meaneth, Thy children? Thy works which thou here dost. Who are thy children’s children? The fruits of thy works. **Thou givest alms: these are thy children: for the sake of thine alms thou receivest everlasting life, these are thy children’s children. “Mayest thou see thy children’s children;” and there shall be “peace upon Israel” (ver. 6), the last words of the Psalm....**”

He refers to **Psalms 128 (KJV):1** Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. **2** For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. **3** Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children

like olive plants round about thy table. 4 Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. 5 The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. 6 Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.

Nothing is said about alms in this passage. The plain sense of the Psalm is that the one that feareth the Lord, and that walks in his ways, will be blessed, and will see his children's children, that is, his grand children. Yet Augustine allegorizes this Psalm in order to support the traditions in the Catholic Church in his time.

Let us remember that there is no remission of sins without the shedding of blood as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):22** And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

And Jesus offered Himself once to accomplish this as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):28** So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

## **Easter**

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine The Harmony of the Gospels, paragraphs 65-66, page 210-211**

65. At the same time, a question, which is not to be dealt with lightly, does arise here with respect to the exact hour at which the women came to the sepulchre. For when Matthew says, "Now, on the evening of the Sabbath, when it was dawning toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre," what are we to make of Mark's statement, which runs thus: "And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun"? (Mark 16:2) It is to be observed that in this Mark states nothing inconsistent with the reports given by other two of the evangelists, namely, Luke and John. For when Luke says, "Very early in the morning," and when John puts it thus, "Early, when it was yet dark," they convey the same sense which Mark is understood to express when he says, "Very early, at the rising of the sun;" that is to say, they all refer to the period when the heavens were now beginning to brighten in the east, which, of course, does not take place but when the sunrise is at hand. For it is the brightness which is diffused by the rising sun that is familiarly designated by the name of the dawn. Consequently, Mark does not contradict the other evangelist who uses the phrase, "When it was yet dark;" for as the day breaks, what remains of the darkness [of the night] passes away just in proportion as the sun continues to rise. And this phrase, "Very early in the morning," need not be taken to mean that the sun itself was actually seen by this time [blazing] over the lands; but it is rather to be taken as like the kind of expression which we are in the habit of employing when speaking to people to whom we wish to intimate that something should be done more betimes than usual. For when we have used the term, "Early in the morning," if we wish to keep the persons addressed from supposing that we refer directly to the time when the sun is already conspicuously visible over earth, we usually add the word "very," and say, "very early in the morning," in order that they may clearly understand that we allude to the time which is also called the daybreak. At the same time, it is also customary for men, after the cockcrow has been repeatedly heard, and when they



begin to surmise that the day is now approaching, to say, "It is now early in the morning;" and when after this they weigh their words and observe that, as the sun now rises,—that is to say, as it now makes its immediate advent into these parts,—the sky is just beginning to redden, or to brighten, those who said, "It is early in the morning," then amplify their expression and say, "It is very early in the morning." But what does it matter, provided only that, whichever method of explanation be preferred, we understand that what is meant by Mark, when he uses the terms "early in the morning," is just the same as is intended by Luke when he adopts the phrase, "in the morning;" and that the whole expression employed by the former—namely, "very early in the morning"—amounts to the same as that which we find in Luke—namely, "very early in the dawn,"—and as that which is chosen by John when he says, "early, when it was yet dark"? Moreover, when Mark speaks of the "rising of the sun," he just means that by its rising the sun was now beginning to bring the light in upon the sky. But the question now is this: how can Matthew be in harmony with these three when he says neither "in the early morning" nor "early in the morning," but "in the evening of the Sabbath, when it was beginning to dawn toward the first day of the week"? This is a matter which must be carefully investigated. Now, under that first part of the night, which is [here called] the evening, Matthew intended to refer to this particular night, at the close of which the women came to the sepulchre. And we understand his reason for so referring to the said night to have been this: that by the time of the evening it was lawful for them to bring the spices, because the Sabbath was then indeed over. Consequently, as they were hindered by the Sabbath from doing so previously, he has given a designation of the night, taken from the time at which it began to be a lawful thing for them to do what they did at any period of the same night which pleased them. Thus, therefore, the phrase "in the evening of the Sabbath" is used, as if what was said had been "in the night of the Sabbath," or in other words, in the night which follows the day of the Sabbath. The express words which he employs thus indicate this with sufficient clearness. For his terms are these: "Now, in the evening of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn toward the first day of the week; and that could not be the case if what we had to understand to be denoted by the mention of the "evening" was simply the first short space of the night, or in other words, only the beginning of the night. For what can be said "to begin to dawn toward the first day of the week" is not explicitly the beginning [of the night], but the night itself, as it commences to be brought to its close by the advance of the light. For the terminus of the first part of the night is just the beginning of the second part, but the terminus of the whole night is the light. Hence we could not speak of the evening as dawning toward the first day of the week unless under the term "evening" we should understand the night itself to be meant, which, as a whole, is brought to its close by the light. It is also a familiar method of speech in divine Scripture to express the whole under the part; and thus, under the word "evening" here, the evangelist has denoted the whole night, which finds its extreme point in the dawn. For it was in the dawn that those women came to the sepulchre; and in this way they really came on the night, which is here indicated by the term "evening." For, as I have said, the night as a whole is denoted by that word; consequently, at whatever period of that night they might have come, they certainly did come in the said night. And, accordingly, if they came at the latest point in that night, it is still unquestionably the case that they did come in the said night. But it could not be said to be on "the evening, when it began to dawn toward the first day of the week," unless the night as a whole can be understood under that expression. Accordingly, the women who came in the night referred to, came in the evening specified. And

if they came at any period, even the latest during that night, they surely came in the night itself.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “At the same time, a question, which is not to be dealt with lightly, does arise here with respect to the exact hour at which the women came to the sepulchre. For when Matthew says, “Now, on the evening of the Sabbath, when it was dawning toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre,” what are we to make of Mark’s statement, which runs thus: “And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun”? (Mark 16:2)”

He refers first to **Matthew 28 (KJV):1** In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

And then in context to **Mark 16 (KJV):1** And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. 2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. 3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? 4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

Augustine continues, “It is to be observed that in this Mark states nothing inconsistent with the reports given by other two of the evangelists, namely, Luke and John. For when Luke says, “Very early in the morning,” and when John puts it thus, “Early, when it was yet dark,” they convey the same sense which Mark is understood to express when he says, “Very early, at the rising of the sun;” that is to say, they all refer to the period when the heavens were now beginning to brighten in the east, which, of course, does not take place but when the sunrise is at hand.”

He refers to **Luke 24 (KJV):1** Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

And to **John 20 (KJV):1** The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

Augustine continues, “For it is the brightness which is diffused by the rising sun that is familiarly designated by the name of the dawn. Consequently, Mark does not contradict the other evangelist who uses the phrase, “When it was yet dark;” for as the day breaks, what remains of the darkness [of the night] passes away just in proportion as the sun continues to rise. And this phrase, “Very early in the morning,” need not be taken to mean that the sun itself was actually seen by this time [blazing] over the lands; but it is rather to be taken as like the kind of expression which we are in the habit of employing when speaking to people to whom we wish to intimate that something should be done more betimes than usual. For when we have used the term, “Early in the morning,” if we wish to keep the persons addressed from supposing that we refer directly to the time when the sun is already conspicuously visible over earth, we usually add the word “very,” and say, “very early in the morning,” in order that they may clearly understand that we allude to the time which is also called the daybreak. At the same time, it is also customary for men, after the cockcrow has been repeatedly heard, and when they begin to surmise that the day is now approaching, to say, “It is now early in the morning;” and

when after this they weigh their words and observe that, as the sun now rises,—that is to say, as it now makes its immediate advent into these parts,—the sky is just beginning to redden, or to brighten, those who said, “It is early in the morning,” then amplify their expression and say, “It is very early in the morning.” But what does it matter, provided only that, whichever method of explanation be preferred, we understand that what is meant by Mark, when he uses the terms “early in the morning,” is just the same as is intended by Luke when he adopts the phrase, “in the morning;” and that the whole expression employed by the former—namely, “very early in the morning”—amounts to the same as that which we find in Luke—namely, “very early in the dawn,”—and as that which is chosen by John when he says, “early, when it was yet dark”? Moreover, when Mark speaks of the “rising of the sun,” he just means that by its rising the sun was now beginning to bring the light in upon the sky. But the question now is this: how can Matthew be in harmony with these three when he says neither “in the early morning” nor “early in the morning,” but “in the evening of the Sabbath, when it was beginning to dawn toward the first day of the week”?”

He refers first to **Matthew 28 (KJV):1** In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

The words “In the end of the sabbath” in the Greek are **Ὁψὲ δὲ σαββάτων** (pronounced o-pse' de sā'b-bā-ton). The Greek word **Ὁψὲ** (pronounced o-pse') means “from the same as G3694 (through the idea of backwardness); (adverbially) late in the day; by extension, after the close of the day:—(at) even, in the end.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3796.**

So we could translate Matthew 28:1 as, “After the close of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.”

The problem was in how Augustine saw the verse translated in the **Latin Vulgate**. In Matthew 28:1 the words “vespere autem” are Latin, and can be translated “in the evening”. This could have affected Augustine’s understanding of the verse,

Augustine continues, “This is a matter which must be carefully investigated. Now, under that first part of the night, which is [here called] the evening, Matthew intended to refer to this particular night, at the close of which the women came to the sepulchre. And we understand his reason for so referring to the said night to have been this: that by the time of the evening it was lawful for them to bring the spices, because the Sabbath was then indeed over. Consequently, as they were hindered by the Sabbath from doing so previously, he has given a designation of the night, taken from the time at which it began to be a lawful thing for them to do what they did at any period of the same night which pleased them. Thus, therefore, the phrase “in the evening of the Sabbath” is used, as if what was said had been “in the night of the Sabbath,” or in other words, in the night which follows the day of the Sabbath. The express words which he employs thus indicate this with sufficient clearness. For his terms are these: “Now, in the evening of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn toward the first day of the week;”

Again he is referring to **Matthew 28 (KJV):1** In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

He continues, “and that could not be the case if what we had to understand to be denoted

by the mention of the “evening” was simply the first short space of the night, or in other words, only the beginning of the night. For what can be said “to begin to dawn toward the first day of the week” is not explicitly the beginning [of the night], but the night itself, as it commences to be brought to its close by the advance of the light. For the terminus of the first part of the night is just the beginning of the second part, but the terminus of the whole night is the light. Hence we could not speak of the evening as dawning toward the first day of the week unless under the term “evening” we should understand the night itself to be meant, which, as a whole, is brought to its close by the light. It is also a familiar method of speech in divine Scripture to express the whole under the part; and thus, under the word “evening” here, the evangelist has denoted the whole night, which finds its extreme point in the dawn. For it was in the dawn that those women came to the sepulchre; and in this way they really came on the night, which is here indicated by the term “evening.””

Augustine seems to have resolved the problem with the verse in his own mind, even though the Latin translation is the real problem.

He continues, “For, as I have said, the night as a whole is denoted by that word; consequently, at whatever period of that night they might have come, they certainly did come in the said night. And, accordingly, if they came at the latest point in that night, it is still unquestionably the case that they did come in the said night. But it could not be said to be on “the evening, when it began to dawn toward the first day of the week,” unless the night as a whole can be understood under that expression. Accordingly, the women who came in the night referred to, came in the evening specified. And if they came at any period, even the latest during that night, they surely came in the night itself.”

Augustine seems to understand that the Jews in Israel in the time of Jesus understood that the next day began at dusk or sundown, and continued to the next sundown. This is why they had to get the bodies off the crosses before sundown, which began the Sabbath as we read in **John 19 (KJV):31** The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

With this as a prelude, we continue to read Augustine’s thoughts about when the resurrection occurred after the Lord’s death in the next paragraph.

66. For the space of three days, which elapsed between the Lord’s death and resurrection, cannot be correctly understood except in the light of that form of expression according to which the part is dealt with as the whole. For He said Himself, “For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Matthew 12:40) Now, in whichever way we reckon the times, whether from the point when He yielded up the ghost, or from the date of his burial, the sum does not come out clearly, unless we take the intermediate day, that is to say, the Sabbath, as a complete day—in other words, a full day along with its night,—and, on the other hand, understand those days between which that one intervenes—that is to say, the day of the preparation and the first day of the week, which we designate the Lord’s day—to be dealt with on the principle of the part standing for the whole. For of what avail is it that some, hard pressed by these difficulties, and not knowing the very large part which the mode of expression referred to—namely, that which takes the part as the whole—plays in the matter of solving the problems presented in the Holy

Scriptures, have struck out the idea of reckoning as a distinct night those three hours, namely, from the sixth hour to the ninth, during which the sun was darkened, and as a distinct day the other three hours, during which the sun was restored again to the lands, that is to say, from the ninth hour on to its setting? For the night connected with the coming Sabbath follows, and if we compute it along with its day, there will then be two days and two nights. But, further, after the Sabbath there comes is to say, with the dawning of the Lord's day, which was the time when the Lord arose. Consequently, the result to which this mode of calculation leads us will be just two days and two nights, and one night, even supposing it possible to take the last as a complete night, and taking it for granted that we were not to show that the said dawn was in reality the ultimate portion of the same. Thus it would appear that, even although we were to compute these six hours in that fashion, during three of which the sun was darkened, and during the other three of which it shone forth again, we would not establish a satisfactory reckoning of three days and three nights. In accordance, therefore, with the usage which meets us so frequently in the language of the Scriptures, and which deals with the part as the whole, it remains for us to hold the time of the preparation to constitute the day at the one extremity, on which the Lord was crucified and buried, and, from that limit, to find one whole day along with its night which was fully spent. In this way, too, we must take the intermediate member, that is to say the day of the Sabbath, not as calculated simply from the part, but as a really complete day. The third day, again, must be computed from its first part; that is to say, calculating from the night, we must look upon it as making up a whole day when its day-portion is connected with it. Thus we shall get a space of three days, on the analogy of a case already considered, namely, those eight days after which the Lord went up into a mountain; with respect to which period we find that Matthew and Mark, fixing their attention simply on the complete days intervening, have put it thus, "After six days," whereas Luke's representation of the same is this, "An eight days after."

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "For the space of three days, which elapsed between the Lord's death and resurrection, cannot be correctly understood except in the light of that form of expression according to which the part is dealt with as the whole. For He said Himself, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matthew 12:40)"

He refers in context to **Matthew 12 (KJV):38** Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. 39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: 40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. 42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

Augustine continues, "Now, in whichever way we reckon the times, whether from the point when He yielded up the ghost, or from the date of his burial, the sum does not come out clearly, unless we take the intermediate day, that is to say, the Sabbath, as a complete day—in other words, a full day along with its night,—and, on the other hand, understand those days



between which that one intervenes—that is to say, the day of the preparation and the first day of the week, which we designate the Lord’s day—to be dealt with on the principle of the part standing for the whole.”

Augustine will assert that the Sabbath is the end of the week Sabbath, and therefore that Jesus was crucified on Friday. So to make three days, he will use part of Friday, all of Saturday, and part of Sunday.

He then explains, “For of what avail is it that some, hard pressed by these difficulties, and not knowing the very large part which the mode of expression referred to—namely, that which takes the part as the whole—plays in the matter of solving the problems presented in the Holy Scriptures, have struck out the idea of reckoning as a distinct night those three hours, namely, from the sixth hour to the ninth, during which the sun was darkened, and as a distinct day the other three hours, during which the sun was restored again to the lands, that is to say, from the ninth hour on to its setting? For the night connected with the coming Sabbath follows, and if we compute it along with its day, there will then be two days and two nights. But, further, after the Sabbath there comes in the night connected with the first day of the week, that is to say, with the dawning of the Lord’s day, which was the time when the Lord arose. Consequently, the result to which this mode of calculation leads us will be just two days and two nights, and one night, even supposing it possible to take the last as a complete night, and taking it for granted that we were not to show that the said dawn was in reality the ultimate portion of the same. Thus it would appear that, even although we were to compute these six hours in that fashion, during three of which the sun was darkened, and during the other three of which it shone forth again, we would not establish a satisfactory reckoning of three days and three nights. In accordance, therefore, with the usage which meets us so frequently in the language of the Scriptures, and which deals with the part as the whole, it remains for us to hold the time of the preparation to constitute the day at the one extremity, on which the Lord was crucified and buried, and, from that limit, to find one whole day along with its night which was fully spent. In this way, too, we must take the intermediate member, that is to say the day of the Sabbath, not as calculated simply from the part, but as a really complete day. The third day, again, must be computed from its first part; that is to say, calculating from the night, we must look upon it as making up a whole day when its day-portion is connected with it. Thus we shall get a space of three days, on the analogy of a case already considered, namely, those eight days after which the Lord went up into a mountain; with respect to which period we find that Matthew and Mark, fixing their attention simply on the complete days intervening, have put it thus, “After six days,” whereas Luke’s representation of the same is this, “An eight days after.”

He refers to **Matthew 17 (KJV):** 1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

And to **Mark 9 (KJV):** 2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them. 3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. 4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.

And to **Luke 9 (KJV):28** And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. 29 And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. 30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: 31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

But the Gospel writers saw things each from a different perspective. The timing of each as they record may be different from the perspective of each one, but the events are the same.

Now Augustine also wrote in another work of his, “And a parallel to that we should then find in the words recorded by Luke, namely, “Behold I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected;” (Luke 13:32) which prediction certainly was not accomplished in the letter. **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine, The Harmony of the Gospels, Book III, Chapter 25, paragraph 80, page 222.**

He refers to **Luke 13 (KJV):32** And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

However, it is not necessary to use partial days and partial nights to account for the three days and three nights that Jesus would be in the heart of the earth, just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights. The problem is resolved when we understand that Jesus was crucified on the Passover, which is the preparation day of the Sabbath which inaugurated the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Feast of Unleavened Bread began with a Sabbath and ended with a Sabbath as we read in **Leviticus 23 (KJV):4** These are the feasts of the Lord, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. 5 In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover. 6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. 7 In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein. 8 But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.

The “holy convocation” in which they did “no servile work therein” refers to a Sabbath. We must also understand that the Jewish day began at sundown, of which Augustine was aware, and as we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV):5** And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

If we then place the Passover to begin on a Tuesday night, then Jesus would have eaten the Passover meal on Tuesday night, and He would have been crucified on the day of Wednesday. Then Wednesday evening would have begun the Sabbath that began the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This explains why they had to get the bodies off the cross before sundown because of the Sabbath.

Wednesday night then is the first night Jesus was in the grave. He would then have been in the tomb Wednesday night, Thursday night, and Friday night to complete the three nights of the sign of Jonah. Friday night would begin the end of the week Sabbath. Then He would be in the tomb on the days of Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and Saturday day would complete the end of the week Sabbath at sundown. He would then rise sometime after sundown on Saturday, which would begin the first day of the week in Jewish understanding. In this way, we have a complete harmony between all of the Gospel accounts.

The knowledge of the Jewish feasts was not in Augustine’s thinking. Perhaps it was because he considered the Jews “the enemy of our faith” as he says, “Of signal consequence,

too, is this which God has done for His Church in its worldwide extension, in that the Jewish nation, which has been deservedly overthrown and scattered abroad throughout the lands, has been made to carry about with it everywhere the records of our prophecies, so that it might not be possible to look upon these predictions as concocted by ourselves; and thus the enemy of our faith has been made a witness to our truth.” **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine, The Harmony of the Gospels, Chapter XXVI, paragraph 40, page 93.**

At any rate, very early on in the history of the Church, there began to be a tradition that Jesus was crucified and died on Good Friday because the the end of the week Sabbath began on Friday evening, and the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath day as we read in **John 19 (KJV):31** The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

That “Sabbath day was an high day” because it was the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which began and ended with a Sabbath. The Passover day on which Jesus was crucified was the preparation day to this Sabbath. The Gentiles had no knowledge of Jewish feasts in the Hebrew calendar. What is hard to understand is why this tradition has persisted in the Church to our day, when this knowledge is now readily available to all.

## Mary

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate X. Chapter II. 12–21, paragraph 2, page 69**

2. “He went down,” as the evangelist says, “to Capernaum, He, and His mother, and His brethren, and His disciples; and they continued there not many days.” Behold He has a mother, and brethren, and disciples: whence He has a mother, thence brethren. For our Scripture is wont to call them brethren, not only that are sprung from the same man and woman, or from the same mother, or from the same father, though by different mothers; or, in truth, that are of the same degree as cousins by the father’s or mother’s side: not these alone is our Scripture wont to call brethren. The Scripture must be understood as it speaks. It has its own language; one who does not know this language is perplexed and says, Whence had the Lord brethren? For surely Mary did not give birth a second time? Far from it! With her begins the dignity of virgins. She could be a mother, but a woman known of man she could not be. She is spoken of as *mulier* [which usually signifies a *wife*], but only in reference to her sex, not as implying loss of virgin purity: and this follows from the language of Scripture itself. For Eve, too, immediately she was formed from the side of her husband, and as yet not known of her husband, is, as you know, called *mulier*: “And he made her a woman [*mulier*].” Then, whence the brethren? The kinsmen of Mary, of whatever degree, are the brethren of the Lord. How do we prove this? From Scripture itself. Lot is called “Abraham’s brother;” (Genesis 13:8, 14:14) he was his brother’s son. Read, and thou wilt find that Abraham was Lot’s uncle on the father’s side, and yet they are called brethren. Why, but because they were kinsmen? Laban the Syrian was Jacob’s uncle by the mother’s

side, for he was the brother of Rebecca, Isaac's wife and Jacob's mother. (Genesis 28:5) Read the Scripture, and thou wilt find that uncle and sister's son are called brothers. (Genesis 29:15) When thou hast known this rule, thou wilt find that all the blood relations of Mary are the brethren of Christ.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "'He went down,'" as the evangelist says, "to Capernaum, He, and His mother, and His brethren, and His disciples; and they continued there not many days." Behold He has a mother, and brethren, and disciples: whence He has a mother, thence brethren. For our Scripture is wont to call them brethren, not only that are sprung from the same man and woman, or from the same mother, or from the same father, though by different mothers; or, in truth, that are of the same degree as cousins by the father's or mother's side: not these alone is our Scripture wont to call brethren. The Scripture must be understood as it speaks. It has its own language; one who does not know this language is perplexed and says, Whence had the Lord brethren? For surely Mary did not give birth a second time? Far from it! With her begins the dignity of virgins. She could be a mother, but a woman known of man she could not be."

In Augustine's time, and still in the Roman Catholic Church today, Mary was a perpetual virgin. She gave birth to Jesus by the Holy Spirit, but afterwards she never had conjugal relations with Joseph, her husband, and she remained a perpetual virgin according to Church dogma in his time, and even to the present. However, the Scripture is clear, as we read in **Matthew 1 (KJV):** 18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. 24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

In verse 18 we read that "before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost", implying that afterwards they did come together.

And in verse 25, Joseph "knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son". So Joseph waited until she had brought forth her firstborn son, Jesus, and then he knew her, that is, he had conjugal relations with her.

Augustine continues, "She is spoken of as *mulier* [which usually signifies a *wife*], but only in reference to her sex, not as implying loss of virgin purity: and this follows from the language of Scripture itself. For Eve, too, immediately she was formed from the side of her husband, and as yet not known of her husband, is, as you know, called *mulier*: "And he made her a woman [*mulier*].'"

But we read in **Genesis 4 (KJV):1** And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

The Scripture confirms the sense of knowing one's wife. That is, Adam had conjugal relations with her, for she then conceived. How could Augustine not see that?

He continues, "Then, whence the brethren? The kinsmen of Mary, of whatever degree, are the brethren of the Lord. How do we prove this? From Scripture itself. Lot is called "Abraham's brother;" (Genesis 13:8, 14:14) he was his brother's son."

He refers to **Genesis 13 (KJV):8** And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.

And in context to **Genesis 14 (KJV):12** And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. 13 And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram. 14 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.

So the Scripture first says that Lot was "Abram's brother's son", and then calls him his brother in verse 14. But the Scripture had already made it clear who Lot was in **Genesis 11 (KJV):31** And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.

Augustine continues, "Read, and thou wilt find that Abraham was Lot's uncle on the father's side, and yet they are called brethren. Why, but because they were kinsmen? Laban the Syrian was Jacob's uncle by the mother's side, for he was the brother of Rebecca, Isaac's wife and Jacob's mother. (Genesis 28:5)"

He refers to **Genesis 28 (KJV):5** And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother.

He continues, "Read the Scripture, and thou wilt find that uncle and sister's son are called brothers. (Genesis 29:15)"

He refers to **Genesis 29 (KJV):15** And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? Tell me, what shall thy wages be?

He concludes, "When thou hast known this rule, thou wilt find that all the blood relations of Mary are the brethren of Christ."

This rule is only valid in the context of the Scriptures. There is no Scripture that speaks of Mary as a perpetual virgin. She was only a virgin until she had brought forth Jesus. And she had sons and daughters after that as we read in **Matthew 13 (KJV):54** And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? 55 Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? 57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. 58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.



And in **Mark 6 (KJV):3** Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

And we read of James again referred to in the same sense by Paul in **Galatians 1 (KJV):19** But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

We can only go by what Scripture says. We are not to assume something when there is no evidence for it in the Scriptures. We are not to go beyond what the Scripture says. To do so is to follow tradition without any warrant from Scripture. And the Scripture plainly says that Joseph waited to come together with Mary until after Jesus was born.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XXVIII. Chapter VII. 1–13, paragraph 3, page 179**

3. “Now the Jews’ feast of tabernacles was at hand.” What the feast of tabernacles is, they who read the Scriptures know. They used on the holy day to make tabernacles, in likeness of the tabernacles in which they dwelt while they sojourned in the wilderness, after being led out of Egypt. This was a holy day, a great solemnity. The Jews were celebrating this, as being mindful of the Lord’s benefits—they who were about to kill the Lord. On this holy day, then (for there were several holy days; but it was called a holy day with the Jews, though it was not one day, but several), “His brethren” spoke to the Lord Christ. Understand the phrase, “His brethren,” as you know it must be taken, for it is not a new thing you hear. The blood relations of the Virgin Mary used to be called the Lord’s brethren. For it was of the usage of Scripture to call blood relations and all other near kindred by the term brethren, which is foreign to our usage, and not within our manner of speech. For who would call an uncle or a sister’s son “brother”? Yet the Scripture calls relatives of this kind “brothers.” For Abraham and Lot are called brothers, while Abraham was Lot’s uncle. (Genesis 11:27) Laban and Jacob are called brothers, while Laban was Jacob’s uncle. (Genesis 28:2) When, therefore, you hear of the Lord’s brethren, consider them the blood relations of Mary, who did not a second time bear children. For, as in the sepulchre, where the Lord’s body was laid, neither before nor after did any dead lie; so, likewise, Mary’s womb, neither before nor after conceived anything mortal.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Now the Jews’ feast of tabernacles was at hand.””

He refers in context to **John 7 (KJV):1** After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. 2 Now the Jew's feast of tabernacles was at hand. 3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. 4 For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. 5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

He continues, “What the feast of tabernacles is, they who read the Scriptures know. They used on the holy day to make tabernacles, in likeness of the tabernacles in which they dwelt while they sojourned in the wilderness, after being led out of Egypt. This was a holy day, a great solemnity. The Jews were celebrating this, as being mindful of the Lord’s benefits—they

who were about to kill the Lord. On this holy day, then (for there were several holy days; but it was called a holy day with the Jews, though it was not one day, but several),”

He refers to **Leviticus 23 (KJV):34** Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord.

Augustine was not totally unaware of the feasts of the Jews.

He continues, ““His brethren” spoke to the Lord Christ. Understand the phrase, “His brethren,” as you know it must be taken, for it is not a new thing you hear. The blood relations of the Virgin Mary used to be called the Lord’s brethren. For it was of the usage of Scripture to call blood relations and all other near kindred by the term brethren, which is foreign to our usage, and not within our manner of speech. For who would call an uncle or a sister’s son “brother”? Yet the Scripture calls relatives of this kind “brothers.” For Abraham and Lot are called brothers, while Abraham was Lot’s uncle. (Genesis 11:27)”

We read in context in **Genesis 11 (Septuagint):27** And these are the generations of Tharrha. Tharrha begot Abram and Nachor, and Arrhan; and Arrhan begot Lot. 28 And Arrhan died in the presence of Tharrha his father, in the land in which he was born, in the country of the Chaldees. 29 And Abram and Nachor took to themselves wives, the name of the wife of Abram was Sara, and the name of the wife of Nachor, Malcha, daughter of Arrhan, and he was the father of Malcha, the father of Jescha. 30 And Sara was barren, and did not bear children. 31 And Tharrha took Abram his son, and Lot the son Arrhan, the son of his son, and Sara his daughter-in-law, the wife of Abram his son, and led them forth out of the land of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Chanaan, and they came as far as Charrhan, and he dwelt there. 32 And all the days of Tharrha in the land of Charrhan were two hundred and five years, and Tharrha died in Charrhan.

And in **Genesis 13 (Septuagint):8** And Abram said to Lot, Let there not be a strife between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we are brethren.

But it is clear from the context in Genesis 11:27-32 that Lot was Abram’s nephew.

He continues, “Laban and Jacob are called brothers, while Laban was Jacob’s uncle. (Genesis 28:2)”

We read in context in **Genesis 28 (Septuagint):1** And Isaac having called for Jacob, blessed him, and charged him, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of the Chananites. 2 Rise and depart quickly into Mesopotamia, to the house of Bathuel the father of thy mother, and take to thyself thence a wife of the daughters of Laban thy mother’s brother. 3 And may my God bless thee, and increase thee, and multiply thee, and thou shalt become gatherings of nations. 4 And may he give thee the blessing of my father Abraam, even to thee and to thy seed after thee, to inherit the land of thy sojourning, which God gave to Abraam. 5 So Isaac sent away Jacob, and he went into Mesopotamia to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebecca the mother of Jacob and Esau.

And in **Genesis 29 (Septuagint):1** And Jacob started and went to the land of the east to Laban, the son of Bathuel the Syrian, and the brother of Rebecca, mother of Jacob and Esau. 2 And he looks, and behold! A well in the plain; and there were there three flocks of sheep resting at it, for out of that well they watered the flocks, but there was a great stone at the mouth of the well. 3 And there were all the flocks gathered, and they used to roll away the stone from the mouth of the well, and water the flocks, and set the stone again in its place on the

mouth of the well. 4 And Jacob said to them, Brethren, whence are ye? And they said, We are of Charrhan. 5 And he said to them, Know ye Laban, the son of Nachor? and they said, We do know him. 6 And he said to them, Is he well? And they said, He is well. And behold Rachel his daughter came with the sheep. 7 And Jacob said, it is yet high day, it is not yet time that the flocks be gathered together; water ye the flocks, and depart and feed them. 8 And they said, We shall not be able, until all the shepherds be gathered together, and they shall roll away the stone from the mouth of the well, then we will water the flocks. 9 While he was yet speaking to them, behold, Rachel the daughter of Laban came with her father's sheep, for she fed the sheep of her father. 10 And it came to pass when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother, that Jacob came and rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother. 11 And Jacob kissed Rachel, and cried with a loud voice and wept. 12 And he told Rachel that he was the near relative of her father, and the son of Rebecca; and she ran and reported to her father according to these words.

Now it is clear in this passage of Scripture that Laban is the brother of Rebecca, who was Jacob's mother, and "the near relative of her father". There is no confusion about this here.

We continue in **Genesis 29 (Septuagint)**: 13 And it came to pass when Laban heard the name of Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him, and embraced and kissed him, and brought him into his house; and he told Laban all these sayings. 14 And Laban said to him, Thou art of my bones and of my flesh; and he was with him a full month. 15 And Laban said to Jacob, Surely thou shalt not serve me for nothing, because thou art my brother; tell me what thy reward is to be.

Laban said to Jacob that he is "of my bones and of my flesh", by which we understand that they were related. Laban then says in this context in verse 15, "Surely thou shalt not serve me for nothing, because thou art my brother; tell me what thy reward is to be."

There is no question that Laban is the uncle of Jacob, according to the Scripture.

Augustine continues, "When, therefore, you hear of the Lord's brethren, consider them the blood relations of Mary, who did not a second time bear children. For, as in the sepulchre, where the Lord's body was laid, neither before nor after did any dead lie; so, likewise, Mary's womb, neither before nor after conceived anything mortal."

There is no basis for this analogy. There is simply no connection in the Scripture between the tomb and the womb of Mary.

The Scripture is clear that Mary did not remain a virgin as we read in **Matthew 1 (KJV)**: 24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

Augustine was supporting the tradition of the Catholic Church in his time. But this tradition has no basis in Scripture.

## Ritual

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XVII. Chapter IV. 1–18, paragraph 4, page 112**

4. Now let us see what He intended to signify in the case of that one whom He Himself, keeping the mystery of unity, as I said before, deigned to heal out of so many sick folk. He found in the number of this man's years the number, so to speak, of infirmity: "He was thirty and eight years in infirmity." How this number refers more to weakness than to health must be somewhat more carefully expounded. I wish you to be attentive; the Lord will aid us, so that I may fitly speak, and that you may sufficiently hear. The number forty is commended to our attention as one consecrated by a kind of perfection. This, I suppose, is well known to you, beloved. The Holy Scriptures very often testify to the fact. Fasting was consecrated by this number, as you are well aware. For Moses fasted forty days, and Elias as many; and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ did Himself fulfill this number of fasting. By Moses is signified the law; by Elias, the prophets; by the Lord, the gospel. It was for this reason that these three appeared on that mountain, where He showed Himself to His disciples in the brightness of His countenance and vesture. For He appeared in the middle, between Moses and Elias, as the gospel had witness from the law and the prophets. (Romans 3:21) Whether, therefore, in the law, or in the prophets, or in the gospel, the number forty is commended to our attention in the case of fasting. Now fasting, in its large and general sense, is to abstain from the iniquities and unlawful pleasures of the world, which is perfect fasting: "That, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we may live temperately, and righteously, and godly in this present world." What reward does the apostle join to this fast? He goes on to say: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of the blessed God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:12,13) In this world, then, we celebrate, as it were, the forty days' abstinence, when we live aright, and abstain from iniquities and from unlawful pleasures. But because this abstinence shall not be without reward, we look for "that blessed hope, and the revelation of the glory of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ." In that hope, when the reality of the hope shall have come to pass, we shall receive our wages, a penny (denarius). For the same is the wages given to the workers laboring in the vineyard, (Matthew 20:10) as I presume you remember; for we are not to repeat everything, as if to persons wholly ignorant and inexperienced. **A denarius, then, which takes its name from the number *ten*, is given, and this joined with the forty makes up fifty; whence it is that before Easter we keep the Quadragesima with labor, but after Easter we keep the Quinquagesima with joy, as having received our wages. Now to this, as if to the wholesome labor of a good work, which belongs to the number forty, there is added the denarius of rest and happiness, that it may be made the number fifty.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "Now let us see what He intended to signify in the case of that one whom He Himself, keeping the mystery of unity, as I said before, deigned to heal out of so many sick folk. He found in the number of this man's years the number, so to speak, of infirmity: "He was thirty and eight years in infirmity." How this number refers more to weakness than to health must be somewhat more carefully expounded. I wish you to be attentive; the Lord will aid us, so that I may fitly speak, and that you may sufficiently hear. The number forty is commended to our attention as one consecrated by a kind of perfection. This, I suppose, is well known to you, beloved. The Holy Scriptures very often testify to the fact. Fasting was consecrated by this number, as you are well aware. For Moses fasted forty days,

and Elias as many; and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ did Himself fulfill this number of fasting.”

He refers to **Exodus 34 (KJV):**27 And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. 28 And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

And to **1 Kings 19 (KJV):**7 And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. 8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. 9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

And to **Matthew 4 (KJV):**1 Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

He continues, “By Moses is signified the law; by Elias, the prophets; by the Lord, the gospel. It was for this reason that these three appeared on that mountain, where He showed Himself to His disciples in the brightness of His countenance and vesture. For He appeared in the middle, between Moses and Elias, as the gospel had witness from the law and the prophets. (Romans 3:21)”

He refers to **Matthew 17 (KJV):**1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. 4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. 6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. 7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

And to **Romans 3 (KJV):**21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

He continues, “Whether, therefore, in the law, or in the prophets, or in the gospel, the number forty is commended to our attention in the case of fasting. Now fasting, in its large and general sense, is to abstain from the iniquities and unlawful pleasures of the world, which is perfect fasting: “That, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we may live temperately, and righteously, and godly in this present world.” What reward does the apostle join to this fast? He goes on to say: “Looking for that blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of the blessed God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” (Titus 2:12,13)”

He refers in context to **Titus 2 (KJV):**11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

He continues, “In this world, then, we celebrate, as it were, the forty days’ abstinence, when we live aright, and abstain from iniquities and from unlawful pleasures. But because this



abstinence shall not be without reward, we look for “that blessed hope, and the revelation of the glory of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ.” In that hope, when the reality of the hope shall have come to pass, we shall receive our wages, a penny (denarius). For the same is the wages given to the workers laboring in the vineyard, (Matthew 20:10) as I presume you remember;”

He refers in context to **Matthew 20 (KJV):8** So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. 9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. 10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. 11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, 12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. 13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? 14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? 16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

The word for “penny” in the Greek is **δηνάριον** (pronounced dā-nā'-rē-on), of Latin origin; a denarius (or ten asses):—pence, penny(-worth). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 1220.**

He continues, “for we are not to repeat everything, as if to persons wholly ignorant and inexperienced. **A denarius, then, which takes its name from the number ten, is given, and this joined with the forty makes up fifty; whence it is that before Easter we keep the Quadragesima with labor, but after Easter we keep the Quinquagesima with joy, as having received our wages. Now to this, as if to the wholesome labor of a good work, which belongs to the number forty, there is added the denarius of rest and happiness, that it may be made the number fifty.**”

Wikipedia has this about the Quadragesima:

**Quadragesima Sunday** or **Invocavit Sunday** is the Sunday occurring after Ash Wednesday. In Roman Catholic and other western Christian tradition, it is the first Sunday during the holy season of **Lent**. As on other Sundays of Lent, it is customary to dispense from the fast on Quadragesima, since Sundays are not counted among the forty days of Lent. The term Quadragesima is derived from the Latin word for "fortieth", as there are exactly forty days from Quadragesima Sunday until Good Friday. However, like Quinquagesima, Sexagesima and Septuagesima, the numeral is more likely an approximation of how many days there are until Easter Sunday, in this case 42. While Quadragesima includes both Sundays and weekdays, the beginning of Lent was later changed to the preceding Wednesday, "Ash Wednesday", to get in forty weekdays.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quadragesima\\_Sunday](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quadragesima_Sunday)

**Quadragesima** denotes a season of preparation by fasting and prayer, to imitate the example of Christ (Matthew 4). <http://Catholicencyclopedia.newadvent.com/cathen/12589a.htm>

He speaks also of the Quinquagesima:

The name **Quinquagesima** originates from Latin *quinquagesimus* (fiftieth). This is in reference to the fifty days before Easter Day using inclusive counting which counts both

Sundays (normal counting would count only one of these). Since the forty days of the Lent do not include Sundays, the first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday, succeeds Quinquagesima Sunday by only three days. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quinquagesima>

Augustine says that they kept these ritual days in the Catholic Church in his time. Such an observance leads to a legalism spoken against by Paul in **Galatians 4 (KJV):9** But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? 10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. 11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

And in **Colossians 2 (KJV):14** Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. 16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

We see how great a place ritual was given in the Catholic Church in the time of Augustine.

## The Sign of the Cross

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate CXVIII. Chapter XIX. 23, 24, paragraph 5, page 431-432**

5. And yet let no one say that such things had no good signification because they were done by the bad, that is to say, not by those who followed Christ, but by those who persecuted Him. For what could we have to say of the cross itself, which every one knows was in like manner made and fastened to Christ by enemies and sinners? And yet it is to it we may rightly understand the words of the apostle to be applicable, “what is the breadth, and the length, and the height, and the depth.” (Ephesians 3:18) For its breadth lies in the transverse beam, on which the hands of the Crucified are extended; and signifies good works in all the breadth of love: its length extends from the transverse beam to the ground, and is that whereto the back and feet are affixed; and signifies perseverance through the whole length of time to the end: **its height is in the summit, which rises upwards above the transverse beam; and signifies the supernal goal, to which all works have reference, since all things that are done well and perseveringly, in respect of their breadth and length, are to be done also with due regard to the exalted character of the divine rewards:** its depth is found in the part that is fixed into the ground; for there it is both concealed and invisible, and yet from thence spring up all those parts that are outstanding and evident to the senses; just as all that is good in us proceeds from the depths of the grace of God, which is beyond the reach of human comprehension and judgment. But even though the cross of Christ signified no more than what was said by the apostle, “And they who are Jesus Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts,” (Galatians 5:24) how great a good it is! And yet it does not this, unless the good spirit be lusting against

the flesh, seeing that it was the opposing, or, in other words, the evil spirit that constructed the cross of Christ. **And lastly, as every one knows, what else is the sign of Christ but the cross of Christ? For unless that sign be applied, whether it be to the foreheads of believers, or to the very water out of which they are regenerated, or to the oil with which they receive the anointing chrism, or to the sacrifice that nourishes them, none of them is properly administered. How then can it be that no good is signified by that which is done by the wicked, when by the cross of Christ, which the wicked made, every good thing is sealed to us in the celebration of His sacraments?** But here we stop; and what follows we shall consider at another time in the course of dissertation, as God shall grant us assistance.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “And yet let no one say that such things had no good signification because they were done by the bad, that is to say, not by those who followed Christ, but by those who persecuted Him. For what could we have to say of the cross itself, which every one knows was in like manner made and fastened to Christ by enemies and sinners? And yet it is to it we may rightly understand the words of the apostle to be applicable, “what is the breadth, and the length, and the height, and the depth.” (Ephesians 3:18)”

He refers in context to **Ephesians 3 (KJV):**17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

He continues, “For its breadth lies in the transverse beam, on which the hands of the Crucified are extended; and signifies good works in all the breadth of love: its length extends from the transverse beam to the ground, and is that whereto the back and feet are affixed; and signifies perseverance through the whole length of time to the end: **its height is in the summit, which rises upwards above the transverse beam; and signifies the supernal goal, to which all works have reference, since all things that are done well and perseveringly, in respect of their breadth and length, are to be done also with due regard to the exalted character of the divine rewards:** its depth is found in the part that is fixed into the ground; for there it is both concealed and invisible, and yet from thence spring up all those parts that are outstanding and evident to the senses; just as all that is good in us proceeds from the depths of the grace of God, which is beyond the reach of human comprehension and judgment. But even though the cross of Christ signified no more than what was said by the apostle, “And they who are Jesus Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts,” (Galatians 5:24) how great a good it is!”

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):**24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

The word “**supernal**” means 1: a: being or coming from on high

b: HEAVENLY, ETHEREAL *supernal* melodies

c: superlatively good *supernal* trumpet playing

2: located in or belonging to the sky (**Merriam Webster**)

He continues, “And yet it does not this, unless the good spirit be lusting against the flesh, seeing that it was the opposing, or, in other words, the evil spirit that constructed the cross of Christ. **And lastly, as every one knows, what else is the sign of Christ but the cross of Christ? For unless that sign be applied, whether it be to the foreheads of believers, or to the very water**

out of which they are regenerated, or to the oil with which they receive the anointing chrism, or to the sacrifice that nourishes them, none of them is properly administered. How then can it be that no good is signified by that which is done by the wicked, when by the cross of Christ, which the wicked made, every good thing is sealed to us in the celebration of His sacraments? But here we stop; and what follows we shall consider at another time in the course of dissertation, as God shall grant us assistance.”

While his analogy of the cross is noteworthy, his application involves mere ritual, as we read again, “For unless that sign be applied, whether it be to the foreheads of believers, or to the very water out of which they are regenerated, or to the oil with which they receive the anointing chrism, or to the sacrifice that nourishes them, none of them is properly administered.”

There is nothing in the word of God about the sacraments, or the proper administration of them with the sign of the cross. All of this was ritual that had developed in the Catholic Church before the time of Augustine.

But ritual does not save us. We are not regenerated by water, but by faith in Jesus Christ, and confession of Him as Lord, as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Therefore, whether we apply the sign of the cross of Christ “to the foreheads of believers, or to the very water out of which they are regenerated, or to the oil with which they receive the anointing chrism, or to the sacrifice that nourishes them”, none of this is of any value to the believer because it is mere ritual based on tradition, and has no basis in the word of God.

## Penance

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3

#### On the Creed: A Sermon to the Catechumens, Chapter 15, paragraphs 15-16, page 374-375

15. “Forgiveness of sins.” Ye have [this article of] the Creed perfectly in you when ye receive Baptism. Let none say, “I have done this or that sin: perchance that is not forgiven me.” What hast thou done? How great a sin hast thou done? Name any heinous thing thou hast committed, heavy, horrible, which thou shudderest even to think of: have done what thou wilt: hast thou killed Christ? There is not than that deed any worse, because also than Christ there is nothing better. What a dreadful thing is it to kill Christ! Yet the Jews killed Him, and many afterwards believed on Him and drank His blood: they are forgiven the sin which they committed. When ye have been baptized, hold fast a good life in the commandments of God, that ye may guard your Baptism even unto the end. I do not tell you that ye will live here without sin; but they are venial, without which this life is not. For the sake of all sins was Baptism provided; for the sake of light sins, without which we cannot be, was prayer provided. What hath the Prayer? “Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)

Once for all we have washing in Baptism, every day we have washing in prayer. **Only, do not commit those things for which ye must needs be separated from Christ's body: which be far from you! For those whom ye have seen doing penance, have committed heinous things, either adulteries or some enormous crimes: for these they do penance. Because if theirs had been light sins, to blot out these daily prayer would suffice.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Forgiveness of sins.” Ye have [this article of] the Creed perfectly in you when ye receive Baptism. Let none say, “I have done this or that sin: perchance that is not forgiven me.” What hast thou done? How great a sin hast thou done? Name any heinous thing thou hast committed, heavy, horrible, which thou shudderest even to think of: have done what thou wilt: hast thou killed Christ? There is not than that deed any worse, because also than Christ there is nothing better. What a dreadful thing is it to kill Christ! Yet the Jews killed Him, and many afterwards believed on Him and drank His blood: they are forgiven the sin which they committed.”

All sins may be forgiven but one, as Jesus revealed in **Matthew 12 (KJV):31** Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

We will talk more about this sin later.

Augustine continues, “When ye have been baptized, hold fast a good life in the commandments of God, that ye may guard your Baptism even unto the end. I do not tell you that ye will live here without sin; but they are venial, without which this life is not. For the sake of all sins was Baptism provided; for the sake of light sins, without which we cannot be, was prayer provided.”

So light sins are venial sins, for which the simple prayer was provided, as Augustine continues, “What hath the Prayer? “Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

He continues, “Once for all we have washing in Baptism, every day we have washing in prayer. **Only, do not commit those things for which ye must needs be separated from Christ's body: which be far from you! For those whom ye have seen doing penance, have committed heinous things, either adulteries or some enormous crimes: for these they do penance. Because if theirs had been light sins, to blot out these daily prayer would suffice.**”

The word translated “repentance” in Matthew 3:11 in the **Latin Vulgate** is **paenitentiam**. Since Augustine was fluent with the Latin language, it is no wonder that he favored the Latin Vulgate translation of Jerome, with whom he was also friends with. It is from this translation that the Catholic Church began to codify penance.

Let us continue reading Augustine's thoughts in the next paragraph.

16. **In three ways then are sins remitted in the Church; by Baptism, by prayer, by the greater humility of penance; yet God doth not remit sins but to the baptized. The very sins which He remits first, He remits not but to the baptized.** When? When they are baptized. The sins which are after remitted upon prayer, upon penance, to whom He remits, it is to the baptized that He remitteth. For how can they say, “Our Father,” who are not yet born sons? The Catechumens, so long as they be such, have upon them all their sins. If Catechumens, how



much more Pagans? How much more heretics? But to heretics we do not change their baptism. Why? Because they have baptism in the same way as a deserter has the soldier's mark: just so these also have Baptism; they have it, but to be condemned thereby, not crowned. And yet if the deserter himself, being amended, begin to do duty as a soldier, does any man dare to change his mark?

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “In three ways then are sins remitted in the Church; by Baptism, by prayer, by the greater humility of penance; yet God doth not remit sins but to the baptized. The very sins which He remits first, He remits not but to the baptized.

When? When they are baptized. The sins which are after remitted upon prayer, upon penance, to whom He remits, it is to the baptized that He remitteth. For how can they say, “Our Father,” who are not yet born sons?”

It is through baptism that regeneration occurs, according to Augustine, and the Catholic Church. However, the Scriptures are clear. We are not saved by our works, or any ritual that we perform. We are saved by grace through faith, which is the gift of God as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Once we have faith in Jesus Christ, we are washed, and need only to wash our feet as Jesus revealed in **John 13 (KJV):10** Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

If we sin, remittance comes through confession as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Jesus Christ is the one and only propitiation for the sins of the whole world as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

A definition of the word “penance” is as follows: “: an act of self-abasement, mortification (see MORTIFICATION SENSE 3), or devotion performed to show sorrow or repentance for sin”. (**Merriam Webster**)

The word “penance” has been substituted for “repentance” in the **Douay Rheims** translation of the **Latin Vulgate**. So we read in **Matthew 3 (Douay Rheims):11** I indeed baptize you in water unto penance, but he that shall come after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire.

The word in the Greek translated penance in this verse is **μετάνοια** (pronounced me-tä'-noi-ä), from G3340; (subjectively) compunction (for guilt, including reformation); by implication, reversal (of (another's) decision):—repentance. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3341.**

And we read in **Matthew 4 (Douay Rheims):17** From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say: Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

The word in the Greek translated “Do penance” in this verse is **μετανοέω**

(pronounced me-tä-no-e'-ō), from G3326 and G3539; to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider (morally, feel compunction):—repent. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3340.**

This Greek word comes from two Greek words, **μετά** (pronounced me-tä'), after, implying change, and **νοέω** (pronounced no-e'-ō), to perceive. So the two together “signifies to changes one's mind or purpose”. **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 279-280.**

Repentance in the Biblical sense means to have a change of mind about our sin, and about God. In the Hebrew it means to turn, or return. So repentance also has the meaning of turning to God. It doesn't involve the giving of alms, or doing good works for the remission of sin.

No amount of penance can atone or make propitiation for sin. God has already provided for “the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”. The Catholic Church in the time of Augustine did not understand this.

Augustine concludes, “The Catechumens, so long as they be such, have upon them all their sins. If Catechumens, how much more Pagans? How much more heretics? But to heretics we do not change their baptism. Why? Because they have baptism in the same way as a deserter has the soldier's mark: just so these also have Baptism; they have it, but to be condemned thereby, not crowned. And yet if the deserter himself, being amended, begin to do duty as a soldier, does any man dare to change his mark?”

Augustine believed that the sacrament of Baptism was how one was regenerated. So he did not think that a “deserter” had to be baptized again, that is, born again, again. But he says that Baptism gives us a mark just as a soldier. Nothing in the Scriptures speaks of regeneration in this way. When one is born again, their spirit is made alive to God by the Holy Spirit who gives it birth. Our spirit now has eternal life by the Spirit of God, and a new divine nature. The Catholic Church in the time of Augustine did not understand the Biblical truth about this.

A Catechumen who truly believed from their heart in Jesus Christ, and that God raised Jesus from the dead, and from their heart confessed Him as Lord, was already a believer, even before being baptized. The Catholic Church thought that the ritual had to be performed for a Catechumen to be regenerated, or born again.

Once one has been born again by the Spirit of God, they have eternal life. If they commit sin, and they are unrepentant, this will inevitably mean that the Lord will discipline them, for if we should judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But once we have truly believed, we are the Lord's as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? **20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

## The Fall

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God**  
**Book XIII, Chapters 1-4, page 245**

Chapter 1.—Of the Fall of the First Man, Through Which Mortality Has Been Contracted.

Having disposed of the very difficult questions concerning the origin of our world and the beginning of the human race, the natural order requires that we now discuss the fall of the first man (we may say of the first men), and of the origin and propagation of human death. For God had not made man like the angels, in such a condition that, even though they had sinned, they could none the more die. He had so made them, that if they discharged the obligations of obedience, an angelic immortality and a blessed eternity might ensue, without the intervention of death; but if they disobeyed, death should be visited on them with just sentence—which, too, has been spoken to in the preceding book.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Having disposed of the very difficult questions concerning the origin of our world and the beginning of the human race, the natural order requires that we now discuss the fall of the first man (we may say of the first men), and of the origin and propagation of human death.”

God gave man a command as in **Genesis 2 (KJV):16** And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

But man disobeyed God as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):6** And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. 7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

And God’s judgment is then mentioned in **Genesis 3 (KJV):13** And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. 14 And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. 16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. 17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

He continues, as he then says, “For God had not made man like the angels, in such a condition that, even though they had sinned, they could none the more die. He had so made them, that if they discharged the obligations of obedience, an angelic immortality and a blessed

eternity might ensue, without the intervention of death; but if they disobeyed, death should be visited on them with just sentence—which, too, has been spoken to in the preceding book.”

However, some of the angels did sin, and suffered eternal separation from God, which is spiritual death. Lucifer became Satan, who sinned from the beginning as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):8** He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

The devil sinned before Adam, and was not given a second chance. Since sin was already in the universe, Adam was given a second chance, and a redeemer was provided.

Chapter 2.—Of that Death Which Can Affect an Immortal Soul, and of that to Which the Body is Subject.

But I see I must speak a little more carefully of the nature of death. For although the human soul is truly affirmed to be immortal, yet it also has a certain death of its own. For it is therefore called immortal, because, in a sense, it does not cease to live and to feel; while the body is called mortal, because it can be forsaken of all life, and cannot by itself live at all. The death, then, of the soul takes place when God forsakes it, as the death of the body when the soul forsakes it. Therefore the death of both—that is, of the whole man—occurs when the soul, forsaken by God, forsakes the body. For, in this case, neither is God the life of the soul, nor the soul the life of the body. And this death of the whole man is followed by that which, on the authority of the divine oracles, we call the second death. This the Saviour referred to when He said, “Fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28) And since this does not happen before the soul is so joined to its body that they cannot be separated at all, it may be matter of wonder how the body can be said to be killed by that death in which it is not forsaken by the soul, but, being animated and rendered sensitive by it, is tormented. For in that penal and everlasting punishment, of which in its own place we are to speak more at large, the soul is justly said to die, because it does not live in connection with God; but how can we say that the body is dead, seeing that it lives by the soul? For it could not otherwise feel the bodily torments which are to follow the resurrection. Is it because life of every kind is good, and pain an evil, that we decline to say that that body lives, in which the soul is the cause, not of life, but of pain? The soul, then, lives by God when it lives well, for it cannot live well unless by God working in it what is good; and the body lives by the soul when the soul lives in the body, whether itself be living by God or no. For the wicked man’s life in the body is a life not of the soul, but of the body, which even dead souls—that is, souls forsaken of God—can confer upon bodies, how little so-ever of their own proper life, by which they are immortal, they retain. But in the last damnation, though man does not cease to feel, yet because this feeling of his is neither sweet with pleasure nor wholesome with repose, but painfully penal, it is not without reason called death rather than life. And it is called the second death because it follows the first, which sunders the two cohering essences, whether these be God and the soul, or the soul and the body. Of the first and bodily death, then, we may say that to the good it is good, and evil to the evil. But, doubtless, the second, as it happens to none of the good, so it can be good for none.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But I see I must speak a little more carefully

of the nature of death. For although the human soul is truly affirmed to be immortal, yet it also has a certain death of its own. For it is therefore called immortal, because, in a sense, it does not cease to live and to feel; while the body is called mortal, because it can be forsaken of all life, and cannot by itself live at all.”

Augustine is correct, and he continues, as he then explains, “The death, then, of the soul takes place when God forsakes it, as the death of the body when the soul forsakes it. Therefore the death of both—that is, of the whole man—occurs when the soul, forsaken by God, forsakes the body. For, in this case, neither is God the life of the soul, nor the soul the life of the body. And this death of the whole man is followed by that which, on the authority of the divine oracles, we call the second death. This the Saviour referred to when He said, “Fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)”

He refers to **Revelation 21 (KJV):8** But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

And to **Matthew 10 (KJV):28** And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

The word “destroy” in the Greek is ἀπόλλυμι (pronounced ä-po'l-lü-mē), from G575 and the base of G3639; to destroy fully (reflexively, to perish, or lose), literally or figuratively:—destroy, die, lose, mar, perish. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G622.**

Thayer’s Greek Lexicon says, “*to destroy* i. e. *to put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to, ruin*: Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; Luke 17:27, 29; Jude 1:5; τὴν σοφίαν *render useless*, cause its emptiness to be perceived, 1 Corinthians 1:19 (from the Sept. of Isaiah 29:14); *to kill*: Matthew 2:13; Matthew 12:14; Mark 9:22; Mark 11:18; John 10:10, etc.; <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G622&t=KJV>

The sense in Matthew 10:28 is that the soul and body will be ruined, rendered useless.

Augustine then continues, “And since this does not happen before the soul is so joined to its body that they cannot be separated at all, it may be matter of wonder how the body can be said to be killed by that death in which it is not forsaken by the soul, but, being animated and rendered sensitive by it, is tormented.”

He is speaking of the resurrection of the wicked dead, and he continues, “For in that penal and everlasting punishment, of which in its own place we are to speak more at large, the soul is justly said to die, because it does not live in connection with God; but how can we say that the body is dead, seeing that it lives by the soul?”

So he speaks of the resurrection of the wicked, where both soul and body will exist in hell, but for all practical purposes they are dead, because they are in torment, and separated from God, as he continues and explains, “For it could not otherwise feel the bodily torments which are to follow the resurrection.”

He then asks, “Is it because life of every kind is good, and pain an evil, that we decline to say that that body lives, in which the soul is the cause, not of life, but of pain? The soul, then, lives by God when it lives well, for it cannot live well unless by God working in it what is good; and the body lives by the soul when the soul lives in the body, whether itself be living by God or no. For the wicked man’s life in the body is a life not of the soul, but of the body, which even dead souls—that is, souls forsaken of God—can confer upon bodies, how little so-ever of their own proper life, by which they are immortal, they retain.”



He explains well the life of the soul, for the soul is still active in the bodies of the unbelieving while they are alive on earth.

He continues, as he then explains, “But in the last damnation, though man does not cease to feel, yet because this feeling of his is neither sweet with pleasure nor wholesome with repose, but painfully penal, it is not without reason called death rather than life. And it is called the second death because it follows the first, which sunders the two cohering essences, whether these be God and the soul, or the soul and the body. Of the first and bodily death, then, we may say that to the good it is good, and evil to the evil. But, doubtless, the second, as it happens to none of the good, so it can be good for none.”

To Augustine, because the soul is composed of spirit, he sees only two parts of man in death. So when the soul separates from the body, there is the death of the body. To the good, the soul will be at rest in God. To the evil, the soul will be in torment.

Augustine recognizes three stages of death here. Man died spiritually the day he sinned. If man does not repent before he dies physically, he will not only die physically, but to this will be added the second death, or eternal separation of soul and body from God. To him, because he believed the soul to be composed of spirit, he sees only two parts of man in death, that of the soul and body. But we understand from Scripture that there is a division between soul and spirit as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

So the three parts of man's being are mentioned in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Augustine thought that the soul was spiritually dead when in unbelief. Our spiritual death is mentioned in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins...

But when we are born again, it is our spirit that is made alive as Jesus spoke in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

It is our spirit that is born again. Our soul will then be renewed as we walk in the light of the word of God and grow in grace and knowledge. Augustine did not understand the difference between soul and spirit. He often mixed up the faculties of the soul with those of the spirit. Our spirit is where we have God consciousness. Our soul is where we have consciousness of relationships in this world. And our flesh, our bodies, communicate with the physical realm by the five senses. When our spirit is united with our body, we become a living soul, and we are able to communicate with others on earth. When we are born again, we have fellowship with God.

So before Christ, our spirit is dead in trespasses and sins. We had no relationship with God. Our souls are also in a sense dead to God, since they have no awareness of Him. Those who die before accepting Christ will go to hell, and experience the second death. At the resurrection of the wicked dead at the White Throne Judgment, their bodies will be reunited with their soul and spirit. They will then be judged by their works, and cast into the Lake of Fire, which is the second death as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):14** And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

### Chapter 3.—Whether Death, Which by the Sin of Our First Parents Has Passed Upon All Men, is the Punishment of Sin, Even to the Good.

But a question not to be shirked arises: Whether in very truth death, which separates soul and body, is good to the good? For if it be, how has it come to pass that such a thing should be the punishment of sin? For the first men would not have suffered death had they not sinned. How, then, can that be good to the good, which could not have happened except to the evil? Then, again, if it could only happen to the evil, to the good it ought not to be good, but nonexistent. For why should there be any punishment where there is nothing to punish? Wherefore we must say that the first men were indeed so created, that if they had not sinned, they would not have experienced any kind of death; but that, having become sinners, they were so punished with death, that whatsoever sprang from their stock should also be punished with the same death. For nothing else could be born of them than that which they themselves had been. Their nature was deteriorated in proportion to the greatness of the condemnation of their sin, so that what existed as punishment in those who first sinned, became a natural consequence in their children. For man is not produced by man, as he was from the dust. For dust was the material out of which man was made: man is the parent by whom man is begotten. Wherefore earth and flesh are not the same thing, though flesh be made of earth. But as man the parent is, such is man the offspring. In the first man, therefore, there existed the whole human nature, which was to be transmitted by the woman to posterity, when that conjugal union received the divine sentence of its own condemnation; and what man was made, not when created, but when he sinned and was punished, this he propagated, so far as the origin of sin and death are concerned. For neither by sin nor its punishment was he himself reduced to that infantine and helpless infirmity of body and mind which we see in children. For God ordained that infants should begin the world as the young of beasts begin it, since their parents had fallen to the level of the beasts in the fashion of their life and of their death; as it is written, “Man when he was in honor understood not; he became like the beasts that have no understanding.” (Psalm 49:12) Nay more, infants, we see, are even feebler in the use and movement of their limbs, and more infirm to choose and refuse, than the most tender offspring of other animals; as if the force that dwells in human nature were destined to surpass all other living things so much the more eminently, as its energy has been longer restrained, and the time of its exercise delayed, just as an arrow flies the higher the further back it has been drawn. To this infantine imbecility the first man did not fall by his lawless presumption and just sentence; but human nature was in his person vitiated and altered to such an extent, that he suffered in his members the warring of disobedient lust, and became subject to the necessity of dying. And what he himself had become by sin and punishment, such he generated those whom he begot; that is to say, subject to sin and death. And if infants are delivered from this bondage of sin by the Redeemer’s grace, they can suffer only this death which separates soul and body; but being redeemed from the obligation of sin, they do not pass to that second endless and penal death.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he asks, “But a question not to be shirked arises: Whether in very truth death, which separates soul and body, is good to the good? For if it be, how has it come to pass that such a thing should be the punishment of sin? For the first men would not have suffered death had they not sinned. How, then, can that be good to the good,

which could not have happened except to the evil? Then, again, if it could only happen to the evil, to the good it ought not to be good, but nonexistent. For why should there be any punishment where there is nothing to punish?”

He continues, as he explains, “Wherefore we must say that the first men were indeed so created, that if they had not sinned, they would not have experienced any kind of death; but that, having become sinners, they were so punished with death, that whatsoever sprang from their stock should also be punished with the same death.”

Disobedience to the Lord’s command meant death in the same day as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):16** And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Man died spiritually in the day that he sinned. Augustine continues, “For nothing else could be born of them than that which they themselves had been. Their nature was deteriorated in proportion to the greatness of the condemnation of their sin, so that what existed as punishment in those who first sinned, became a natural consequence in their children. For man is not produced by man, as he was from the dust. For dust was the material out of which man was made: man is the parent by whom man is begotten.”

He refers to **Genesis 2 (KJV):7** And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

When God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”, man’s spirit was created, and the uniting of man’s spirit with his body made man a “living soul”.

Augustine continues, “Wherefore earth and flesh are not the same thing, though flesh be made of earth. But as man the parent is, such is man the offspring. In the first man, therefore, there existed the whole human nature, which was to be transmitted by the woman to posterity, when that conjugal union received the divine sentence of its own condemnation; and what man was made, not when created, but when he sinned and was punished, this he propagated, so far as the origin of sin and death are concerned.”

And this we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

And in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):21** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Augustine continues, “For neither by sin nor its punishment was he himself reduced to that infantine and helpless infirmity of body and mind which we see in children. For God ordained that infants should begin the world as the young of beasts begin it, since their parents had fallen to the level of the beasts in the fashion of their life and of their death; as it is written, “Man when he was in honor understood not; he became like the beasts that have no understanding.” (Psalm 49:12)”

Augustine refers in context, to **Psalms 49 (KJV):12** Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. 13 This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.

He continues, “Nay more, infants, we see, are even feebler in the use and movement of their limbs, and more infirm to choose and refuse, than the most tender offspring of other animals; as if the force that dwells in human nature were destined to surpass all other living things so much the more eminently, as its energy has been longer restrained, and the time of its

exercise delayed, just as an arrow flies the higher the further back it has been drawn. **To this infantine imbecility the first man did not fall by his lawless presumption and just sentence; but human nature was in his person vitiated and altered to such an extent, that he suffered in his members the warring of disobedient lust, and became subject to the necessity of dying.**”

The word “vitiating” means 1: to make faulty or defective : IMPAIR the comic impact

is *vitiated* by obvious haste— William Styron

2: to debase in moral or aesthetic status a mind *vitiated* by prejudice

3: to make ineffective fraud *vitiates* a contract

(Merriam Webster)

This “warring of disobedient lust” is what is referred to in **Romans 7 (KJV):**18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Augustine continues, **“And what he himself had become by sin and punishment, such he generated those whom he begot; that is to say, subject to sin and death. And if infants are delivered from this bondage of sin by the Redeemer’s grace, they can suffer only this death which separates soul and body; but being redeemed from the obligation of sin, they do not pass to that second endless and penal death.”**

Augustine has explained it well. Man was created good, but when he sinned, death came upon the human race. And sin in our members wars against the Spirit of life in our spirits in our inward man once we have been born again. But the law of the Spirit of life in our spirits has made us free from having to yield to the law of sin in our members. Hallelujah!

Chapter 4.—Why Death, the Punishment of Sin, is Not Withheld from Those Who by the Grace of Regeneration are Absolved from Sin.

If, moreover, any one is solicitous about this point, how, if death be the very punishment of sin, they whose guilt is cancelled by grace do yet suffer death, this difficulty has already been handled and solved in our other work which we have written on the baptism of infants. There it was said that the parting of soul and body was left, though its connection with sin was removed, for this reason, that if the immortality of the body followed immediately upon **the sacrament of regeneration**, faith itself would be thereby enervated. For faith is then only faith when it waits in hope for what is not yet seen in substance. And by the vigor and conflict of faith, at least in times past, was the fear of death overcome. Specially was this conspicuous in the holy martyrs, who could have had no victory, no glory, to whom there could not even have been any conflict, if, after **the laver of regeneration**, saints could not suffer bodily death. Who would not, then, in company with the infants presented for baptism, run to the grace of Christ, that so he might not be dismissed from the body? **And thus faith would not be tested with an unseen reward; and so**

would not even be faith, seeking and receiving an immediate recompense of its works. But now, by the greater and more admirable grace of the Saviour, the punishment of sin is turned to the service of righteousness. For then it was proclaimed to man, "If thou sinnest, thou shalt die;" now it is said to the martyr, "Die, that thou sin not." Then it was said, "If ye transgress the commandments, ye shall die;" now it is said, "If ye decline death, ye transgress the commandment." That which was formerly set as an object of terror, that men might not sin, is now to be undergone if we would not sin. Thus, by the unutterable mercy of God, even the very punishment of wickedness has become the armor of virtue, and the penalty of the sinner becomes the reward of the righteous. For then death was incurred by sinning, now righteousness is fulfilled by dying. In the case of the holy martyrs it is so; for to them the persecutor proposes the alternative, apostasy or death. For the righteous prefer by believing to suffer what the first transgressors suffered by not believing. For unless they had sinned, they would not have died; but the martyrs sin if they do not die. The one died because they sinned, the others do not sin because they die. By the guilt of the first, punishment was incurred; by the punishment of the second, guilt is prevented. Not that death, which was before an evil, has become something good, but only that God has granted to faith this grace, that death, which is the admitted opposite to life, should become the instrument by which life is reached.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, as he says, "If, moreover, any one is solicitous about this point, how, if death be the very punishment of sin, they whose guilt is cancelled by grace do yet suffer death, this difficulty has already been handled and solved in our other work which we have written on the baptism of infants. There it was said that the parting of soul and body was left, though its connection with sin was removed, for this reason, that if the immortality of the body followed immediately upon **the sacrament of regeneration**, faith itself would be thereby enervated. For faith is then only faith when it waits in hope for what is not yet seen in substance. And by the vigor and conflict of faith, at least in times past, was the fear of death overcome."

We walk by faith and not by sight as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):6** Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

We do not fear death now as we read in **Hebrews 2 (KJV):14** Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

And we wait in hope as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):24** For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

He continues, "Specially was this conspicuous in the holy martyrs, who could have had no victory, no glory, to whom there could not even have been any conflict, if, after **the laver of regeneration**, saints could not suffer bodily death. Who would not, then, in company with the infants presented for baptism, run to the grace of Christ, that so he might not be dismissed from the body?"



He here refers to “the sacrament of regeneration”, and to “the laver of regeneration”, which refer to the ritual of baptism in Augustine’s time in the Catholic Church.

He continues, “And thus faith would not be tested with an unseen reward; and so would not even be faith, seeking and receiving an immediate recompense of its works. But now, by the greater and more admirable grace of the Saviour, the punishment of sin is turned to the service of righteousness. For then it was proclaimed to man, “If thou sinnest, thou shall die;” now it is said to the martyr, “Die, that thou sin not.” Then it was said, “If ye transgress the commandments, ye shall die;” now it is said, “If ye decline death, ye transgress the commandment.” That which was formerly set as an object of terror, that men might not sin, is now to be undergone if we would not sin.”

That is, the martyrs would not have been martyrs if they denied the Lord. And to deny the Lord is sin.

He continues, “Thus, by the unutterable mercy of God, even the very punishment of wickedness has become the armor of virtue, and the penalty of the sinner becomes the reward of the righteous. For then death was incurred by sinning, now righteousness is fulfilled by dying. In the case of the holy martyrs it is so; for to them the persecutor proposes the alternative, apostasy or death. For the righteous prefer by believing to suffer what the first transgressors suffered by not believing.”

I think Augustine has hit the nail on the head. Death is a test as he said before, “And thus faith would not be tested with an unseen reward; and so would not even be faith, seeking and receiving an immediate recompense of its works. But now, by the greater and more admirable grace of the Saviour, the punishment of sin is turned to the service of righteousness.”

We read of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):13** These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. 16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

And others followed them as we read also in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):32** And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. 34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. 39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

He continues, “For unless they had sinned, they would not have died; but the martyrs sin

if they do not die. The one died because they sinned, the others do not sin because they die. By the guilt of the first, punishment was incurred; by the punishment of the second, guilt is prevented. Not that death, which was before an evil, has become something good, but only that God has granted to faith this grace, that death, which is the admitted opposite to life, should become the instrument by which life is reached.”

For the righteous, death is a test. If we pass the test, we are rewarded, not only for dying in the Lord, but for all the good works that He does through us. If we don’t pass the test, that is to say, we only build on the foundation of Jesus Christ wood, hay, and stubble, we are still saved, yet as by the fire of our bad choices.

The martyrs chose to be strong and courageous. They chose to walk and live by faith, as those who have gone before them.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XIII, Chapter 13, page 251**

Chapter 13.—What Was the First Punishment of the Transgression of Our First Parents.

For, as soon as our first parents had transgressed the commandment, divine grace forsook them, and they were confounded at their own wickedness; and therefore they took fig-leaves (which were possibly the first that came to hand in their troubled state of mind), and covered their shame; for though their members remained the same, they had shame now where they had none before. They experienced a new motion of their flesh, which had become disobedient to them, in strict retribution of their own disobedience to God. For the soul, reveling in its own liberty, and scorning to serve God, was itself deprived of the command it had formerly maintained over the body. And because it had willfully deserted its superior Lord, it no longer held its own inferior servant; neither could it hold the flesh subject, as it would always have been able to do had it remained itself subject to God. Then began the flesh to lust against the Spirit, (Galatians 5:17) in which strife we are born, deriving from the first transgression a seed of death, and bearing in our members, and in our vitiated nature, the contest or even victory of the flesh.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, as he says, “For, as soon as our first parents had transgressed the commandment, divine grace forsook them, and they were confounded at their own wickedness; and therefore they took fig-leaves (which were possibly the first that came to hand in their troubled state of mind), and covered their shame; for though their members remained the same, they had shame now where they had none before.”

Adam and Eve felt no shame before they sinned as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):**21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Augustine continues, “They experienced a new motion of their flesh, which had become disobedient to them, in strict retribution of their own disobedience to God. For the soul, reveling in its own liberty, and scorning to serve God, was itself deprived of the command it had formerly maintained over the body. And because it had willfully deserted its superior Lord, it no longer held its own inferior servant; neither could it hold the flesh subject, as it would always have been able to do had it remained itself subject to God.”

After having sinned, the eyes of them both were opened as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):7** And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. 8 And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. 9 And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. 11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? 12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. 13 And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

He continues, “**Then began the flesh to lust against the Spirit, (Galatians 5:17) in which strife we are born, deriving from the first transgression a seed of death, and bearing in our members, and in our vitiated nature, the contest or even victory of the flesh.**”

Augustine here describes the Adamic sin nature that we have inherited from Adam. He refers again to **Galatians 5 (KJV):17** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book 1, Chapter 2-4, page 15-16**

#### **Chapter 2 [II.]—If Adam Had Not Sinned, He Would Never Have Died.**

They who say that Adam was so formed that he would even without any demerit of sin have died, not as the penalty of sin, but from the necessity of his being, endeavour indeed to refer that passage in the law, which says: “On the day ye eat thereof ye shall surely die,” (Genesis 2:17) not to the death of the body, **but to that death of the soul which takes place in sin.** It is the unbelievers who have died this death, to whom the Lord pointed when He said, “Let the dead bury their dead.” (Matthew 8:22, Luke 9:60) Now what will be their answer, when we read that God, when reproving and sentencing the first man after his sin, said to him, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return?” (Genesis 3:19) For it was not in respect of his soul that he was “dust,” but clearly by reason of his body, and it was by the death of the self-same body that he was destined to “return to dust.” Still, although it was by reason of his body that he was dust, and although he bare about the natural body in which he was created, he would, if he had not sinned, have been changed into a spiritual body, and would have passed into the incorruptible state, which is promised to the faithful and the saints, without the peril of death. (1 Corinthians 15:52-53) And for this issue we not only are conscious in ourselves of

having an earnest desire, but we learn it from the apostle's intimation, when he says: "For in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven; if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life." (2 Corinthians 5:2-4) Therefore, if Adam had not sinned, he would not have been divested of his body, but would have been clothed upon with immortality and incorruption, that "mortality might have been swallowed up of life;" that is, that he might have passed from the natural body into the spiritual body.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "They who say that Adam was so formed that he would even without any demerit of sin have died, not as the penalty of sin, but from the necessity of his being, endeavour indeed to refer that passage in the law, which says: "On the day ye eat thereof ye shall surely die," (Genesis 2:17) not to the death of the body, **but to that death of the soul which takes place in sin.**"

He refers in context to **Genesis 2 (KJV):16** And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Actually, it was first a spiritual death that man died when he ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and not a death of the soul. And physical death followed "for dust thou art" as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):19** In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

He then argues, "It is the unbelievers who have died this death, to whom the Lord pointed when He said, "Let the dead bury their dead." (Matthew 8:22, Luke 9:60) Now what will be their answer, when we read that God, when reproving and sentencing the first man after his sin, said to him, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return?" (Genesis 3:19)

He refers to **Matthew 8 (KJV):22** But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

And to **Luke 9 (KJV):60** Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

Augustine then continues, "Still, although it was by reason of his body that he was dust, and although he bare about the natural body in which he was created, he would, if he had not sinned, have been changed into a spiritual body, and would have passed into the incorruptible state, which is promised to the faithful and the saints, without the peril of death. (1 Corinthians 15:52-53)"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):44** It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

And to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):52** In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

When Adam and Eve were judged by God, he sent them out of the Garden of Eden as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):21** Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of

skins, and clothed them. 22 And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 23 Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

God did not want Adam to “take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever”, in verse 22, because in his fallen state, he would still have sin. So it is possible that if he had not sinned, he would have taken “of the tree of life”, and eaten, and lived forever.

Now we must understand that man was tested in the Garden of Eden because sin was already in the universe. Satan had already sinned as we read in **Ezekiel 28 (KJV)**: 12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. 13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. 14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

Satan was “the anointed cherub that covereth”, on “the holy mountain of God”. He was a king, who “sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty”. He had “been in Eden the garden of God”, and “every precious stone” was his “covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold.”

And he was perfect in his “ways from the day that” he was created, until “iniquity” was found in him.

We continue to read in **Ezekiel 28 (KJV)**: 16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. 18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. 19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

His fall is also spoken of in **Isaiah 14 (KJV)**: 12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. 16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did



shake kingdoms; 17 That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? 18 All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. 19 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. 20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.

As a result of his sin, the first earth was judged, and became formless and void as we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV)**: 1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

The words “without form and void” in the Hebrew are **תהו ובהו** (pronounced towhoo va-bowhoo), and mean “without form and void”.

The words “and void”, in Hebrew are va-bowhoo, and according to **Strong’s Concordance**, it is “from an unused root (meaning to be empty); a vacuity, i.e. (superficially) an undistinguishable ruin:—emptiness, void.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H922.**

These words are used in **Jeremiah 4 (KJV)**: 23 I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light.

The words “lo, it was without form, and void”, in this verse in Hebrew are **והנה-תהו ובהו** (pronounced veh-he-get-e towhoo va-bowhoo), and mean literally “and see formless and void”.

The Hebrew word **תהו** (pronounced towhoo), is used in one other place in Scripture in **Isaiah 45 (KJV)**: 18 For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.

In the Hebrew, the words translated “not in vain” are **לא-תהו** (pronounced low-towhoo). The word **לא** (pronounced low) in Hebrew means “not”. The Hebrew word **תהו** (pronounced towhoo) means vain, or formless, without form, as we read in Genesis 1:2, and Jeremiah 4:23.

So the Lord did not create the earth in this way, but it became this way when the earth was judged when Satan sinned.

So man was tested in the Garden of Eden because sin was already in the universe. And man gets a second chance because sin was already in the world, while no sin existed when Satan sinned as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV)**: 8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Augustine continues, “And for this issue we not only are conscious in ourselves of having an earnest desire, but we learn it from the apostle’s intimation, when he says: “For in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven; if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life.” (2 Corinthians 5:2-4)”

He refers in context to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV)**: 1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands,

eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: 3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. 4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

And so Augustine concludes, “Therefore, if Adam had not sinned, he would not have been divested of his body, but would have been clothed upon with immortality and incorruption, that “mortality might have been swallowed up of life;” that is, that he might have passed from the natural body into the spiritual body.”

Yes, and man will have access on the new earth to the tree of life as we read in **Revelation 22 (KJV):** 1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Chapter 3 [III.]—It is One Thing to Be Mortal, Another Thing to Be Subject to Death.

Nor was there any reason to fear that if he had happened to live on here longer in his natural body, he would have been oppressed with old age, and have gradually, by increasing age, arrived at death. For if God granted to the clothes and the shoes of the Israelites that “they waxed not old” during so many years, (Deuteronomy 29:5) what wonder if for obedience it had been by the power of the same [God] allowed to man, that although he had a natural and mortal body, he should have in it a certain condition, in which he might grow full of years without decrepitude, and, whenever God pleased, pass from mortality to immortality without the medium of death? For even as this very flesh of ours, which we now possess, is not therefore invulnerable, because it is not necessary that it should be wounded; so also was his not therefore immortal, because there was no necessity for its dying. Such a condition, whilst still in their natural and mortal body, I suppose, was granted even to those who were translated hence without death. (Genesis 5:24, 2 Kings 2:11) For Enoch and Elijah were not reduced to the decrepitude of old age by their long life. But yet I do not believe that they were then changed into that spiritual kind of body, such as is promised in the resurrection, and which the Lord was the first to receive; only they probably do not need those aliments, which by their use minister refreshment to the body; but ever since their translation they so live, as to enjoy such a sufficiency as was provided during the forty days in which Elijah lived on the cruse of water and the cake, without substantial food; (1 Kings 19:8) or else, if there be any need of such sustenance, they are, it may be, sustained in Paradise in some such way as Adam was, before he brought on himself expulsion therefrom by sinning. And he, as I suppose, was supplied with sustenance against decay from the fruit of the various trees, and from the tree of life with security against old age.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Nor was there any reason to fear that if he had happened to live on here longer in his natural body, he would have been oppressed with old age, and have gradually, by increasing age, arrived at death. For if God granted to the clothes and the shoes of the Israelites that “they waxed not old” during so many years, (Deuteronomy 29:5) what wonder if for obedience it had been by the power of the same [God] allowed to man, that

although he had a natural and mortal body, he should have in it a certain condition, in which he might grow full of years without decrepitude, and, whenever God pleased, pass from mortality to immortality without the medium of death?"

He refers to **Deuteronomy 29 (KJV):5** And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot.

But death was necessary in order for Jesus to save us, as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):8** But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

And without the shedding of blood there is no remission as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):22** And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. 23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

He continues, "For even as this very flesh of ours, which we now possess, is not therefore invulnerable, because it is not necessary that it should be wounded; so also was his not therefore immortal, because there was no necessity for its dying. Such a condition, whilst still in their natural and mortal body, I suppose, was granted even to those who were translated hence without death. (Genesis 5:24, 2 Kings 2:11)"

He refers to **Genesis 5 (KJV):24** And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

And to **2 Kings 2 (KJV):11** And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

He continues, "For Enoch and Elijah were not reduced to the decrepitude of old age by their long life. But yet I do not believe that they were then changed into that spiritual kind of body, such as is promised in the resurrection, and which the Lord was the first to receive; only they probably do not need those aliments, which by their use minister refreshment to the body; but ever since their translation they so live, as to enjoy such a sufficiency as was provided during the forty days in which Elijah lived on the cruse of water and the cake, without substantial food; (1 Kings 19:8) or else, if there be any need of such sustenance, they are, it may be, sustained in Paradise in some such way as Adam was, before he brought on himself expulsion therefrom by sinning. And he, as I suppose, was supplied with sustenance against decay from the fruit of the various trees, and from the tree of life with security against old age."

He refers in context to **1 Kings 19 (KJV):5** And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. 6 And he looked, and,

behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again. 7 And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. 8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

In the Garden of Eden God planted trees as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):**8 And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

And Adam was only prohibited from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):**16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Chapter 4 [IV.]—Even Bodily Death is from Sin.

But in addition to the passage where God in punishment said, “Dust thou art, unto dust shalt thou return,” (Genesis 3:19)—a passage which I cannot understand how anyone can apply except to the death of the body,—there are other testimonies likewise, from which it most fully appears that by reason of sin the human race has brought upon itself not spiritual death merely, but the death of the body also. The apostle says to the Romans: “But if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. If therefore the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” (Romans 8:10-11) I think that so clear and open a sentence as this only requires to be read, and not expounded. The body, says he, is dead, not because of earthly frailty, as being made of the dust of the ground, but because of sin; what more do we want? And he is most careful in his words: he does not say “is mortal,” but “dead.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But in addition to the passage where God in punishment said, “Dust thou art, unto dust shalt thou return,” (Genesis 3:19)—a passage which I cannot understand how anyone can apply except to the death of the body,—there are other testimonies likewise, from which it most fully appears that by reason of sin the human race has brought upon itself not spiritual death merely, but the death of the body also.”

He refers to **Genesis 3 (KJV):**19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Spiritual death is revealed in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):**1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

He continues, “The apostle says to the Romans: “But if Christ be in you, the body is dead

because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. If therefore the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” (Romans 8:10-11) I think that so clear and open a sentence as this only requires to be read, and not expounded. The body, says he, is dead, not because of earthly frailty, as being made of the dust of the ground, but because of sin; what more do we want? And he is most careful in his words: he does not say “is mortal,” but “dead.”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):10** And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

We can agree with Augustine here.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book 1, Chapters 7-16, page 17-18**

Chapter 7 [VII.]—The Life of the Body the Object of Hope, the Life of the Spirit Being a Prelude to It.

Although I am much afraid that so clear a matter may rather be obscured by exposition, I must yet request your attention to the luminous statement of the apostle. “But if Christ,” says he, “be in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” (Romans 8:10) Now this is said, that men may not suppose that they derive no benefit, or but scant benefit, from the grace of Christ, seeing that they must needs die in the body. For they are bound to remember that, although their body still bears that desert of sin, which is irrevocably bound to the condition of death, **yet their spirit has already begun to live because of the righteousness of faith, although it had actually become extinct by the death, as it were, of unbelief.** No small gift, therefore, he says, must you suppose to have been conferred upon you, by the circumstance that Christ is in you; inasmuch as in the body, which is dead because of sin, your spirit is even now alive because of righteousness; so that therefore you should not despair of the life even of your body. “For if the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” (Romans 8:11) How is it that fumes of controversy still darken so clear a light? The apostle distinctly tells you, that although the body is dead because of sin within you, yet even your mortal bodies shall be made alive because of righteousness, **because of which even now your spirit is life,**—the whole of which process is to be perfected by the grace of Christ, that is, by His Spirit dwelling in you: and men still contradict! He goes on to tell us how it comes to pass that life converts death into itself by mortifying it. “Therefore, brethren,” says he, “we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh; for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live.” (Romans 8:12-13) What else does this mean but this: If ye live according to death, ye shall wholly die; but if by living according to life ye mortify death, ye shall wholly live?



**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Although I am much afraid that so clear a matter may rather be obscured by exposition, I must yet request your attention to the luminous statement of the apostle. “But if Christ,” says he, “be in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” (Romans 8:10)”

He refers in context to **Romans 8 (KJV):10** And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Now he continues, “Now this is said, that men may not suppose that they derive no benefit, or but scant benefit, from the grace of Christ, seeing that they must needs die in the body. For they are bound to remember that, although their body still bears that desert of sin, which is irrevocably bound to the condition of death, **yet their spirit has already begun to live because of the righteousness of faith, although it had actually become extinct by the death, as it were, of unbelief.**”

Augustine has stated correctly here that **“their spirit has already begun to live because of the righteousness of faith”**, for this is what happens when we are born of the Spirit as Jesus said in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

We continue, as he says, **“No small gift, therefore, he says, must you suppose to have been conferred upon you, by the circumstance that Christ is in you; inasmuch as in the body, which is dead because of sin, your spirit is even now alive because of righteousness;”**

Christ is in us as we read in Romans 8:10 above. Indeed, as believers, our spirits are alive because of righteousness. He continues, **“so that therefore you should not despair of the life even of your body. “For if the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” (Romans 8:11)** How is it that fumes of controversy still darken so clear a light? The apostle distinctly tells you, that although the body is dead because of sin within you, yet even your mortal bodies shall be made alive because of righteousness, **because of which even now your spirit is life**,—the whole of which process is to be perfected by the grace of Christ, that is, by His Spirit dwelling in you: and men still contradict!”

But let us read the two verses again together, as in **Romans 8 (KJV):10** And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Reading the two verses together, we see that in verse 10, he does not say that our “spirit is life”, but the Spirit, that is the Holy Spirit, is life because of righteousness. That is, the Holy Spirit is the life of our spirits, when we are born again. This is also confirmed in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

We see clearly here that the “law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” refers to the life of the Holy Spirit that was given to our spirits when we were born of the Spirit, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Augustine then continues, “He goes on to tell us how it comes to pass that life converts death into itself by mortifying it. “Therefore, brethren,” says he, “we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh; for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live.” (Romans 8:12-13)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):12** Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

When he says “that life converts death into itself by mortifying it”, he makes it sound as if we are becoming more and more alive. The word “mortify” means “to put to death”. We do not mortify death. We mortify the “deeds of the flesh” as he has quoted, or “the deeds of the body” as we read in the **King James Version** in verse 13 above.

Augustine concludes, “What else does this mean but this: If ye live according to death, ye shall wholly die; but if by living according to life ye mortify death, ye shall wholly live?”

If we, after we have been born again, live after the flesh, we will come under the chastening of the Lord, who is a good, good, Father. If we continue this way, we could suffer death just as the Corinthians did in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):28** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

But if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live, and that abundantly as in **John 10 (KJV):10** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Once we have been born again, we have eternal life. We will not “wholly die” if we then live still in the deeds of the flesh, but we will be saved “as by fire” because of our bad choices, being “chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world”, as in verse 32.

## Chapter 8 [VIII.]—Bodily Death from Adam’s Sin.

When to the like purport he says: “By man came death, by man also the resurrection of the dead,” (1 Corinthians 15:21) in what other sense can the passage be understood than of the death of the body; for having in view the mention of this, he proceeded to speak of the resurrection of the body, and affirmed it in a most earnest and solemn discourse? In these words, addressed to the Corinthians: “By man came death, and by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,” (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)—what other meaning is indeed conveyed than in the verse in which he says to the Romans, “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin?” (Romans 5:12) Now they will have it, that the death here meant is the death, not of the body, but of the soul, on the pretense that another thing is spoken of to the Corinthians, where they are quite unable to understand the death of the soul, because the subject there treated is the resurrection of the body, which is the antithesis of the death of the body. **The reason, moreover, why only death is here mentioned as caused by man, and not sin also, is because the point of the discourse is not about righteousness, which is the antithesis of sin, but about the resurrection of the body, which**

is contrasted with the death of the body.

**Commentary:** In summary, we can agree with Augustine here. He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):21** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

And to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

But spiritual death is also in view here, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience...

Chapter 9 [IX.]—Sin Passes on to All Men by Natural Descent, and Not Merely by Imitation.

You tell me in your letter, that they endeavour to twist into some new sense the passage of the apostle, in which he says: “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; (Romans 5:12) yet you have not informed me what they suppose to be the meaning of these words. But so far as I have discovered from others, they think that the death which is here mentioned is not the death of the body, which they will not allow Adam to have deserved by his sin, but that of the soul, which takes place in actual sin; and that this actual sin has not been transmitted from the first man to other persons by natural descent, but by imitation. Hence, likewise, they refuse to believe that in infants original sin is remitted through baptism, for they contend that no such original sin exists at all in people by their birth. But if the apostle had wished to assert that sin entered into the world, not by natural descent, but by imitation, he would have mentioned as the first offender, not Adam indeed, but the devil, of whom it is written, (1 John 3:8) that “he sinneth from the beginning;” of whom also we read in the Book of Wisdom: “Nevertheless through the devil’s envy death entered into the world.” (Wisdom 2:24) Now, forasmuch as this death came upon men from the devil, not because they were propagated by him, but because they imitated his example, it is immediately added: “And they that do hold of his side do imitate him.” Accordingly, the apostle, when mentioning sin and death together, which had passed by natural descent from one upon all men, set him down as the introducer thereof from whom the propagation of the human race took its beginning.

**Commentary:** In summary, we can agree with Augustine here. Clearly the Pelagians are in error. He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

And we see that it was by Adam’s sin that sin entered into the world, and death by sin. This is confirmed as we read also in **Romans 5 (KJV):19** For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

He refers also to **Wisdom 2 (KJV):24** Nevertheless through envy of the devil came death into the world: and they that do hold of his side do find it.

And to **1 John 3 (KJV):8** He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

## Chapter 10.—The Analogy of Grace.

No doubt all they imitate Adam who by disobedience transgress the commandment of God; but he is one thing as an example to those who sin because they choose; and another thing as the progenitor of all who are born with sin. All His saints, also, imitate Christ in the pursuit of righteousness; whence the same apostle, whom we have already quoted, says: “Be ye imitators of me, as I am also of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1) But besides this imitation, His grace works within us our illumination and justification, by that operation concerning which the same preacher of His [name] says: “Neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.” (1 Corinthians 3:7) For by this grace He engrafts into His body even baptized infants, who certainly have not yet become able to imitate anyone. As therefore He, in whom all are made alive, besides offering Himself as an example of righteousness to those who imitate Him, gives also to those who believe on Him the hidden grace of His Spirit, which He secretly infuses even into infants; so likewise he, in whom all die, besides being an example for imitation to those who willfully transgress the commandment of the Lord, depraved also in his own person all who come of his stock by the hidden corruption of his own carnal concupiscence. It is entirely on this account, and for no other reason, that the apostle says: “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so passed upon all men; in which all have sinned.” (Romans 5:12) Now if I were to say this, they would raise an objection, and loudly insist that I was incorrect both in expression and sense; for they would perceive no sense in these words when spoken by an ordinary man, except that sense which they refuse to see in the apostle. Since, however, these are the words of him to whose authority and doctrine they submit, they charge us with slowness of understanding, while they endeavour to wrest to some unintelligible sense, words which were written in a clear and obvious purport. “By one man,” says he, “sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” This indicates propagation, not imitation; for if imitation were meant, he would have said, “By the devil.” But as no one doubts, he refers to that first man who is called Adam: “And so,” says he, “it passed upon all men.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “No doubt all they imitate Adam who by disobedience transgress the commandment of God; but he is one thing as an example to those who sin because they choose; and another thing as the progenitor of all who are born with sin.”

He continues as he says, “All His saints, also, imitate Christ in the pursuit of righteousness; whence the same apostle, whom we have already quoted, says: “Be ye imitators of me, as I am also of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1)”

And he refers to **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):1** Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

And he continues, “But besides this imitation, His grace works within us our illumination and justification, by that operation concerning which the same preacher of His [name] says: “Neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.” (1 Corinthians 3:7)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):7** So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

So God's grace "works within us our illumination and justification", giving us increase.

And he continues, "For by this grace He engrafts into His body even baptized infants, who certainly have not yet become able to imitate anyone. **As therefore He, in whom all are made alive, besides offering Himself as an example of righteousness to those who imitate Him, gives also to those who believe on Him the hidden grace of His Spirit, which He secretly infuses even into infants;**"

It is interesting how he speaks of grace here. God, he says, **"gives also to those who believe on Him the hidden grace of His Spirit, which He secretly infuses even into infants;"**

It's almost as if he is saying that we have a hidden bag, or a hidden account, of the **"grace of His Spirit"** somewhere, when what actually happened was that our spirit was given life by the Holy Spirit when we were born again.

He then continues, "so likewise he, in whom all die, besides being an example for imitation to those who willfully transgress the commandment of the Lord, depraved also in his own person all who come of his stock by the hidden corruption of his own carnal concupiscence."

Augustine is speaking of Adam, as he refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

But Augustine makes all sex, even in marriage, to be "carnal concupiscence", or we could say carnal lust. But the bed is undefiled in marriage as we read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):4** Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Sex outside of marriage will be judged by God.

He continues, "It is entirely on this account, and for no other reason, that the apostle says: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so passed upon all men; in which all have sinned." (Romans 5:12)"

He refers again to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

And he concludes, "Now if I were to say this, they would raise an objection, and loudly insist that I was incorrect both in expression and sense; for they would perceive no sense in these words when spoken by an ordinary man, except that sense which they refuse to see in the apostle. Since, however, these are the words of him to whose authority and doctrine they submit, they charge us with slowness of understanding, while they endeavour to wrest to some unintelligible sense, words which were written in a clear and obvious purport. "By one man," says he, "sin entered into the world, and death by sin." This indicates propagation, not imitation; for if imitation were meant, he would have said, "By the devil." But as no one doubts, he refers to that first man who is called Adam: "And so," says he, "it passed upon all men.""

Augustine could have simply ended the argument by quoting **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

We were all "dead" in our "trespasses and sins", and "by nature children of wrath, even as the rest".



## Chapter 11 [X.]—Distinction Between Actual and Original Sin.

Again, in the clause which follows, “In which all have sinned,” how cautiously, rightly, and unambiguously is the statement expressed! For if you understand that sin to be meant which by one man entered into the world, “In which [sin] all have sinned,” it is surely clear enough, that the sins which are peculiar to every man, which they themselves commit and which belong simply to them, mean one thing; and that the one sin, in and by which all have sinned, means another thing; since all were that one man. **If, however, it be not the sin, but that one man that is understood, “In which [one man] all have sinned,” what again can be plainer than even this clear statement? We read, indeed, of those being justified in Christ who believe in Him, by reason of the secret communion and inspiration of that spiritual grace which makes every one who cleaves to the Lord “one spirit” with Him, (1 Corinthians 6:17) although His saints also imitate His example; can I find, however, any similar statement made of those who have imitated His saints? Can any man be said to be justified in Paul or in Peter, or in any one whatever of those excellent men whose authority stands high among the people of God? We are no doubt said to be blessed in Abraham, according to the passage in which it was said to him, “In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Galatians 3:8, Genesis 12:3, 18:18, 22:18)—for Christ’s sake, who is his seed according to the flesh; which is still more clearly expressed in the parallel passage: “In thy seed shall all nations be blessed.” I do not believe that any one can find it anywhere stated in the Holy Scriptures, that a man has ever sinned or still sins “in the devil,” although all wicked and impious men “imitate” him. The apostle, however, has declared concerning the first man, that “in him all have sinned;” (Romans 5:12) and yet there is still a contest about the propagation of sin, and men oppose to it I know not what nebulous theory of “imitation.”**

**Commentary:** Augustine continues his argument that Adam contaminated the whole human race with sin. He argues that it is not just that Adam sinned, and then those who come after him imitate his sin, or that they follow that path that he took to sin.

He begins as he says, “Again, in the clause which follows, “In which all have sinned,” how cautiously, rightly, and unambiguously is the statement expressed! For if you understand that sin to be meant which by one man entered into the world, “In which [sin] all have sinned,” it is surely clear enough, that the sins which are peculiar to every man, which they themselves commit and which belong simply to them, mean one thing; and that the one sin, in and by which all have sinned, means another thing; since all were that one man.”

He is referring again to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

But he is also referring to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Adam was the federal head of the human race. He alone, without sin, in innocence possessed the freedom to obey God or not to obey God. And now we, being his descendants, have a sin nature in our flesh as a result. So by Adam, sin entered into the world, and we are by nature children of wrath, even as others, because in Adam all die.

Augustine then argues, **“If, however, it be not the sin, but that one man that is understood,**

“In which [one man] all have sinned,” what again can be plainer than even this clear statement? We read, indeed, of those being justified in Christ who believe in Him, by reason of the secret communion and inspiration of that spiritual grace which makes every one who cleaves to the Lord “one spirit” with Him, (1 Corinthians 6:17) although His saints also imitate His example; can I find, however, any similar statement made of those who have imitated His saints?”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):17** But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

But the Scripture here says “he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit”. When Augustine says, “those being justified in Christ who believe in Him, by reason of the secret communion and inspiration of that spiritual grace which makes every one who cleaves to the Lord “one spirit” with Him”, he makes our justification dependent on “the secret communion and inspiration of that spiritual grace which makes every one who cleaves to the Lord “one spirit” with Him”. He implies that one could lose “that spiritual grace” by not cleaving to the Lord. This is a very subtle assertion that makes our salvation dependent on us. We are joined to the Lord when we are born again by faith in Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures are clear. By one man sin entered the world of mankind, and death by sin. Death has passed upon all men, for all have sinned. In Adam all die, but in Christ shall all be made alive. Those who are in Christ are joined unto the Lord in one spirit.

But the Scriptures are also clear that we are not “being justified in Christ who believe in Him”, as if it were ongoing, and as the **King James Version** reads in **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

It also reads similarly in **Romans 5 (Douay Rheims):1** Being justified therefore by faith, let us have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Instead, it should read that we “have been justified”, which is according to the literal Greek text, and as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...

The word “peace” in the Greek means “to be set at one with”. Now when Augustine says that this justification is “by reason of the secret communion and inspiration of that spiritual grace which makes every one who cleaves to the Lord “one spirit” with Him”, he makes it sound like a “spiritual grace” has been put down to our account when we are “being justified”. But we must understand that the righteousness of God has been put down to our account when we are justified as we read again in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; **22** Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

The righteousness of God has been imputed to us when we believe, as we read also that it was of Abraham in **Romans 4 (KJV):20** He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; **21** And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. **22** And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. **23** Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; **24** But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; **25** Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

To “impute” means to reckon, to count, to put down to one’s account. So it is not just a “spiritual grace” that is inspired in us, but the righteousness of God is put down to our account which gives us a standing with God as righteous ones. This what it means to be justified.

And in the previous Chapter 10, we read that Augustine said that God “gives also to those who believe on Him the hidden grace of His Spirit, which He secretly infuses even into infants;”

He makes it sound like this grace could leak out at some point because he does not acknowledge any real changes in the person who believes, or their standing with God. A real change in one who has been born again is a new divine nature in our spirits, and also eternal life in our spirits, as a result of being born again of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God gave birth to our spirits when we were born again. Then the righteousness of God has been put down to our account as a result of God justifying us. We are not being justified, but we have been justified. Thus we are secure in Him.

Augustine then continues, “Can any man be said to be justified in Paul or in Peter, or in any one whatever of those excellent men whose authority stands high among the people of God? We are no doubt said to be blessed in Abraham, according to the passage in which it was said to him, “In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Galatians 3:8, Genesis 12:3, 18:18, 22:18)—for Christ’s sake, who is his seed according to the flesh; which is still more clearly expressed in the parallel passage: “In thy seed shall all nations be blessed.” I do not believe that any one can find it anywhere stated in the Holy Scriptures, that a man has ever sinned or still sins “in the devil,” although all wicked and impious men “imitate” him. The apostle, however, has declared concerning the first man, that “in him all have sinned;” (Romans 5:12) and yet there is still a contest about the propagation of sin, and men oppose to it I know not what nebulous theory of “imitation.”

We can agree with Augustine that men and women have a sin nature that they inherited from Adam. So all are guilty of sin as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):19** Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

And in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Now when he said above, “In thee shall all nations be blessed”, he refers to **Galatians 3 (KJV):8** And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

And to **Genesis 12 (KJV):3** And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

And to **Genesis 18 (KJV):18** Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

And to **Genesis 22 (KJV):18** And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Augustine is right to refute the “nebulous theory of “imitation.”” In Adam all die.

## Chapter 12.—The Law Could Not Take Away Sin.

Observe also what follows. Having said, “In which all have sinned,” he at once added, “For until the law, sin was in the world.” (Romans 5:13) This means that sin could not be taken away even by the law, which entered that sin might the more abound, (Romans 5:20) whether it be the law of nature, under which every man when arrived at years of discretion only proceeds to add his own sins to original sin, or that very law which Moses gave to the people. “For if

there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. (Galatians 3:21-22) But sin is not imputed where there is no law.” (Romans 5:13) Now what means the phrase “is not imputed,” but “is ignored,” or “is not reckoned as sin?” Although the Lord God does not Himself regard it as if it had never been, since it is written: “As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law.” (Romans 2:12)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Observe also what follows. Having said, “In which all have sinned,” he at once added, “For until the law, sin was in the world.” (Romans 5:13)

He refers in context to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: 13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

He then continues, “This means that sin could not be taken away even by the law, which entered that sin might the more abound, (Romans 5:20) whether it be the law of nature, under which every man when arrived at years of discretion only proceeds to add his own sins to original sin, or that very law which Moses gave to the people.

And he refers here to **Romans 5 (KJV):20** Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

He then continues, ““For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. (Galatians 3:21-22)”

And he refers in context to **Galatians 3 (KJV):21** Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

He then continues, “But sin is not imputed where there is no law.” (Romans 5:13) Now what means the phrase “is not imputed,” but “is ignored,” or “is not reckoned as sin?” Although the Lord God does not Himself regard it as if it had never been, since it is written: “As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law.” (Romans 2:12)”

And he refers to **Romans 2 (KJV):12** For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; 13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

So what Augustine has proven by the Scriptures is that the whole human race is dead because of sin, and must have faith in Jesus Christ to be born again, or perish.

## Chapter 13 [XI.]—Meaning of the Apostle’s Phrase “The Reign of Death.”

“Nevertheless,” says he, “death reigned from Adam even unto Moses,” (Romans 5:14—that is to say, from the first man even to the very law which was promulgated by the divine authority, because even it was unable to abolish the reign of death. Now death must be understood “to reign,” whenever the guilt of sin so dominates in men that it prevents their attainment of that eternal life which is the only true life, and drags them down even to the

second death which is penally eternal. This reign of death is only destroyed in any man by the Saviour's grace, which wrought even in the saints of the olden time, all of whom, though previous to the coming of Christ in the flesh, yet lived in relation to His assisting grace, not to the letter of the law, which only knew how to command, but not to help them. In the Old Testament, indeed, that was hidden (conformably to the perfectly just dispensation of the times) which is now revealed in the New Testament. Therefore "death reigned from Adam unto Moses," in all who were not assisted by the grace of Christ, that in them the kingdom of death might be destroyed, "even in those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," (Romans 5:14) that is, who had not yet sinned of their own individual will, as Adam did, but had drawn from him original sin, "who is the figure of him that was to come," (Romans 5:14) because in him was constituted the form of condemnation to his future progeny, who should spring from him by natural descent; so that from one all men were born to a condemnation, from which there is no deliverance but in the Saviour's grace. I am quite aware, indeed, that several Latin copies of the Scriptures read the passage thus: "Death reigned from Adam to Moses over them who have sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression: (Romans 5:14) but even this version is referred by those who so read it to the very same purport, for they understood those who have sinned in him to have sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; so that they are created in his likeness, not only as men born of a man, but as sinners born of a sinner, dying ones of a dying one, and condemned ones to a condemned one. However, the Greek copies from which the Latin version was made, have all, without exception or nearly so, the reading which I first adduced.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "'Nevertheless," says he, "death reigned from Adam even unto Moses," (Romans 5:14—that is to say, from the first man even to the very law which was promulgated by the divine authority, because even it was unable to abolish the reign of death."

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):14** Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

He continues, "Now death must be understood "to reign," whenever the guilt of sin so dominates in men that it prevents their attainment of that eternal life which is the only true life, and drags them down even to the second death which is penally eternal. This reign of death is only destroyed in any man by the Saviour's grace, which wrought even in the saints of the olden time, all of whom, though previous to the coming of Christ in the flesh, yet lived in relation to His assisting grace, not to the letter of the law, which only knew how to command, but not to help them."

The law cannot give us life as we read before in **Galatians 3 (KJV):21** Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

The law could not give the Old Testament saints life either. They believed in the one who was to come, and were born again. This is what Jesus taught Nicodemus in **John 3 (KJV):7** Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth,



and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Jesus expected Nicodemus to know these things, even before He had died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. To be born again has been a requirement in every age.

Augustine continues, “In the Old Testament, indeed, that was hidden (conformably to the perfectly just dispensation of the times) which is now revealed in the New Testament. Therefore “death reigned from Adam unto Moses,” in all who were not assisted by the grace of Christ, that in them the kingdom of death might be destroyed, “even in those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression,” (Romans 5:14) that is, who had not yet sinned of their own individual will, as Adam did, but had drawn from him original sin, “who is the figure of him that was to come,” (Romans 5:14) because in him was constituted the form of condemnation to his future progeny, who should spring from him by natural descent; so that from one all men were born to a condemnation, from which there is no deliverance but in the Saviour’s grace.”

This grace is the same as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Augustine concludes, “I am quite aware, indeed, that several Latin copies of the Scriptures read the passage thus: “Death reigned from Adam to Moses over them who have sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression: (Romans 5:14) but even this version is referred by those who so read it to the very same purport, for they understood those who have sinned in him to have sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression; so that they are created in his likeness, not only as men born of a man, but as sinners born of a sinner, dying ones of a dying one, and condemned ones to a condemned one. However, the Greek copies from which the Latin version was made, have all, without exception or nearly so, the reading which I first adduced.”

And he is correct. The Greek copies read as we have quoted above, as in **Romans 5 (KJV):14** Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

#### Chapter 14.—Superabundance of Grace.

“But,” says he, “not as the offence so also is the free gift. For if, through the offence of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by One Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” (Romans 5:15) Not many more, that is, many more men, for there are not more persons justified than condemned; but it runs, much more hath abounded; inasmuch as, while Adam produced sinners from his one sin, Christ has by His grace procured free forgiveness even for the sins which men have of their own accord added by actual transgression to the original sin in which they were born. This he states more clearly still in the sequel.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““But,” says he, “not as the offence so also is

the free gift. For if, through the offence of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by One Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” (Romans 5:15)”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):15** But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

And we can agree with Augustine as he then explains, “Not many more, that is, many more men, for there are not more persons justified than condemned; but it runs, much more hath abounded; inasmuch as, while Adam produced sinners from his one sin, Christ has by His grace procured free forgiveness even for the sins which men have of their own accord added by actual transgression to the original sin in which they were born. This he states more clearly still in the sequel.”

## Chapter 15 [XII.]—The One Sin Common to All Men.

But observe more attentively what he says, that “through the offence of one, many are dead.” For why should it be on account of the sin of one, and not rather on account of their own sins, if this passage is to be understood of imitation, and not of propagation? But mark what follows: “And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the grace is of many offences unto justification.” (Romans 5:16) Now let them tell us, where there is room in these words for imitation. “By one,” says he, “to condemnation.” By one what except one sin? This, indeed, he clearly implies in the words which he adds: “But the grace is of many offences unto justification.” Why, indeed, is the judgment from one offence to condemnation, while the grace is from many offences to justification? If original sin is a nullity, would it not follow, that not only grace withdraws men from many offences to justification, but judgment leads them to condemnation from many offences likewise? For assuredly grace does not condone many offences, without judgment in like manner having many offences to condemn. Else, if men are involved in condemnation because of one offence, on the ground that all the offences which are condemned were committed in imitation of that one offence; there is the same reason why men should also be regarded as withdrawn from one offence unto justification, inasmuch as all the offences which are remitted to the justified were committed in imitation of that one offence. But this most certainly was not the apostle’s meaning, when he said: “The judgment, indeed, was from one offence unto condemnation, but the grace was from many offences unto justification.” We on our side, indeed, can understand the apostle, and see that judgment is predicated of one offence unto condemnation entirely on the ground that, even if there were in men nothing but original sin, it would be sufficient for their condemnation. For however much heavier will be their condemnation who have added their own sins to the original offence (and it will be the more severe in individual cases, in proportion to the sins of individuals); still, even that sin alone which was originally derived unto men not only excludes from the kingdom of God, which infants are unable to enter (as they themselves allow), unless they have received the grace of Christ before they die, but also alienates from salvation and everlasting life, which cannot be anything else than the kingdom of God, to which fellowship with Christ alone introduces us.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But observe more attentively what he says, that “through the offence of one, many are dead.” For why should it be on account of the sin of one, and not rather on account of their own sins, if this passage is to be understood of imitation, and not of propagation? But mark what follows: “And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the grace is of many offences unto justification.” (Romans 5:16)”

Augustine argues well, as he refers to **Romans 5 (Douay Rheims):15** But not as the offence, so also the gift. For if by the offence of one, many died: much more the grace of God and the gift, by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16 And not as it was by one sin, so also is the gift. For judgment indeed was by one unto condemnation: but grace is of many offences unto justification.

And this agrees with Jesus’ words in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Augustine then continues, as he argues, “But mark what follows: “And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the grace is of many offences unto justification.” (Romans 5:16) Now let them tell us, where there is room in these words for imitation. “By one,” says he, “to condemnation.” By one what except one sin? This, indeed, he clearly implies in the words which he adds: “But the grace is of many offences unto justification.” Why, indeed, is the judgment from one offence to condemnation, while the grace is from many offences to justification?”

He refers again in context to **Romans 5 (Douay Rheims):15** But not as the offence, so also the gift. For if by the offence of one, many died: much more the grace of God and the gift, by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16 And not as it was by one sin, so also is the gift. For judgment indeed was by one unto condemnation: but grace is of many offences unto justification. 17 For if by one man's offence death reigned through one; much more they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift and of justice shall reign in life through one, Jesus Christ.

Now let us compare this translation with **Romans 5 (KJV):15** But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. 17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

In verse 15 both translations refer to the gift. In **Douay Rheims** we read that “the gift, by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many”. The **King James Version** is similar, “the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many”.

In verse 15, where the Douay Rheims has translated, “But not as the offence, so also the gift”, the word in the Greek translated “gift” is **δῶρημα** (pronounced dō'-rā-mä), “from G1433; a bestowment:—gift.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1434.**

Both translations have “gift” here. Then in verse 15, where the **Douay Rheims** has translated, “much more the grace of God and the gift, by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ,

hath abounded unto many”, the Greek word for “gift” is **δωρεά** (pronounced dō-re-ä'), “from G1435; a gratuity:—gift.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1431.** The **King James Version** has translated “much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.”

The Greek word for “grace” in both instances in verse 15 is **χάρις** (pronounced khä'-rēs), “from G5463; graciousness (as gratifying), of manner or act (abstract or concrete; literal, figurative or spiritual; especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude):—acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, grace(-ious), joy, liberality, pleasure, thank(-s, -worthy).” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5485.**

Both translations translate the same Greek word as “grace” in verse 15. Now in verse 16, The **Douay Rheims** has translated, “And not as it was by one sin, so also is the gift”. The word “gift” in the Greek here is again **δῶρημα** (pronounced dō'-rā-mä), the same as in verse 15.

The **King James Version** also has translated it as gift, as “And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift”.

In verse 16, we first read in **Douay Rheims**, “And not as it was by one sin, so also is the gift”, and in the **King James Version** we read, “And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift:”. Both are similar.

But we then read in **Douay Rheims**, “For judgment indeed was by one unto condemnation: but grace is of many offences unto justification”, and in the **King James Version** we read, “for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.”

So in **Douay Rheims** “grace is of many offences unto justification”, whereas in the **King James Version** “the free gift is of many offences unto justification.”

The word translated “grace” in the **Douay Rheims** in the Greek is **χάρισμα** (pronounced khä'-rē-smä), “from G5483; a (divine) gratuity, i.e. deliverance (from danger or passion); (specially), a (spiritual) endowment, i.e. (subjectively) religious qualification, or (objectively) miraculous faculty:—(free) gift. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5486.**

The **King James Version** has it translated as, “for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.”

The translation as “grace” in the **Douay Rheims** version seems to obscure the meaning of the what the gift is.

Then in verse 17, we first read in **Douay Rheims**, “For if by one man's offence death reigned through one;”. In **King James Version** we first read “For if by one man's offence death reigned by one;” The two translations are equal.

But we then read in **Douay Rheims**, “much more they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift and of justice shall reign in life through one, Jesus Christ.”

But we then read in **King James Version**, “much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)”

The **Douay Rheims** makes it unclear exactly what the “gift” is that both translations refer to in verse 15. Let us read the verse as an interlinear translation, below.

εἰ γὰρ	τῷ	τοῦ	ἐνὸς	παραπτώματι	ὁ	θάνατος	ἐβασίλευσεν
if for	(for if)	by the	of the	one man	offence	the death	reigned
διὰ	τοῦ ἐνὸς,	πολλῷ	μᾶλλον	οἱ	τὴν περισσεῖαν	τῆς χάριτος	καὶ

through the one by much more the ones the abundance of the grace and  
τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης λαμβάνοντες ἐν ζωῇ βασιλεύσουσιν  
of the gift of the righteousness receiving in life will reign  
διὰ τοῦ ἐνὸς Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ  
through the one man Jesus Christ.

**The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, Marshall's literal English translation with the Nestle Greek text, page 618, third edition 1974.**

The literal Greek translations make it clear that the gift of righteousness is the gift that is mentioned in verse 15. It is important to note this difference in the understanding of what the gift is here. In Augustine's time, the Catholic Church did not understand the birth of the Spirit of God, which believers experience when they are born again. They thought it was grace that was infused into the believer when they were baptized. This understanding made it easier to believe that one could lose their salvation if they lost grace by committing a damnable, or mortal, sin. But grace is not the gift we receive. We receive the gift of righteousness by grace. When we understand that it is God's righteousness that is put down to our account, who is there to condemn us as Paul asks in **Romans 8 (KJV):33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Augustine continues, as he then argues, "If original sin is a nullity, would it not follow, that not only grace withdraws men from many offences to justification, but judgment leads them to condemnation from many offences likewise? For assuredly grace does not condone many offences, without judgment in like manner having many offences to condemn. Else, if men are involved in condemnation because of one offence, on the ground that all the offences which are condemned were committed in imitation of that one offence; there is the same reason why men should also be regarded as withdrawn from one offence unto justification, inasmuch as all the offences which are remitted to the justified were committed in imitation of that one offence. But this most certainly was not the apostle's meaning, when he said: "The judgment, indeed, was from one offence unto condemnation, but the grace was from many offences unto justification."

We have to conclude with Augustine that the one offence gave to the whole human race original sin. He has argued well here.

He continues, as he explains, "We on our side, indeed, can understand the apostle, and see that judgment is predicated of one offence unto condemnation entirely on the ground that, even if there were in men nothing but original sin, it would be sufficient for their condemnation. For however much heavier will be their condemnation who have added their own sins to the original offence (and it will be the more severe in individual cases, in proportion to the sins of individuals); still, even that sin alone which was originally derived unto men not only excludes from the kingdom of God, which infants are unable to enter (as they themselves allow), unless they have received the grace of Christ before they die, but also alienates from salvation and everlasting life, which cannot be anything else than the kingdom of God, to which fellowship with Christ alone introduces us."



When he speaks of infants who “are unable to enter (as they themselves allow), unless they have received the grace of Christ before they die”, the Scriptures do not speak in this way of “grace”. Grace is not something we receive, but it is by grace that we receive faith, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

And we understand then that it is by grace that we receive Him as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

But Augustine is correct as he speaks of original sin, and that it holds us in a place of condemnation, and destined to perish. And this is why Christ came into the world as we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. 21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Chapter 16 [XIII.]—How Death is by One and Life by One.

And from this we gather that we have derived from Adam, in whom we all have sinned, not all our actual sins, but only original sin; whereas from Christ, in whom we are all justified, we obtain the remission not merely of that original sin, but of the rest of our sins also, which we have added. Hence it runs: “Not as by the one that sinned, so also is the free gift.” For the judgment, certainly, from one sin, if it is not remitted—and that the original sin—is capable of drawing us into condemnation; whilst grace conducts us to justification from the remission of many sins,—that is to say, not simply from the original sin, but from all others also whatsoever.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine has well spoken as he summarizes that original sin derives from Adam, “in whom we all have sinned, not all our actual sins, but only original sin”.

He refers again to **Romans 5 (KJV):15** But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

Original sin has not drawn us into condemnation, but it is the cause of our condemnation. We stand condemned until we believe in Jesus Christ as we read in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

## Original Sin

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On Original Sin, Book II, Chapter 6, page 239**

## Chapter 6 [VI.]—Cœlestius the Disciple is In This Work Bolder Than His Master.

Carefully observe, then, what Cœlestius has advanced so very openly, and you will discover what amount of concealment Pelagius has practiced upon you. Cœlestius goes on to say as follows: “That infants, however, must be baptized for the remission of sins, was not admitted by us with the view of our seeming to affirm sin by transmission. This is very alien from the Catholic meaning, because sin is not born with a man,—it is subsequently committed by the man for it is shown to be a fault, not of nature, but of the will. It is fitting, therefore, to confess this, lest we should seem to make different kinds of baptism; it is, moreover, necessary to lay down this preliminary safeguard, lest by the occasion of this mystery evil should, to the disparagement of the Creator, be said to be conveyed to man by nature, before that it has been committed by man.” Now Pelagius was either afraid or ashamed to avow this to be his own opinion before you; although his disciple experienced neither a qualm nor a blush in openly professing it to be his, without any obscure subterfuges, in presence of the Apostolic See.

**Commentary:** In summary, Cœlestius, the disciple of Pelagius, is seen here to be denying that man now has a sin nature. This is definitely false, just as Augustine argues. We read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):**21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

In the Garden of Eden, God commanded the man in **Genesis 2 (KJV):**16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

And we read in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):**1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

In verse 3 it says that we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. In verse 1 we read that we were dead in the trespasses and sins. Pelagius and his disciples were in error.

We continue to read in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):**4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

And our bodies are mortal, so physical death, as well as spiritual death, is also a consequence of the sin of Adam.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Original Sin, Book II, Chapter 19, page 243-244**

Chapter 19.—Pelagius’ Attempt to Deceive the Apostolic See; He Inverts the Bearings of the

## Controversy.

But I would have you carefully observe the way in which Pelagius endeavoured by deception to overreach even the judgment of the bishop of the Apostolic See on this very question of the baptism of infants. He sent a letter to Rome to Pope Innocent of blessed memory; and when it found him not in the flesh, it was handed to the holy Pope Zosimus, and by him directed to us. In this letter he complains of being “defamed by certain persons for refusing the sacrament of baptism to infants, and promising the kingdom of heaven irrespective of Christ’s redemption.” The objections, however, are not urged against them in the manner he has stated. For they neither deny the sacrament of baptism to infants, nor do they promise the kingdom of heaven to any irrespective of the redemption of Christ. As regards, therefore, his complaint of being defamed by sundry persons, he has set it forth in such terms as to be able to give a ready answer to the alleged charge against him, without injury to his own dogma. [XVIII.] The real objection against them is, that they refuse to confess that unbaptized infants are liable to the condemnation of the first man, and that original sin has been transmitted to them and requires to be purged by regeneration; their contention being that infants must be baptized solely for being admitted into the kingdom of heaven, as if they could only have eternal death apart from the kingdom of heaven, who cannot have eternal life without partaking of the Lord’s body and blood. This, I would have you know, is the real objection to them respecting the baptism of infants; and not as he has represented it, for the purpose of enabling himself to save his own dogmas while answering what is actually a proposition of his own, under colour of meeting an objection.

**Commentary:** Augustine is writing against Pelagius who believed that man did not have original sin, and so infants did not have to be baptized since they had no sin. Augustine begins as he says, “But I would have you carefully observe the way in which Pelagius endeavoured by deception to overreach even the judgment of the bishop of the Apostolic See on this very question of the baptism of infants. He sent a letter to Rome to Pope Innocent of blessed memory; and when it found him not in the flesh, it was handed to the holy Pope Zosimus, and by him directed to us.”

We notice here the organization of the Church in the time of Augustine. He refers to “the judgment of the bishop of the Apostolic See”, and to “Pope Innocent”, and to “the holy Pope Zosimus”.

Augustine was evidently handed the letter Pelagius had sent to the Pope in Rome. He continues as he then says, “In this letter he complains of being “defamed by certain persons for refusing the sacrament of baptism to infants, and promising the kingdom of heaven irrespective of Christ’s redemption.” The objections, however, are not urged against them in the manner he has stated. For they neither deny the sacrament of baptism to infants, nor do they promise the kingdom of heaven to any irrespective of the redemption of Christ. As regards, therefore, his complaint of being defamed by sundry persons, he has set it forth in such terms as to be able to give a ready answer to the alleged charge against him, without injury to his own dogma.”

Augustine saw through the equivocation of Pelagius. He then explains, “The real objection against them is, that they refuse to confess that unbaptized infants are liable to the condemnation of the first man, and that original sin has been transmitted to them and requires to

be purged by regeneration; their contention being that infants must be baptized solely for being admitted into the kingdom of heaven, as if they could only have eternal death apart from the kingdom of heaven, who cannot have eternal life without partaking of the Lord's body and blood. This, I would have you know, is the real objection to them respecting the baptism of infants; and not as he has represented it, for the purpose of enabling himself to save his own dogmas while answering what is actually a proposition of his own, under colour of meeting an objection. “

All unbaptized infants, or even baptized infants, are still in possession of the old Adamic sin nature, for all die in Adam as we read again in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):21** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

So Augustine thought that infants must be baptized to spare them God's judgment of condemnation. But it is possible that in God's mercy, the children who die, and who know not the difference between good and evil, will be pardoned, just as the children in Deuteronomy 1:34-39 who knew not the difference between good and evil were pardoned, and allowed to go into the promised land, while their fathers were held responsible, and were not permitted to enter the promised land. God only knows.

It is interesting to note that Augustine refers to Pope Innocent in Rome, and also to holy Pope Zosimus as the bishops of the Apostolic See. The hierarchy in the Catholic Church had grown from Irenaeus' day into an unscriptural model of leadership. From the elevation of the bishop who, according to Scripture, was merely an overseer in the local church, to a position of leadership over churches much like an apostle, we now have mention of Popes who ruled from Apostolic Sees. Augustine is trying to rightly divide the word, but he is hindered by this hierarchy that had grown up in the church because of the belief in apostolic succession which was more or less codified by Irenaeus in his writing of **Adversus Heresies** (Against Heresies). We will discuss this more later.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, Book I, Chapter 26, page 385**

Chapter 26 [XIII.]—The Seventh Calumny,—That Augustin Asserts that in Baptism All Sins are Not Remitted.

“They also say,” says he, “that baptism does not give complete remission of sins, nor take away crimes, but that it shaves them off, so that the roots of all sins are retained in the evil flesh.” Who but an unbeliever can affirm this against the Pelagians? **I say, therefore, that baptism gives remission of all sins, and takes away guilt, and does not shave them off; and “that the roots of all sins are” not “retained in the evil flesh, as if of shaved hair on the head, whence the sins may grow to be cut down again.”** For it was I that found out that similitude, too, for them to use for the purposes of their calumny, as if I thought and said this.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he quotes Pelagius, ““They also say,” says he, “that baptism does not give complete remission of sins, nor take away crimes, but that it shaves them off, so that the roots of all sins are retained in the evil flesh.””

Augustine then asks, “Who but an unbeliever can affirm this against the Pelagians?”

Augustine then states his own opinion, “I say, therefore, that baptism gives remission of all sins, and takes away guilt, and does not shave them off; and “that the roots of all sins are” not “retained in the evil flesh, as if of shaved hair on the head, whence the sins may grow to be cut down again.” For it was I that found out that similitude, too, for them to use for the purposes of their calumny, as if I thought and said this.”

Pelagius was accusing Augustine of saying “that baptism does not give complete remission of sins, nor take away crimes, but that it shaves them off, so that the roots of all sins are retained in the evil flesh.” That Augustine never said any such thing is evident from his writings, which we have in abundance.

The Scripture is clear. We read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: **2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Jesus Christ is the propitiation or atoning sacrifice for our sins, and the sins of the whole world. When we believed we were washed clean of all our sin as we read in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

This is the bath Jesus spoke of in **John 13 (NASB):10** Jesus said to him, “He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.”

This is what John refers to above in 1 John 2:1. Once we have been washed by faith in Jesus Christ, we only need to wash our feet and we are all clean.

Not only were we washed when we believed, but we were justified as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

When we are born again, we are given a standing of righteousness as we read in **Romans 3 (NASB):21** But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, **22** even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; **25** whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; **26** for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

In verse 25 we read that He “passed over the sins previously committed”. He didn’t pass over some of our sins, but all of our sins. The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ is for all those who believe.

We have redemption through His blood as we read in **Colossians 1 (KJV):14** In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

His blood cleanses us from all sin as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.



But the ritual of baptism does not give remission of all sins, or any sins. Nowhere is this more clear than in **Romans 10 (KJV):10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

It is faith in Jesus that saves us the moment we believe from our hearts, for with the heart a man, or a woman, believes unto righteousness.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book 1, Chapter 20, page 22**

Chapter 20.—Original Sin Alone is Contracted by Natural Birth.

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.” (Romans 5:20) This addition to original sin men now made of their own willfulness, not through Adam; but even this is done away and remedied by Christ, because “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death”—even that sin which men have not derived from Adam, but have added of their own will—“even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life.” (Romans 5:21) There is, however, other righteousness apart from Christ, as there are other sins apart from Adam. Therefore, after saying, “As sin hath reigned unto death,” he did not add in the same clause “by one,” or “by Adam,” because he had already spoken of that sin which was abounding when the law entered, and which, of course, was not original sin, but the sin of man’s own willful commission. But after he has said: “Even so might grace also reign through righteousness unto eternal life,” he at once adds, “through Jesus Christ our Lord;” **because, whilst by the generation of the flesh only that sin is contracted which is original; yet by the regeneration of the Spirit there is effected the remission not of original sin only, but also of the sins of man’s own voluntary and actual commission.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.” (Romans 5:20)”

He refers in context to **Romans 5 (KJV):20** Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

He continues, “This addition to original sin men now made of their own willfulness, not through Adam; but even this is done away and remedied by Christ, because “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death”—even that sin which men have not derived from Adam, but have added of their own will—“even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life.” (Romans 5:21)”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):21** That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now we note that he says that, even sins apart or in addition to original sin which was through Adam, are “done away and remedied by Christ”. He continues, “There is, however, other righteousness apart from Christ, as there are other sins apart from Adam.”

He does not explain here what he means by “other righteousness apart from Christ”, but he does explain what he means by “other sins apart from Adam”, as he continues, “Therefore, after saying, “As sin hath reigned unto death,” he did not add in the same clause “by one,” or “by Adam,” because he had already spoken of that sin which was abounding when the law

entered, and which, of course, was not original sin, but the sin of man's own willful commission. But after he has said: "Even so might grace also reign through righteousness unto eternal life," he at once adds, "through Jesus Christ our Lord;" **because, whilst by the generation of the flesh only that sin is contracted which is original; yet by the regeneration of the Spirit there is effected the remission not of original sin only, but also of the sins of man's own voluntary and actual commission.**"

We can agree with Augustine here. As we saw in the previous segment, His blood cleanses us from all sin as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Original Sin, Chapter 16, page 242**

Chapter 16 [XV.]—Pelagius' Fraudulent and Crafty Excuses.

**For what is the significance to the matter with which we now have to do of his answers to his followers, when he tells them that "the reason why he condemned the points which were objected against him, is because he himself maintains that primal sin was injurious not only to the first man, but to the whole human race, not by transmission, but by example;" in other words, not because those who have been propagated from him have derived any fault from him, but because all who afterwards have sinned, have imitated him who committed the first sin? Or** when he says that "the reason why infants are not in the same state in which Adam was before the transgression, is because they are not yet able to receive the commandment, whereas he was able; and because they do not yet make use of that choice of a rational will which he certainly made use of, since otherwise no commandment would have been given to him"? How does such an exposition as this of the points alleged against him justify him in thinking that he rightly condemned the propositions, "Adam's sin injured only himself, and not the whole race of man;" and "infants at their birth are in the selfsame state in which Adam was before he sinned;" and that by the said condemnation he is not guilty of deceit in holding such opinions as are found in his subsequent writings, how that "infants are born without any evil or fault, and that there is nothing in them but what God has formed,"—no wound, in short, inflicted by an enemy?

**Commentary:** Here Augustine explains the equivocation of Pelagius. Pelagius does not admit to a nature to sin in man, that is, a nature to sin inherited from Adam.

Augustine begins as he asks, **"For what is the significance to the matter with which we now have to do of his answers to his followers, when he tells them that "the reason why he condemned the points which were objected against him, is because he himself maintains that primal sin was injurious not only to the first man, but to the whole human race, not by transmission, but by example;"**

So Pelagius did not admit to a nature to sin in man. Augustine then explains his question, **"in other words, not because those who have been propagated from him have derived any fault from him, but because all who afterwards have sinned, have imitated him who committed the first sin?"**

So man does not have a nature to sin that he receives at birth, but he sins when he acts after Adam's example of disobedience.

Augustine continues, as he explains the thinking of Pelagius, "Or when he says that "the reason why infants are not in the same state in which Adam was before the transgression, is because they are not yet able to receive the commandment, whereas he was able; and because they do not yet make use of that choice of a rational will which he certainly made use of, since otherwise no commandment would have been given to him"?"

While this may be true as Pelagius describes, the Scripture is clear that a nature is in man to sin as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):1** And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; **2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: **3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Augustine then points out the equivocation of Pelagius as he then asks, "How does such an exposition as this of the points alleged against him justify him in thinking that he rightly condemned the propositions, "Adam's sin injured only himself, and not the whole race of man;" and "infants at their birth are in the selfsame state in which Adam was before he sinned;" and that by the said condemnation he is not guilty of deceit in holding such opinions as are found in his subsequent writings, how that "infants are born without any evil or fault, and that there is nothing in them but what God has formed,"—no wound, in short, inflicted by an enemy?"

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Original Sin, Chapters 36-37, page 250**

Chapter 36 [XXXI]—The Platonists' Opinion About the Existence of the Soul Previous to the Body Rejected.

What, then, is the purport of so severe a condemnation, when no willful sin has been committed? **For it is not as certain Platonists have thought, because every such infant is thus requited in his soul for what it did of its own willfulness previous to the present life, as having possessed previous to its present bodily state a free choice of living either well or ill; since the Apostle Paul says most plainly, that before they were born they did neither good nor evil. (Romans 9:11)** On what account, therefore, is an infant rightly punished with such ruin, if it be not because he belongs to the mass of perdition, and is properly regarded as born of Adam, condemned under the bond of the ancient debt unless he has been released from the bond, not according to debt, but according to grace? And what grace but God's, through our Lord Jesus Christ? Now there was a forecast of His coming undoubtedly contained not only in other sacred institutions (sacramenta) of the ancient Jews, but also in their circumcision of the foreskin. For the eighth day, in the recurrence of weeks, became the Lord's day, on which the Lord arose from the dead; and Christ was the rock (1 Corinthians 10:4) whence was formed the stony blade for the circumcision; (Exodus 4:25) and the flesh of the foreskin was the body of sin.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he asks, "What, then, is the purport of so severe a

condemnation, when no willful sin has been committed?”

He refers to the penalty for not keeping the covenant of circumcision God made with Abraham in **Genesis 17 (KJV):10** This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. 11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. 12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. 13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

He then shows the error of certain Platonist philosophers as he continues, “**For it is not as certain Platonists have thought, because every such infant is thus requited in his soul for what it did of its own willfulness previous to the present life, as having possessed previous to its present bodily state a free choice of living either well or ill; since the Apostle Paul says most plainly, that before they were born they did neither good nor evil. (Romans 9:11)**”

He refers to Paul’s words in **Romans 9 (KJV):11** (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

He then continues, “On what account, therefore, is an infant rightly punished with such ruin, if it be not because he belongs to the mass of perdition, and is properly regarded as born of Adam, condemned under the bond of the ancient debt unless he has been released from the bond, not according to debt, but according to grace?”

The baptism of infants in Augustine’s time was done in order to secure their release from the bond of original sin. But he may not have understood Jesus’ words in **Luke 18 (KJV):16** But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

It is possible that little children who have not yet reached the age of accountability will still be saved by God’s grace, without baptism. Augustine continues, “And what grace but God’s, through our Lord Jesus Christ?”

Augustine then says, “Now there was a forecast of His coming undoubtedly contained not only in other sacred institutions (sacramenta) of the ancient Jews, but also in their circumcision of the foreskin.”

A child under the covenant God made with Abraham was required to be circumcised the eighth day after birth, as we read above in Genesis 17:12.

Augustine then asserts, “For the eighth day, in the recurrence of weeks, became the Lord’s day, on which the Lord arose from the dead;”

Actually, it was known as the first day of the week that He arose as we read in **Mark 16 (KJV):9** Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

Augustine then continues, “and Christ was the rock (1 Corinthians 10:4) whence was formed the stony blade for the circumcision; (Exodus 4:25) and the flesh of the foreskin was the body of sin.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):4** And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

And speaking of Moses' son, we read in **Exodus 4 (KJV):25** Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me.

Augustine could also be referring to **Colossians 2 (KJV):11** In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

Chapter 37 [XXXII.]—In What Sense Christ is Called “Sin.”

There was a change of the sacramental ordinances made after the coming of Him whose advent they prefigured; but there was no change in the Mediator's help, who, even previous to His coming in the flesh, all along delivered the ancient members of His body by their faith in His incarnation; and in respect of ourselves too, though we were dead in sins and in the uncircumcision of our flesh, we are quickened together in Christ, in whom we are circumcised with the circumcision not made with the hand, (Colossians 2:11,13) but such as was prefigured by the old manual circumcision, that the body of sin might be done away (Romans 6:6) which was born with us from Adam. The propagation of a condemned origin condemns us, unless we are cleansed by the likeness of sinful flesh, in which He was sent without sin, who nevertheless concerning sin condemned sin, having been made sin for us. (Romans 8:3, Galatians 3:13) Accordingly the apostle says: “We beseech you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:20-21) God, therefore, to whom we are reconciled, has made Him to be sin for us,—that is to say, a sacrifice by which our sins may be remitted; for by sins are designated the sacrifices for sins. And indeed He was sacrificed for our sins, the only one among men who had no sins, even as in those early times one was sought for among the flocks to prefigure the Faultless One who was to come to heal our offences. On whatever day, therefore, an infant may be baptized after his birth, he is as if circumcised on the eighth day; inasmuch as he is circumcised in Him who rose again the third day indeed after He was crucified, but the eighth according to the weeks. He is circumcised for the putting off of the body of sin; in other words, that the grace of spiritual regeneration may do away with the debt which the contagion of carnal generation contracted. “For no one is pure from uncleanness” (what uncleanness, pray, but that of sin?), “not even the infant, whose life is but that of a single day upon the earth.” (Job 14:4-5)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “There was a change of the sacramental ordinances made after the coming of Him whose advent they prefigured; but there was no change in the Mediator's help, who, even previous to His coming in the flesh, all along delivered the ancient members of His body by their faith in His incarnation;”

What he is saying is that the Old Testament saints were delivered “by their faith in His incarnation”. That is, they believed in Him who was to come.

He continues, as he explains, “and in respect of ourselves too, though we were dead in sins and in the uncircumcision of our flesh, we are quickened together in Christ, in whom we



are circumcised with the circumcision not made with the hand, (Colossians 2:11,13) but such as was prefigured by the old manual circumcision, that the body of sin might be done away (Romans 6:6) which was born with us from Adam.”

He refers in context to **Colossians 2 (KJV):11** In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

And to **Romans 6 (KJV):6** Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Augustine then continues, “The propagation of a condemned origin condemns us, unless we are cleansed by the likeness of sinful flesh, in which He was sent without sin, who nevertheless concerning sin condemned sin, having been made sin for us. (Romans 8:3, Galatians 3:13)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):3** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

And to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):21** For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

And we read also in **Galatians 3 (KJV):13** Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

And Augustine then continues, “Accordingly the apostle says: “We beseech you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled unto God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:20-21)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):20** Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Augustine then explains, “God, therefore, to whom we are reconciled, has made Him to be sin for us,—that is to say, a sacrifice by which our sins may be remitted; for by sins are designated the sacrifices for sins. And indeed He was sacrificed for our sins, the only one among men who had no sins, even as in those early times one was sought for among the flocks to prefigure the Faultless One who was to come to heal our offences.”

He speaks of the Passover lamb as we read in **Exodus 12 (KJV):5** Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: 6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. 7 And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. 8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. 9 Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. 10 And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

11 And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's passover.

He then concludes, “On whatever day, therefore, an infant may be baptized after his birth, he is as if circumcised on the eighth day; inasmuch as he is circumcised in Him who rose again the third day indeed after He was crucified, but the eighth according to the weeks. He is circumcised for the putting off of the body of sin; in other words, that the grace of spiritual regeneration may do away with the debt which the contagion of carnal generation contracted. “For no one is pure from uncleanness” (what uncleanness, pray, but that of sin?), “not even the infant, whose life is but that of a single day upon the earth.” (Job 14:4-5)

He refers in context to **Job 14 (Septuagint):** 1 For a mortal born of a woman is short lived, and full of wrath. 2 Or he falls like a flower that has bloomed; and he departs like a shadow, and cannot continue. 3 Hast thou not taken account even of him, and caused him to enter into judgment before thee? 4 For who shall be pure from uncleanness? not even one; 5 if even his life should be but one day upon the earth: and his months are numbered by him: thou hast appointed him for a time, and he shall by no means exceed it.

It was a requirement under the law to be circumcised as we read in **Genesis 17 (KJV):**12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.

Augustine saw baptism as a spiritual circumcision as we read again in **Colossians 2 (NASB):**11 and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; 12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

But baptism is only analogous to the spiritual resurrection that occurs “through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead” in verse 12. We are made “alive together with Him” in verse 13, through this faith. It is not about circumcision but about faith as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):**6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

And in **Galatians 6 (KJV):**15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

And in **Colossians 3 (KJV):**11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

Augustine thought of circumcision as one of the “**sacramental ordinances**” in the Old Testament. But even in the Old Testament, the rituals did not save anyone. It was always “**faith in the working of God**”, that is, the one who “who raised Him from the dead”.

Augustine also saw that it was through “carnal generation” that sin was passed down in the human race. It seems that because of this, he thought that sex in marriage was concupiscence, that is lust, because the one born in this way had the old Adamic sin nature in his or her flesh. What he did not understand was that God has established marriage, and that sex in marriage is not lust but is natural as Paul says in **Romans 1 (KJV):**24 Wherefore God also

gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

It is through the lust of our own hearts that we act outside of the will of God. But when we walk in the will of God, it is not lust to have sexual relations with our husband or wife. It is natural.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Original Sin, Chapters 45-48, page 253-255**

#### **Chapter 45.—Man's Deliverance Suited to the Character of His Captivity.**

The guilt, therefore, of that corruption of which we are speaking will remain in the carnal offspring of the regenerate, until in them also it be washed away in the laver of regeneration. A regenerate man does not regenerate, but generates, sons according to the flesh; and thus he transmits to his posterity, not the condition of the regenerated, but only of the generated. Therefore, be a man guilty of unbelief, or a perfect believer, he does not in either case beget faithful children, but sinners; in the same way that the seeds, not only of a wild olive, but also of a cultivated one, produce not cultivated olives, but wild ones. **So, likewise, his first birth holds a man in that bondage from which nothing but his second birth delivers him.** The devil holds him, Christ liberates him: Eve's deceiver holds him, Mary's Son frees him: he holds him, who approached the man through the woman; He frees him, who was born of a woman that never approached a man: he holds him, who injected into the woman the cause of lust; He liberates him, who without any lust was conceived in the woman. The former was able to hold all men in his grasp through one; nor does any deliver them out of his power but One, whom he was unable to grasp. The very sacraments indeed of the Church, which she administers with due ceremony, according to the authority of very ancient tradition (so that these men, notwithstanding their opinion that the sacraments are imitatively rather than really used in the case of infants, still do not venture to reject them with open disapproval),—the very sacraments, I say, of the holy Church show plainly enough that infants, even when fresh from the womb, are delivered from the bondage of the devil through the grace of Christ. For, to say nothing of the fact that they are baptized for the remission of sins by no fallacious, but by a true and faithful mystery, there is previously wrought on them the exorcism and the exsufflation of the hostile power, which they profess to renounce by the mouth of those who bring them to baptism. Now, by all these consecrated and evident signs of hidden realities, they are shown to pass from their worst oppressor to their most excellent Redeemer, who, by taking on Himself our infirmity in our behalf, has bound the strong man, that He may spoil his goods; (Matthew 12:29) seeing that the weakness of God is stronger, not only than men, but also than angels. While, therefore, God delivers small as well as great, He shows in both instances that the apostle spoke under the direction of the Truth. For it is not merely adults, but little babes too whom He rescues from the

power of darkness, in order to transfer them to the kingdom of God's dear Son. (Colossians 1:13)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "The guilt, therefore, of that corruption of which we are speaking will remain in the carnal offspring of the regenerate, until in them also it be washed away in the laver of regeneration."

We can agree with Augustine that the guilt of sin is washed away by the washing of regeneration, which happens when we believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord. It is not by works of righteousness which we do, such as being baptized, as we read in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Augustine continues, "A regenerate man does not regenerate, but generates, sons according to the flesh; and thus he transmits to his posterity, not the condition of the regenerated, but only of the generated. Therefore, be a man guilty of unbelief, or a perfect believer, he does not in either case beget faithful children, but sinners; in the same way that the seeds, not only of a wild olive, but also of a cultivated one, produce not cultivated olives, but wild ones. **So, likewise, his first birth holds a man in that bondage from which nothing but his second birth delivers him.**"

And this is why we all must be born again, or we cannot enter the Kingdom of God as Jesus spoke in **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Augustine then continues, "The devil holds him, Christ liberates him: Eve's deceiver holds him, Mary's Son frees him: he holds him, who approached the man through the woman; He frees him, who was born of a woman that never approached a man: he holds him, who injected into the woman the cause of lust; He liberates him, who without any lust was conceived in the woman. The former was able to hold all men in his grasp through one; nor does any deliver them out of his power but One, whom he was unable to grasp."

We were in the devil's hold before Christ as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

But we are set free by Christ as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

But it is not lust when a man has conjugal relations with his wife. God made man and woman to have intimacy this way. This is why people marry.

He continues, "The very sacraments indeed of the Church, which she administers with due ceremony, according to the authority of very ancient tradition (so that these men, notwithstanding their opinion that the sacraments are imitatively rather than really used in the case of infants, still do not venture to reject them with open disapproval),—the very sacraments, I say, of the holy Church show plainly enough that infants, even when fresh from the womb, are delivered from the bondage of the devil through the grace of Christ."



Here he admits of his agreement with “the authority of very ancient tradition” of “the holy Church”. He was not able to completely free himself from this tradition, as he then continues, “For, to say nothing of the fact that they are baptized for the remission of sins by no fallacious, but by a true and faithful mystery, there is previously wrought on them the exorcism and the exsufflation of the hostile power, which they profess to renounce by the mouth of those who bring them to baptism.”

Again, note that “exsufflation” means “the action of breathing forth or blowing; especially : this action used as an exorcism in some rites of baptism”. (**Merriam Webster**)

So he says that infants undergo exorcism or exsufflation in baptism because of Adam’s sin. He continues, “Now, by all these consecrated and evident signs of hidden realities, they are shown to pass from their worst oppressor to their most excellent Redeemer, who, by taking on Himself our infirmity in our behalf, has bound the strong man, that He may spoil his goods; (Matthew 12:29) seeing that the weakness of God is stronger, not only than men, but also than angels.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 12 (KJV):28** But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. 29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

And he concludes, “While, therefore, God delivers small as well as great, He shows in both instances that the apostle spoke under the direction of the Truth. For it is not merely adults, but little babes too whom He rescues from the power of darkness, in order to transfer them to the kingdom of God’s dear Son. (Colossians 1:13)

He refers to **Colossians 1 (KJV):13** Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

Chapter 46.—Difficulty of Believing Original Sin. Man’s Vice is a Beast’s Nature.

No one should feel surprise, and ask: “Why does God’s goodness create anything for the devil’s malignity to take possession of?” The truth is, God’s gift is bestowed on the seminal elements of His creature with the same bounty wherewith “He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matthew 5:45) It is with so large a bounty that God has blessed the very seeds, and by blessing has constituted them. Nor has this blessing been eliminated out of our excellent nature by a fault, which puts us under condemnation. **Owing, indeed, to God’s justice, who punishes, this fatal flaw has so far prevailed, that men are born with the fault of original sin; but yet its influence has not extended so far as to stop the birth of men. Just so does it happen in persons of adult age: whatever sins they commit, do not eliminate his manhood from man; nay, God’s work continues still good, however evil be the deeds of the impious.** For although “man being placed in honour abideth not; and being without understanding, is compared with the beasts, and is like them,” (Psalm 49:12) yet the resemblance is not so absolute that he becomes a beast. There is a comparison, no doubt, between the two; but it is not by reason of nature, but through vice—not vice in the beast, but in nature. **For so excellent is a man in comparison with a beast, that man’s vice is beast’s nature; still man’s nature is never on this account changed into beast’s nature. God, therefore, condemns man because of the fault wherewithal his nature is disgraced, and not**



because of his nature, which is not destroyed in consequence of its fault. Heaven forbid that we should think beasts are obnoxious to the sentence of condemnation! It is only proper that they should be free from our misery, inasmuch as they cannot partake of our blessedness. What, then, is there surprising or unjust in man's being subjected to an impure spirit—not on account of nature, but on account of that impurity of his which he has contracted in the stain of his birth, and which proceeds, not from the divine work, but from the will of man;—since also the impure spirit itself is a good thing considered as spirit, but evil in that it is impure? For the one is of God, and is His work, while the other emanates from man's own will. The stronger nature, therefore, that is, the angelic one, keeps the lower, or human, nature in subjection, by reason of the association of vice with the latter. Accordingly the Mediator, who was stronger than the angels, became weak for man's sake. (2 Corinthians 8:9) So that the pride of the Destroyer is destroyed by the humility of the Redeemer; and he who makes his boast over the sons of men of his angelic strength, is vanquished by the Son of God in the human weakness which He assumed.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “No one should feel surprise, and ask: “Why does God's goodness create anything for the devil's malignity to take possession of?” The truth is, God's gift is bestowed on the seminal elements of His creature with the same bounty wherewith “He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matthew 5:45)

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):45** That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

He continues, “It is with so large a bounty that God has blessed the very seeds, and by blessing has constituted them. Nor has this blessing been eliminated out of our excellent nature by a fault, which puts us under condemnation.”

He then explains, “Owing, indeed, to God's justice, who punishes, this fatal flaw has so far prevailed, that men are born with the fault of original sin; but yet its influence has not extended so far as to stop the birth of men. Just so does it happen in persons of adult age: whatever sins they commit, do not eliminate his manhood from man; nay, God's work continues still good, however evil be the deeds of the impious. For although “man being placed in honour abideth not; and being without understanding, is compared with the beasts, and is like them,” (Psalm 49:12) yet the resemblance is not so absolute that he becomes a beast.

He refers in context to **Psalm 49 (KJV):6** They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; **7** None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: **8** (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:) **9** That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption. **10** For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. **11** Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. **12** Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. **13** This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.

So the Psalm speaks of those who do not acknowledge God. So a man may seem to be in honor because of his wealth, but he is really no different than the beasts that perish. He

accomplishes nothing that will last for eternity. But as Augustine says, “the resemblance is not so absolute that he becomes a beast”.

He continues, “There is a comparison, no doubt, between the two; but it is not by reason of nature, but through vice—not vice in the beast, but in nature. **For so excellent is a man in comparison with a beast, that man’s vice is beast’s nature; still man’s nature is never on this account changed into beast’s nature. God, therefore, condemns man because of the fault wherewithal his nature is disgraced, and not because of his nature, which is not destroyed in consequence of its fault.**”

Augustine seems to argue so long, that at times he exceeds what is written for we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Before Christ, we were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. We followed after the desires of our flesh as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Augustine then argues, “Heaven forbid that we should think beasts are obnoxious to the sentence of condemnation! It is only proper that they should be free from our misery, inasmuch as they cannot partake of our blessedness. What, then, is there surprising or unjust in man’s being subjected to an impure spirit—not on account of nature, but on account of that impurity of his which he has contracted in the stain of his birth, and which proceeds, not from the divine work, but from the will of man;—since also the impure spirit itself is a good thing considered as spirit, but evil in that it is impure?”

God created good things. Spirit is a creation of God, so it is good, “but evil in that it is impure”. Before Christ, we are spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins as in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)...

It is not just something “contracted in the stain of his birth”, but a sinful nature in our flesh, where sin dwells as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):15** For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

He then says, “For the one is of God, and is His work, while the other emanates from man’s own will.”

Our spirit is dead in trespasses and sins before Christ. It is still the work of God, but must be born again to be pure. The impurity is not just “from man’s own will”, but is a nature in his flesh which has affected his will, and put it into bondage to sin.

He continues, “The stronger nature, therefore, that is, the angelic one, keeps the lower, or human, nature in subjection, by reason of the association of vice with the latter.”

The angelic one is the prince of the power of the air, Satan, as we read of in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

So he is saying that the “prince of the power of the air”, the devil, had “the stronger nature, therefore, that is, the angelic one”, and he thus had control over our human nature “by reason of the association of vice with the latter.”

He then says, “Accordingly the Mediator, who was stronger than the angels, became weak for man’s sake. (2 Corinthians 8:9)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 8 (KJV):9** For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

And we could add **Philippians 2 (KJV):6** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

And he concludes, “So that the pride of the Destroyer is destroyed by the humility of the Redeemer; and he who makes his boast over the sons of men of his angelic strength, is vanquished by the Son of God in the human weakness which He assumed.”

And the spirit of man, when he is born again, is able to overcome the flesh, as Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (KJV):2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

This law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is then the law in our spirit of those of us who have been born again. It is a new divine nature which is born by the Holy Spirit. Our human nature, or flesh, is not just associated with vice, but has a nature to sin, or law of sin, inherited from Adam, as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

But this is overcome when we are born again, and receive the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus in our spirit. Augustine did not fully understand this.

Chapter 47 [XLI.]—Sentences from Ambrose in Favour of Original Sin.

And now that we are about to bring this book to a conclusion, we think it proper to do on this subject of Original Sin what we did before in our treatise On Grace,—adduce in evidence against the injurious talk of these persons that servant of God, the **Archbishop Ambrose**, whose faith is proclaimed by Pelagius to be the most perfect among the writers of the Latin Church; for *grace* is more especially honoured in doing away with original *sin*. In the work which the saintly Ambrose wrote, Concerning the Resurrection, he says: “I fell in Adam, in Adam was I expelled from Paradise, in Adam I died; and He does not recall me unless He has found me in Adam,—so as that, as I am obnoxious to the guilt of sin in him, and subject to death, I may be also justified in Christ.” Then, again, writing against the Novatians, he says: “We men are all of us born in sin; our very origin is in sin; as you may read when David says, ‘Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.’ (Psalm 51:5) Hence it is that Paul’s flesh is ‘a body of death;’ (Romans 7:24) even as he says himself, ‘Who shall deliver me from

the body of this death?’ Christ’s flesh, however, has condemned sin, which He experienced not by being born, and which by dying He crucified, that in our flesh there might be justification through grace, where previously there was impurity through sin.” The same holy man also, in his Exposition of Isaiah, speaking of Christ, says: “Therefore as man He was tried in all things, and in the likeness of men He endured all things; but as born of the Spirit, He was free from sin. For every man is a liar, and no one but God alone is without sin. It is therefore an observed and settled fact, that no man born of a man and a woman, that is, by means of their bodily union, is seen to be free from sin. Whosoever, indeed, is free from sin, is free also from a conception and birth of this kind.” Moreover, when expounding the Gospel according to Luke, he says: “It was no cohabitation with a husband which opened the secrets of the Virgin’s womb; rather was it the Holy Ghost which infused immaculate seed into her unviolated womb. For the Lord Jesus alone of those who are born of woman is holy, inasmuch as He experienced not the contact of earthly corruption, by reason of the novelty of His immaculate birth; nay, He repelled it by His heavenly majesty.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “And now that we are about to bring this book to a conclusion, we think it proper to do on this subject of Original Sin what we did before in our treatise On Grace,—adduce in evidence against the injurious talk of these persons that servant of God, the **Archbishop Ambrose**, whose faith is proclaimed by Pelagius to be the most perfect among the writers of the Latin Church; for grace is more especially honoured in doing away with original sin. In the work which the saintly Ambrose wrote, Concerning the Resurrection, he says: “I fell in Adam, in Adam was I expelled from Paradise, in Adam I died; and He does not recall me unless He has found me in Adam,—so as that, as I am obnoxious to the guilt of sin in him, and subject to death, I may be also justified in Christ.”

Clearly, Augustine was in agreement with Archbishop Ambrose. And Ambrose is correct. All die in Adam. And we are found in Adam by the Lord when we acknowledge our sin, and believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord. It is then that we are justified by faith in Christ as we read in **Galatians 2 (KJC):16** Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Augustine then continues to quote Ambrose, “Then, again, writing against the Novatians, he says: “We men are all of us born in sin; our very origin is in sin; as you may read when David says, ‘Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.’ (Psalm 51:5) Hence it is that Paul’s flesh is ‘a body of death;’ (Romans 7:24) even as he says himself, ‘Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?’”

He refers to **Psalm 51 (KJV):5** Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

And to **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

And we can agree with Ambrose and Augustine here. He then continues, “Christ’s flesh, however, has condemned sin, which He experienced not by being born, and which by dying He crucified, that in our flesh there might be justification through grace, where previously there was impurity through sin.”

The “**impurity through sin**” was in our flesh, which has a fallen nature. When we are born again of the Holy Spirit, our spirit is made new, but our flesh still has the fallen nature. We are saved by grace through faith, and then justified by that faith. We then have a standing as righteous ones, God’s righteousness having been imputed to us.

Augustine then continues, “The same holy man also, in his Exposition of Isaiah, speaking of Christ, says: “Therefore as man He was tried in all things, and in the likeness of men He endured all things; but as born of the Spirit, He was free from sin. For every man is a liar, and no one but God alone is without sin.”

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):4** God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

That Christ did no sin is the testimony of Peter in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):21** For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: **22** Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

When we believe in Jesus Christ we are made free from sin as we read in **Romans 6 (KJV):18** Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

And in **Romans 6 (KJV):22** But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

And in **Romans 8 (KJV):2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Augustine then continues quoting Ambrose, “It is therefore an observed and settled fact, that no man born of a man and a woman, that is, by means of their bodily union, is seen to be free from sin. Whosoever, indeed, is free from sin, is free also from a conception and birth of this kind.” **Moreover, when expounding the Gospel according to Luke, he says: “It was no cohabitation with a husband which opened the secrets of the Virgin’s womb; rather was it the Holy Ghost which infused immaculate seed into her unviolated womb. For the Lord Jesus alone of those who are born of woman is holy, inasmuch as He experienced not the contact of earthly corruption, by reason of the novelty of His immaculate birth; nay, He repelled it by His heavenly majesty.”**

And we can agree with Ambrose and Augustine. Jesus was conceived without sin, by the Holy Spirit, as we read in **Luke 1 (KJV):34** Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? **35** And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Chapter 48.—Pelagius Rightly Condemned and Really Opposed by Ambrose.

**These words, however, of the man of God are contradicted by Pelagius, notwithstanding all his commendation of his author, when he himself declares that “we are procreated, as without virtue, so without vice.” What remains, then, but that Pelagius should condemn and renounce this error of his; or else be sorry that he has quoted Ambrose in the way he has? Inasmuch, however, as the blessed Ambrose, Catholic bishop as he is, has expressed himself in the above quoted passages in accordance with the Catholic faith, it follows that Pelagius, along with his disciple Cœlestius, was justly condemned by the authority of the Catholic Church for**



having turned aside from the true way of faith, since he repented not for having bestowed commendation on Ambrose, and for having at the same time entertained opinions in opposition to him. I know full well with what insatiable avidity you read whatever is written for edification and in confirmation of the faith; but yet, notwithstanding its utility as contributing to such an end, I must at last bring this treatise to a conclusion.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine quotes Pelagius as he begins, “These words, however, of the man of God are contradicted by Pelagius, notwithstanding all his commendation of his author, when he himself declares that “we are procreated, as without virtue, so without vice.”

Augustine was right to rebuke Pelagius, and “his disciple Cœlestius”, and insist on their repentance.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Marriage and Concupiscence, Book I, Chapters 45-47, page 301-302**

#### **Chapter 45.—Answer to This Argument: The Apostle Says We All Sinned in One.**

Now, there is an answer for him to all these questions given by the apostle, who censures neither the infant’s will, which is not yet matured in him for sinning, nor marriage, which, as such, has not only its institution, but its blessing also, from God; nor parents, so far as they are parents, who are united together properly and lawfully for the procreation of children; but he says, “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for in him all have sinned.” (Romans 5:12) Now, if these persons would only receive this statement with Catholic hearts and ears, they would not have rebellious feelings against the grace and faith of Christ, nor would they vainly endeavor to convert to their own particular and heretical sense these very clear and manifest words of the apostle, when they assert that the purport of the passage is to this effect: that Adam was the first to sin, and that any one who wished afterwards to commit sin found an example for sinning in him; so that sin, you must know, did not pass from this one upon all men by birth, but by the imitation of this one. Whereas it is certain that if the apostle meant this imitation to be here understood, he would have said that sin had entered into the world and passed upon all men, not by one man, but rather by the devil. For of the devil it is written: “They that are on his side do imitate him.” (Wisdom 2:24) He used the phrase “by one man,” from whom the generation of men, of course, had its beginning, in order to show us that original sin had passed upon all men by generation.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, as he says, “Now, there is an answer for him to all these questions given by the apostle, who censures neither the infant’s will, which is not yet matured in him for sinning, nor marriage, which, as such, has not only its institution, but its blessing also, from God; nor parents, so far as they are parents, who are united together properly and lawfully for the procreation of children; but he says, “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men for in him all have sinned.” (Romans 5:12)”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

He continues, “Now, if these persons would only receive this statement with Catholic hearts and ears, they would not have rebellious feelings against the grace and faith of Christ, nor would they vainly endeavor to convert to their own particular and heretical sense these very clear and manifest words of the apostle, “that the purport of the passage is to this effect: that Adam was the first to sin, and that any one who wished afterwards to commit sin found an example for sinning in him; so that sin, you must know, did not pass from this one upon all men by birth, but by the imitation of this one.”

Augustine is again rebuking Pelagius, as he then explains, “Whereas it is certain that if the apostle meant this imitation to be here understood, he would have said that sin had entered into the world and passed upon all men, not by one man, but rather by the devil. For of the devil it is written: “They that are on his side do imitate him.” (Wisdom 2:24)

He refers to **Wisdom 2 (Septuagint):24** Nevertheless through envy of the devil came death into the world: and they that do hold of his side do find it.

The devil tempted the man to sin, and when the man sinned, man became a sinner, that is, he is dead in trespasses and sins until he is born again by faith in Jesus Christ.

And Augustine concludes, “He used the phrase “by one man,” from whom the generation of men, of course, had its beginning, in order to show us that original sin had passed upon all men by generation.”

And we can again agree with Augustine here, who agrees with the Scripture in Romans 5:12.

Chapter 46.—The Reign of Death, What It Is; The Figure of the Future Adam; How All Men are Justified Through Christ.

But what else is meant even by the apostle’s subsequent words? For after he had said the above, he added, “For until the law sin was in the world,” (Romans 5:13) as much as to say that not even the law was able to take away sin. “But sin,” adds he, “was not imputed when there was no law.” It existed then, but was not imputed, for it was not set forth so that it might be imputed. It is on the same principle, indeed, that he says in another passage: “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” (Romans 3:20) “Nevertheless,” says he, “death reigned from Adam to Moses;” (Romans 5:14) that is, as he had already expressed it, “until the law.” Not that there was no sin after Moses, but because even the law, which was given by Moses, was unable to deprive death of its power, which, of course, reigns only by sin. Its reign, too, is such as to plunge mortal man even into that second death which is to endure for evermore. “Death reigned,” but over whom? “Even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come.” Of whom that was to come, if not Christ? And in what sort a figure, except in the way of contrariety? Which he elsewhere briefly expresses: “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22) The one condition was in one, even as the other condition was in the other; this is the figure. But this figure is not conformable in every respect; accordingly the apostle, following up the same idea, added, “But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” (Romans 5:15) But why “hath it much more abounded,” except it be that all who are delivered through Christ suffer temporal death on

Adam's account, but have everlasting life in store for the sake of Christ Himself? "And not as it was by one that sinned," says he, "so is the gift: for the judgment was from one to condemnation, but the free gift is from many offences unto justification." "By one" what, but offence? since it is added, "the free gift is from many offences." Let these objectors tell us how it can be "by one offence unto condemnation," unless it be that even the one original sin which has passed over unto all men is sufficient for condemnation? Whereas the free gift delivers from many offences to justification, because it not only cancels the one offence, which is derived from the primal sin, but all others also which are added in every individual man by the motion of his own will. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ. Therefore, by the offence of one upon all men to condemnation; so by the righteousness of one upon all men unto justification of life." (Romans 5:17-18) Let them after this persist in their vain imaginations, and maintain that one man did not hand on sin by propagation, but only set the example of committing it. How is it, then, that by one's offence judgment comes on all men to condemnation, and not rather by each man's own numerous sins, unless it be that even if there were but that one sin, it is sufficient, without the addition of any more, to lead to condemnation,—as, indeed, it does lead all who die in infancy who are born of Adam, without being born again in Christ? Why, then, does he, when he refuses to hear the apostle, ask us for an answer to his question, "By what means may sin be discovered in an infant,—through the will, or through marriage, or through its parents?" Let him listen in silence, and hear by what means sin may be discovered in an infant. "By the offence of one," says the apostle, "upon all men to condemnation." He said, moreover, all to condemnation through Adam, and all to justification through Christ: not, of course, that Christ removes to life all those who die in Adam; but he said "all" and "all," because, as without Adam no one goes to death, so without Christ no man to life. Just as we say of a teacher of letters, when he is alone in a town: This man teaches all their learning; not because all the inhabitants take lessons, but because no man who learns at all is taught by any but him. Indeed, the apostle afterwards designates as *many* those whom he had previously described as *all*, meaning the self-same persons by the two different terms. "For," says he, "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." (Romans 5:19)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "But what else is meant even by the apostle's subsequent words? For after he had said the above, he added, "For until the law sin was in the world," (Romans 5:13) as much as to say that not even the law was able to take away sin." "But sin," adds he, "was not imputed when there was no law." It existed then, but was not imputed, for it was not set forth so that it might be imputed. It is on the same principle, indeed, that he says in another passage: "By the law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20) "Nevertheless," says he, "death reigned from Adam to Moses;" (Romans 5:14) that is, as he had already expressed it, "until the law."

He refers in context to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: 13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

And to **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

He continues, “Not that there was no sin after Moses, but because even the law, which was given by Moses, was unable to deprive death of its power, which, of course, reigns only by sin. Its reign, too, is such as to plunge mortal man even into that second death which is to endure for evermore. “Death reigned,” but over whom? “Even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come.” Of whom that was to come, if not Christ? And in what sort a figure, except in the way of contrariety? Which he elsewhere briefly expresses: “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

He continues, “The one condition was in one, even as the other condition was in the other; this is the figure. But this figure is not conformable in every respect; accordingly the apostle, following up the same idea, added, “But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” (Romans 5:15)”

He refers in context to **Romans 5 (KJV):15** But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

He continues, as he explains, “But why “hath it much more abounded,” except it be that all who are delivered through Christ suffer temporal death on Adam’s account, but have everlasting life in store for the sake of Christ Himself? “And not as it was by one that sinned,” says he, “so is the gift: for the judgment was from one to condemnation, but the free gift is from many offences unto justification.” “By one” what, but offence? since it is added, “the free gift is from many offences.” Let these objectors tell us how it can be “by one offence unto condemnation,” unless it be that even the one original sin which has passed over unto all men is sufficient for condemnation? Whereas the free gift delivers from many offences to justification, because it not only cancels the one offence, which is derived from the primal sin, but all others also which are added in every individual man by the motion of his own will. “For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace and righteousness shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ. Therefore, by the offence of one upon all men to condemnation; so by the righteousness of one upon all men unto justification of life.” (Romans 5:17-18)”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):17** For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) 18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

He continues, “Let them after this persist in their vain imaginations, and maintain that one man did not hand on sin by propagation, but only set the example of committing it. How is it, then, that by one’s offence judgment comes on all men to condemnation, and not rather by

each man's own numerous sins, unless it be that even if there were but that one sin, it is sufficient, without the addition of any more, to lead to condemnation,—as, indeed, it does lead all who die in infancy who are born of Adam, without being born again in Christ? Why, then, does he, when he refuses to hear the apostle, ask us for an answer to his question, “By what means may sin be discovered in an infant,—through the will, or through marriage, or through its parents?” Let him listen in silence, and hear by what means sin may be discovered in an infant. “By the offence of one,” says the apostle, “upon all men to condemnation.” He said, moreover, all to condemnation through Adam, and all to justification through Christ: not, of course, that Christ removes to life all those who die in Adam; but he said “all” and “all,” because, as without Adam no one goes to death, so without Christ no man to life. Just as we say of a teacher of letters, when he is alone in a town: This man teaches all their learning; not because all the inhabitants take lessons, but because no man who learns at all is taught by any but him. Indeed, the apostle afterwards designates as many those whom he had previously described as all, meaning the self-same persons by the two different terms. “For,” says he, “as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” (Romans 5:19)”

Augustine refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):19** For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Augustine has rightly divided the word of God here.

#### Chapter 47.—The Scriptures Repeatedly Teach Us that All Sin in One.

Still let him ply his question: “By what means may sin be discovered in an infant?” He may find an answer in the inspired pages: “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for in him all sinned.” “Through the offence of one many are dead.” “The judgment was from one to condemnation.” “By one man's offence death reigned by one.” “By the offence of one, Judgment came upon all men to condemnation.” “By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.” (Romans 5:12-19) Behold, then, “by what means sins may be discovered in an infant.” Let him now believe in original sin; let him permit infants to come to Christ, that they may be saved. [XXVIII.] What means this passage of his: “He sins not who is born; he sins not who begat him; He sins not who created him. Amidst these entrenchments of innocence, therefore, what are the breaches through which you pretend that sin entered?” Why does he search for a hidden chink when he has an open door? “By one man,” says the apostle; “through the offence of one,” says the apostle; “By one man's disobedience,” says the apostle. What does he want more? What does he require plainer? What does he expect to be more impressively repeated?

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine refers to Romans 5:12-19 which we have quoted previously. There is no question that these Scriptures prove that man is born with original sin. The fact that all men die is proof of the Scripture.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On Marriage and Concupiscence, Book I, Chapters 57-59, page 307-308**



Now observe what follows, as he goes on to say: “If, before sin, God created a source from which men should be born, but the devil a source from which parents were disturbed, then beyond a doubt holiness must be ascribed to those that are born, and guilt to those that produce. Since, however, this would be a most manifest condemnation of marriage; remove, I pray you, this view from the midst of the churches, and really believe that all things were made by Jesus Christ, and that without Him nothing was made.” (John 1:3) He so speaks here, as if he would make us say, that there is a something in man’s substance which was created by the devil. The devil persuaded evil as a sin; he did not create it as a nature. No doubt he persuaded nature for man is nature; and therefore by his persuasion he corrupted it. He who wounds a limb does not, of course, create it, but he injures it. Those wounds, indeed, which are inflicted on the body produce lameness in a limb, or difficulty of motion; but they do not affect the virtue whereby a man becomes righteous: that wound, however, which has the name of sin, wounds the very life, which was being righteously lived. This wound was at that fatal moment of the fall inflicted by the devil to a vastly wider and deeper extent than are the sins which are known amongst men.

Whence it came to pass, that our nature having then and there been deteriorated by that great sin of the first man, not only was made a sinner, but also generates sinners; and yet the very weakness, under which the virtue of a holy life has drooped and died, is not really nature, but corruption; precisely as a bad state of health is not a bodily substance or nature, but disorder; very often, indeed, if not always, the ailing character of parents is in a certain way implanted, and reappears in the bodies of their children.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he quotes Pelagius, “Now observe what follows, as he goes on to say: “If, before sin, God created a source from which men should be born, but the devil a source from which parents were disturbed, then beyond a doubt holiness must be ascribed to those that are born, and guilt to those that produce. Since, however, this would be a most manifest condemnation of marriage; remove, I pray you, this view from the midst of the churches, and really believe that all things were made by Jesus Christ, and that without Him nothing was made.” (John 1:3)”

He is referring to **John 1 (KJV):3** All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Augustine then responds, “He so speaks here, as if he would make us say, that there is a something in man’s substance which was created by the devil. The devil persuaded evil as a sin; he did not create it as a nature. No doubt he persuaded nature for man is nature; and therefore by his persuasion he corrupted it. He who wounds a limb does not, of course, create it, but he injures it. Those wounds, indeed, which are inflicted on the body produce lameness in a limb, or difficulty of motion; but they do not affect the virtue whereby a man becomes righteous: that wound, however, which has the name of sin, wounds the very life, which was being righteously lived. This wound was at that fatal moment of the fall inflicted by the devil to a vastly wider and deeper extent than are the sins which are known amongst men. Whence it came to pass, that our nature having then and there been deteriorated by that great sin of the first man, not only was made a sinner, but also generates sinners;”

And this last statement agrees with the Scripture in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Before Christ, our spirit is dead in trespasses and sins. Our nature in our flesh was “**deteriorated by that great sin of the first man**”. We now have a fallen nature, the Adamic sin nature, the law of sin in our members, as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Augustine then concludes, “**and yet the very weakness, under which the virtue of a holy life has drooped and died, is not really nature, but corruption; precisely as a bad state of health is not a bodily substance or nature, but disorder; very often, indeed, if not always, the ailing character of parents is in a certain way implanted, and reappears in the bodies of their children.**”

And yet, Augustine cannot bring himself to call it a sin nature in our flesh, or even “the law of sin in our members”. He calls it “**not really nature, but corruption**”, and “**not a bodily substance or nature, but disorder**”. It is simply as, “**very often, indeed, if not always, the ailing character of parents is in a certain way implanted, and reappears in the bodies of their children.**”

The Scripture is clear that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh, even after we are saved, as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

But we who have been born again now have a new nature in our spirit which has been made alive to God. We have been set free as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV)**:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

That is, I don't have to yield to the law of sin and death in my members.

Chapter 58.—Adam's Sin is Derived from Him to Every One Who is Born Even of Regenerate Parents; The Example of the Olive Tree and the Wild Olive.

But this sin, which changed man for the worse in paradise, because it is far greater than we can form any judgment of, is contracted by every one at his birth, and is remitted only in the regenerate; and this derangement is such as to be derived even from parents who have been regenerated, and in whom the sin is remitted and covered, to the condemnation of the children

born of them, unless these, who were bound by their first and carnal birth, are absolved by their second and spiritual birth. Of this wonderful fact the Creator has produced a wonderful example in the cases of the olive and the wild olive trees, in which, from the seed not only of the wild olive, but even of the good olive, nothing but a wild olive springs. **Wherefore, although even in persons whose natural birth is followed by regeneration through grace, there exists this carnal concupiscence which contends against the law of the mind, yet, seeing that it is remitted in the remission of sins, it is no longer accounted to them as sin, nor is it in any degree hurtful, unless consent is yielded to its motions for unlawful deeds.** Their offspring, however, being begotten not of spiritual concupiscence, but of carnal, like a wild olive of our race from the good olive, derives guilt from them by natural birth to such a degree that it cannot be liberated from that pest except by being born again. How is it, then, that this man affirms that we ascribe holiness to those who are born, and guilt to their parents? When the truth rather shows that even if there has been holiness in the parents, original sin is inherent in their children, which is abolished in them only if they are born again.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But this sin, which changed man for the worse in paradise, because it is far greater than we can form any judgment of, is contracted by every one at his birth, and is remitted only in the regenerate; and this derangement is such as to be derived even from parents who have been regenerated, and in whom the sin is remitted and covered, to the condemnation of the children born of them, unless these, who were bound by their first and carnal birth, are absolved by their second and spiritual birth.”

Yes, we must be born again, and our children must also be born again, or we, and they, cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. He continues, “Of this wonderful fact the Creator has produced a wonderful example in the cases of the olive and the wild olive trees, in which, from the seed not only of the wild olive, but even of the good olive, nothing but a wild olive springs.”

His analogy is of Israel, which is the good olive tree, and Gentiles, which correspond to the wild olive tree, as we read in **Romans 11 (KJV):** 16 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. 17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; 18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. 19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: 21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. 22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. 23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? 25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

Augustine then continues, **“Wherefore, although even in persons whose natural birth is**

followed by regeneration through grace, there exists this carnal concupiscence which contends against the law of the mind, yet, seeing that it is remitted in the remission of sins, it is no longer accounted to them as sin, nor is it in any degree hurtful, unless consent is yielded to its motions for unlawful deeds.”

Nowhere in Scripture is the nature of the flesh spoken of as “**carnal concupiscence**”. It would be better if he called it “the law of sin which is in my members”. But it is true that there is “another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members”, as the Scripture says in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

And we are not to yield our members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin as Paul commands in **Romans 6 (KJV):13** Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Augustine continues, “Their offspring, however, being begotten not of spiritual concupiscence, but of carnal, like a wild olive of our race from the good olive, derives guilt from them by natural birth to such a degree that it cannot be liberated from that pest except by being born again.”

Augustine uses the word “carnal” when he refers to sexual relations between married couples. We are given the context of the word “carnal” as used in Scripture in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. **2** I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. **3** For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? **4** For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

The word “carnal” in Scripture relates to walking in the flesh, and not in the Spirit. Walking in the flesh is yielding to the works of the flesh spoken of in **Galatians 5 (KJV):19** Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, **20** Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, **21** Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

If we are walking in the Spirit, we will produce the fruit of the Spirit as in **Galatians 5 (KJV):22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, **23** Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. **24** And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. **25** If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

“Carnal concupiscence” has nothing to do with marriage. Marriage is honorable in all as we read again in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):4** Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

It is the sin of adultery and fornication that is born of the lust of the flesh, and that is what God will judge.

Augustine continues, “How is it, then, that this man affirms that we ascribe holiness to those who are born, and guilt to their parents? When the truth rather shows that even if there has

been holiness in the parents, original sin is inherent in their children, which is abolished in them only if they are born again.”

Unless we are born again, we cannot see or enter the Kingdom of God as we read again in **John 3 (KJV):3** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Chapter 59 [XXXV.]—The Pelagians Can Hardly Venture to Place Concupiscence in Paradise Before the Commission of Sin.

This being the case, let him think what he pleases about this concupiscence of the flesh and about the lust which lords it over the unchaste, has to be mastered by the chaste, and yet is to be blushed at both by the chaste and the unchaste; for I see plainly he is much pleased with it. Let him not hesitate to praise what he is ashamed to name; let him call it (as he has in fact called it) the vigour of the members, and let him not be afraid of the honor of chaste ears; let him designate it the power of the members, and let him not care about the impudence. Let him say, if his blushes permit him, that if no one had sinned, this vigour must have flourished like a flower in paradise; nor would there have been any need to cover that which would have been so moved that no one should have felt ashamed; rather, with a wife provided, it would have been ever exercised and never repressed, lest so great a pleasure should ever be denied to so vast a happiness. Far be it from being thought that such blessedness could in such a spot fail to have what it wished, or ever experience in mind or body what it disliked. And so, should the motion of lust precede men's will, then the will would immediately follow it. The wife, who ought certainly never to be absent in this happy state of things, would be urged on by it, whether about to conceive or already pregnant; and, either a child would be begotten, or a natural and laudable pleasure would be gratified,—for perish all seed rather than disappoint the appetite of so good a concupiscence. Only be sure that the united pair do not apply themselves to that use of each other which is contrary to nature, then (with so modest a reservation) let them use, as often as they would have delight, their organs of generation, created for the purpose. But what if this very use, which is contrary to nature, should peradventure give them delight; what if the aforesaid laudable lust should hanker even after such delight; I wonder whether they should pursue it because it was sweet, or loathe it because it was base? If they should pursue it to gratification, what becomes of all thought about honour? If they should loathe it, where is the peaceful composure of so good a happiness? **But at this point perchance his blushes will awake, and he will say that so great is the tranquillity of this happy state, and so entire the orderliness which may have existed in this state of things, that carnal concupiscence never preceded these persons' will: only whenever they themselves wished, would it then arise; and only then would they entertain the wish, when there was need for begetting children; and the result would be, that no seed would ever be emitted to no purpose, nor would any embrace ever ensue which would not be followed by conception and birth; the flesh would obey the will, and concupiscence would vie with it in subserviency. Well, if he says all this of the imagined happy state, he must at least be pretty sure that what he describes does not now exist among men. And**



even if he will not concede that lust is a corrupt condition, let him at least allow that through the disobedience of the man and woman in the happy state the very concupiscence of their flesh was corrupted, so that what would once be excited obediently and orderly is now moved disobediently and inordinately, and that to such a degree that it is not obedient to the will of even chaste-minded husbands and wives, so that it is excited when it is not wanted; and whenever it is necessary, it never, indeed, follows their will, but sometimes too hurriedly, at other times too tardily, exerts its own movements. Such, then, is the rebellion of this concupiscence which the primitive pair received for their own disobedience, and transfused by natural descent to us. It certainly was not at their bidding, but in utter disorder, that it was excited, when they covered their members, which at first were worthy to be gloried in, but had then become a ground of shame.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “This being the case, let him think what he pleases about this concupiscence of the flesh and about the lust which lords it over the unchaste, has to be mastered by the chaste, and yet is to be blushed at both by the chaste and the unchaste; for I see plainly he is much pleased with it. Let him not hesitate to praise what he is ashamed to name; let him call it (as he has in fact called it) the vigour of the members, and let him not be afraid of the honor of chaste ears; let him designate it the power of the members, and let him not care about the impudence.”

When he refers to the “vigour of the members”, he is referring to the sexual relationship between man and woman. When he says it “is to be blushed at both by the chaste and the unchaste”, he refers to the shame that Adam and Eve felt after they had sinned.

Adam and Eve felt shame for the first time after they sinned, and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):6** And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. 7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

He then proposes what it would have been like if man and woman had not sinned, as he continues, “Let him say, if his blushes permit him, that if no one had sinned, this vigour must have flourished like a flower in paradise; **nor would there have been any need to cover that which would have been so moved that no one should have felt ashamed**; rather, with a wife provided, it would have been ever exercised and never repressed, lest so great a pleasure should ever be denied to so vast a happiness.”

Man came to the knowledge of good and evil by sin. Sin was already in the universe by Satan. If man would have come to the knowledge of good and evil by his obedience, then he would have known to cover himself because of his acknowledgement that evil exists.

Augustine then continues, “Far be it from being thought that such blessedness could in such a spot fail to have what it wished, or ever experience in mind or body what it disliked. And so, should the motion of lust precede men’s will, then the will would immediately follow it. The wife, who ought certainly never to be absent in this happy state of things, would be urged on by it, whether about to conceive or already pregnant; and, either a child would be begotten, or a natural and laudable pleasure would be gratified,—for perish all seed rather than disappoint the appetite of so good a concupiscence. Only be sure that the united pair do not apply themselves

to that use of each other which is contrary to nature, then (with so modest a reservation) let them use, as often as they would have delight, their organs of generation, created for the purpose.”

Augustine thought that sex in marriage was only lawful when exercised in order to have children. Otherwise it was “contrary to nature”. To Augustine, all sexual desire, even in marriage, was “concupiscence”, that is, lust. He was never able to realize the truth about marriage, that is, that there is no shame in marriage.

He continues, as he then asks, “But what if this very use, which is contrary to nature, should peradventure give them delight; what if the aforesaid laudable lust should hanker even after such delight; I wonder whether they should pursue it because it was sweet, or loathe it because it was base? If they should pursue it to gratification, what becomes of all thought about honour? If they should loathe it, where is the peaceful composure of so good a happiness?”

But marriage is honorable in all as we read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):4** Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

There is no shame in marriage. But sin is in the world. We cover ourselves in acknowledgment of this. He continues, “But at this point perchance his blushes will awake, and he will say that so great is the tranquillity of this happy state, and so entire the orderliness which may have existed in this state of things, that carnal concupiscence never preceded these persons’ will: only whenever they themselves wished, would it then arise; and only then would they entertain the wish, when there was need for begetting children; and the result would be, that no seed would ever be emitted to no purpose, nor would any embrace ever ensue which would not be followed by conception and birth; the flesh would obey the will, and concupiscence would vie with it in subserviency.”

He is speaking of a time before Adam and Eve sinned. They would have had complete control, and “only then would they entertain the wish, when there was need for begetting children”, and “the result would be, that no seed would ever be emitted to no purpose, nor would any embrace ever ensue which would not be followed by conception and birth”.

But those marriages in the Lord have complete control because of the Spirit of life in their spirits. The desire for intimacy with one’s spouse is natural and good.

He then concludes, as he describes what happened after Adam and Eve sinned, “Well, if he says all this of the imagined happy state, he must at least be pretty sure that what he describes does not now exist among men. And even if he will not concede that lust is a corrupt condition, let him at least allow that through the disobedience of the man and woman in the happy state the very concupiscence of their flesh was corrupted, so that what would once be excited obediently and orderly is now moved disobediently and inordinately, and that to such a degree that it is not obedient to the will of even chaste-minded husbands and wives, so that it is excited when it is not wanted; and whenever it is necessary, it never, indeed, follows their will, but sometimes too hurriedly, at other times too tardily, exerts its own movements. Such, then, is the rebellion of this concupiscence which the primitive pair received for their own disobedience, and transfused by natural descent to us. It certainly was not at their bidding, but in utter disorder, that it was excited, when they covered their members, which at first were worthy to be gloried in, but had then become a ground of shame.”

Adam and Eve came to the knowledge of good and evil by their sin. This is why they felt shame. If they would have come to this knowledge by their obedience, they would have been no

shame but an understanding that sin is in the world. This necessitates the covering of our members. Augustine had a lot of unprocessed feelings about his own past relationships. He himself had a son out of wedlock. And the Church in his time was not helping him to have a more real understanding of marriage. It is helpful to read Paul's words in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV)**: 1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. 6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. 8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. 9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

In verse 9, the word “contain” in the Greek is ἐγκρατεύομαι (pronounced en-krä-tyü'-o-mī), and means “en, “in,” kratos, “power, strength,” lit., “to have power over oneself,” is rendered “(if) they have (not) continency” (i.e., are lacking in self-control), in 1 Corinthians 7:9, RV; AV, “can (not) contain;” in 1 Corinthians 9:25, “is temperate.”” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. I, page 235.**

In these verses, nothing is said of procreation. In verse 5 they were not to defraud each other, “except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer”.

Again marriage is honorable in all, as we read again in **Hebrews 13 (KJV)**: 4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

But to Augustine, and the Catholic Church in his time, sex was only for the procreation of children. Otherwise, in marriage, if it was just for pleasure, it was permissible but was a venial sin. But God made it to be pleasurable. Men are commanded to love their wives as we read in **Ephesians 5 (KJV)**: 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, Book IV, Chapters 18-19, page 424-425**

### **Chapter 18.—The Opinion of the Saints Themselves About Themselves.**

It is to be confessed that “the Holy Spirit, even in the old times,” not only “aided good dispositions,” which even they allow, but that it even made them good, which they will not have. “That all, also, of the prophets and apostles or saints, both evangelical and ancient, to whom God gives His witness, were righteous, not in comparison with the wicked, but by the rule of virtue,” is not doubtful. And this is opposed to the Manicheans, who blaspheme the

patriarchs and prophets; but what is opposed to the Pelagians is, that all of these, when interrogated concerning themselves while they lived in the body, with one most accordant voice would answer, “If we should say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8) “But in the future time,” it is not to be denied “that there will be a reward as well of good works as of evil, and that no one will be commanded to do the commandments there which here he has contemned,” but that a sufficiency of perfect righteousness where sin cannot be, a righteousness which is here hungered and thirsted after by the saints, is here hoped for in precept, is there received as a reward, on the entreaty of alms and prayers; so that what here may have been wanting in fulfillment of the commandments may become unpunished for the forgiveness of sin.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “It is to be confessed that “the Holy Spirit, even in the old times,” not only “aided good dispositions,” which even they allow, but that it even made them good, which they will not have. “That all, also, of the prophets and apostles or saints, both evangelical and ancient, to whom God gives His witness, were righteous, not in comparison with the wicked, but by the rule of virtue,” is not doubtful.”

All of the Old Testament saints were born again, for this has been in every age how one enters the Kingdom of God. Adam and Eve were born again, for they confessed their sin to the Lord. And so the Lord made coats of skins for them as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):21** Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

The coats of skins which clothed them are symbolic of God’s righteousness, the righteousness which is by faith. And so Adam was a son of God as we read in **Luke 3 (KJV):38** Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

Augustine then continues, “And this is opposed to the Manicheans, who blaspheme the patriarchs and prophets; but what is opposed to the Pelagians is, that all of these, when interrogated concerning themselves while they lived in the body, with one most accordant voice would answer, “If we should say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8)”

He refers to **1 John 1 (KJV):8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Augustine then continues, ““But in the future time,” it is not to be denied “that there will be a reward as well of good works as of evil, and that no one will be commanded to do the commandments there which here he has contemned,””

The word “contemned” means “to view or treat with contempt : SCORN”. (**Merriam Webster**)

He continues, “but that a sufficiency of perfect righteousness where sin cannot be, a righteousness which is here hungered and thirsted after by the saints...”

He speaks of a time in heaven where sin cannot be. And he then refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):6** Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

He continues, “is here hoped for in precept, is there received as a reward, on the

entreaty of alms and prayers;

John Piper offers this definition of God's righteousness when he says, "God's righteousness is His unwavering allegiance to do what is right, that is, most ultimately, to uphold the infinite worth of His glory." **The Future of Justification, A Response to N. T. Wright, by John Piper, page 78.**

So to hunger and thirst after righteousness is to hunger and thirst to do what is right, and to uphold God's glory. And to do what is right and to uphold God's glory is to put on the breastplate of righteousness as we read in **Ephesians 6 (KJV):14** Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

But in another sense, having been justified by faith in Jesus Christ, we have His righteousness put down to our account. So we have a standing with God as righteous ones as in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Augustine concludes, "so that what here may have been wanting in fulfillment of the commandments may become unpunished for the forgiveness of sin."

He speaks of a time in heaven where sin cannot be. But when he says that "a sufficiency of perfect righteousness...is there received as a reward, on the entreaty of alms and prayers", he did not understand that this perfect righteousness is put down to our account when we believed in Jesus Christ, and God justified us. The reward of heaven is secured by our standing of righteousness which God imputes to us when we believe in Jesus Christ, and we are born again. The rewards for good works are rewards we receive in addition to the reward of heaven, such as the crown of life in **James 1 (KJV):12** Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

And the crown of righteousness in **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):8** Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

## Chapter 19.—The Craft of the Pelagians.

And if these things be so, let the Pelagians cease by their most insidious praises of these five things—that is, the praise of the creature, the praise of marriage, the praise of the law, the praise of free will, the praise of the saints—from feigning that they desire to pluck men, as it were, from the little snares of the Manicheans, in order that they may entangle them in their own nets—that is, that they may deny original sin; may begrudge to infants the aid of Christ the physician; may say that the grace of God is given according to our merits, and thus that grace is no more grace; and may say that the saints in this life had not sin, and thus make the prayer of none effect which He gave to the saints who had no sin, and by which all sin is pardoned to the saints that pray unto Him. To these three evil doctrines, they by their deceitful praise of these five good things seduce careless and unlearned men. Concerning all which things, I think I have sufficiently censured their most cruel and wicked



and proud vanity.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “And if these things be so, let the Pelagians cease by their most insidious praises of these five things—that is,”

- 1.) the praise of the creature, 4.) the praise of free will,
- 2.) the praise of marriage, 5.) the praise of the saints”
- 3.) the praise of the law,

He continues, “—from feigning that they desire to pluck men, as it were, from the little snares of the Manicheans, in order that they may entangle them in their own nets—“

Augustine then summarizes the three evil doctrines of the Pelagians:

- 1.) “that they may deny original sin; may begrudge to infants the aid of Christ the physician;
- 2.) may say that the grace of God is given according to our merits, and thus that grace is no more grace;
- 3.) and may say that the saints in this life had not sin, and thus make the prayer of none effect which He gave to the saints who had no sin, and by which all sin is pardoned to the saints that pray unto Him.”

He concludes, “To these three evil doctrines, they by their deceitful praise of these five good things seduce careless and unlearned men. Concerning all which things, I think I have sufficiently censured their most cruel and wicked and proud vanity.”

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, Book IV, Chapter 21, page 425-426**

Chapter 21.—Pelagius, in Imitation of Cyprian, Wrote a Book of Testimonies.

Even that heresiarch of these men, Pelagius himself, mentions with the honour that is certainly due to him, the most blessed Cyprian, most glorious with even the crown of martyrdom, not only in the African and the Western, but also in the Eastern Churches, well known by the report of fame, and by the diffusion far and wide of his writings,—when, writing a book of testimonies, he asserts that he is imitating him, saying that “he was doing to Romanus what Cyprian had done to Quirinus.” Let us, then, see what Cyprian thought concerning original sin, which entered by one man into the world. In the epistle on “Works and Alms” he thus speaks: “When the Lord at His advent had cured these wounds which Adam had introduced, and had healed the old poisons of the serpent, He gave a law to the sound man, and bade him sin no more, lest a worse thing should happen to him if he sinned. We had been limited and shut up into a narrow space by the commandment of innocence; nor would the infirmity and weakness of human frailty have any resource unless the divine mercy coming once more in aid should open some way of securing salvation by pointing out works of justice and mercy, so that by almsgiving we may wash away whatever foulness we subsequently contract.” By this testimony this witness refutes two falsehoods of theirs,—the one, wherein they say that the human race draws no sin from Adam which needs cure and healing through Christ; the other, in which they say that the saints have no sin after baptism.

Again, in the same epistle he says, “Let each one place before his eyes the devil with his servants,—that is, with the people of perdition and death,—as springing forth into the midst and provoking the people of Christ,—Himself being present and judging,—with the trial of comparison in these words: ‘I, on behalf of those whom thou seest with me, neither received buffets, nor bore scourgings, nor endured the cross, nor shed my blood, nor redeemed my family at the price of my suffering and blood; but neither do I promise them a celestial kingdom, nor do I recall them to Paradise, having again restored to them immortality.’” Let the Pelagians answer and say when we could have been in the immortality of Paradise, and how we could have been expelled thence so as to be recalled thither by the grace of Christ. And, although they may be unable to find what they can answer in this case on behalf of their own perversity, let them observe in what manner Cyprian understood what the apostle says, “In whom all have sinned.” And let not the Pelagian heretics, freed from the old Manichean heretics, dare to suggest any calumny against a Catholic, lest they should be convicted of doing so wicked a wrong even to the ancient martyr Cyprian.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Even that heresiarch of these men, Pelagius himself, mentions with the honour that is certainly due to him, the most blessed Cyprian, most glorious with even the crown of martyrdom, not only in the African and the Western, but also in the Eastern Churches, well known by the report of fame, and by the diffusion far and wide of his writings,—when, writing a book of testimonies, he asserts that he is imitating him, saying that “he was doing to Romanus what Cyprian had done to Quirinus.”?

The word “heresiarch” means “dissenter, dissentient, dissident, heretic, nonconformist”. (Merriam Webster)

He is speaking of Pelagius. He then continues, “Let us, then, see what Cyprian thought concerning original sin, which entered by one man into the world.”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Augustine continues, “In the epistle on “Works and Alms” he thus speaks: “When the Lord at His advent had cured these wounds which Adam had introduced, and had healed the old poisons of the serpent, He gave a law to the sound man, and bade him sin no more, lest a worse thing should happen to him if he sinned. We had been limited and shut up into a narrow space by the commandment of innocence; nor would the infirmity and weakness of human frailty have any resource unless the divine mercy coming once more in aid should open some way of securing salvation by pointing out works of justice and mercy, so that by almsgiving we may wash away whatever foulness we subsequently contract.””

He may in part refer to an impotent man Jesus healed in **John 5 (KJV):14** Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

Almsgiving does not “wash away whatever foulness we subsequently contract”. Our salvation is secure by what Jesus has done for us. For “whatever foulness we subsequently contract”, that is, sins we commit after being born again, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have

fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):22** And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

The blood of Jesus Christ, and only His blood, cleanses us from sins as we confess them.

Augustine continues, “By this testimony this witness refutes two falsehoods of theirs,—the one, wherein they say that the human race draws no sin from Adam which needs cure and healing through Christ; the other, in which they say that the saints have no sin after baptism.”

Augustine again mentions two falsehoods of the Pelagians:

- 1.) “the one, wherein they say that the human race draws no sin from Adam which needs cure and healing through Christ”
- 2.) “the other, in which they say that the saints have no sin after baptism”

Augustine then quotes Cyprian again, as he says, “Again, in the same epistle he says, “Let each one place before his eyes the devil with his servants,—that is, with the people of perdition and death,—as springing forth into the midst and provoking the people of Christ,—Himself being present and judging,—with the trial of comparison in these words: ‘I, on behalf of those whom thou seest with me, neither received buffets, nor bore scourgings, nor endured the cross, nor shed my blood, nor redeemed my family at the price of my suffering and blood; but neither do I promise them a celestial kingdom, nor do I recall them to Paradise, having again restored to them immortality.’”

Augustine then says, “Let the Pelagians answer and say when we could have been in the immortality of Paradise, and how we could have been expelled thence so as to be recalled thither by the grace of Christ. And, although they may be unable to find what they can answer in this case on behalf of their own perversity, let them observe in what manner Cyprian understood what the apostle says, “In whom all have sinned.”

Augustine equates what Cyprian said, that is, “When the Lord at His advent had cured these wounds which Adam had introduced...”, with “what the apostle says, “In whom all have sinned.”

And he then concludes, “And let not the Pelagian heretics, freed from the old Manichean heretics, dare to suggest any calumny against a Catholic, lest they should be convicted of doing so wicked a wrong even to the ancient martyr Cyprian.”

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine, Sermons on New Testament Lessons, Sermon XIX. [LXIX. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel, Matt. xix. 28, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden,” etc., paragraph 4, page 316**

4.... Call to mind the original sin of Adam, in whom we all die. When he first sinned, he made himself aprons of fig-leaves, (Genesis 3:7) signifying by these leaves the irritations of lust to which he had been reduced by sinning. Hence are we born; in this condition are we

born; born in sinful flesh, which “the likeness of sinful flesh” alone can cure. Therefore “God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.” (Romans 8:3)...

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine refers to **Genesis 3 (KJV):7** And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

And to **Romans 8 (KJV):3** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

But the fig leaves Adam and Eve sewed together as aprons relate to the shame they felt because of their sin. They made these aprons themselves. But God later made coats of skins for them after they confessed their sin, as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):21** Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them. 22 And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

These coats of skins are symbolic of the righteousness of faith. Because sin was already in the universe, Adam and Eve were tested in regards to their obedience. When they sinned, they came to the knowledge of good and evil. They felt shame for their sin, and covered themselves with fig leaves. When they confessed their sin, God clothed them with coats of skins, symbolic of His righteousness. As long as they walk in obedience to the Lord, they feel no shame.

## Man's Nature

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine**

**Tractate XLII. Chapter VIII. 37–47, paragraphs 15-16, page 239-240**

15. “He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.” Here, again, it is not of their nature as men, but of their depravity, that you are to think. In this way they are of God, and yet not of God. By nature they are of God, in depravity they are not of God. Give heed, I pray you. In the gospel you have the remedy against the poisonous and impious errors of the heretics. For of these words also the Manicheans are accustomed to say, See, here there are two natures, —the one good and the other bad; the Lord says it. What says the Lord? “Ye therefore hear me not, because ye are not of God.” This is what the Lord says. What then, he rejoins, dost thou say to that? Hear what I say. They are both of God, and not of God. By nature they are of God: by depravity they are not of God; for the good nature which is of God sinned voluntarily by believing the persuasive words of the devil, and was corrupted; and so it is seeking a physician, because no longer in health. That is what I say. But thou thinkest it impossible that they should be of God, and yet not of God. Hear why it is not impossible. They are of God, and yet not of God, in the same way as they are the children of Abraham, and yet not the children of Abraham. Here you have it. It is not as you say. Harken to the Lord Himself; it is He that said to them, “I know that ye are the children of Abraham.” Could there be any lie with the Lord? Surely not. Then is it true what the Lord said?

It is true. Then it is true that they were the children of Abraham? It is true. But listen to Himself denying it. He who said, “Ye are the children of Abraham,” Himself denied that they were the children of Abraham. “If ye are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that telleth you the truth, which I have heard from God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the works of your father,” that is, of the devil. **How, then, were they both Abraham’s children, and yet not his children? Both states He showed in them. They were both Abraham’s children in their carnal origin, and not his children in the sin of following the persuasion of the devil. So, also, apply it to our Lord and God, that they were both of Him, and not of Him. How were they of Him? Because He it was that created the man of whom they were born. How were they of Him? Because He is the Architect of nature,—Himself the Creator of flesh and spirit. How, then, were they not of Him? Because they had made themselves depraved. They were no longer of Him, because, imitating the devil, they had become the children of the devil.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.””

He refers to **John 8 (KJV):47** He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

He continues, “Here, again, it is not of their nature as men, but of their depravity, that you are to think. In this way they are of God, and yet not of God. By nature they are of God, in depravity they are not of God.”

As God’s creation, man is of God. But when man sinned, we must remember that his body became mortal, and sin as a law, that is, a nature, is in his members.

Augustine continues, “Give heed, I pray you. In the gospel you have the remedy against the poisonous and impious errors of the heretics. For of these words also the Manicheans are accustomed to say, See, here there are two natures, —the one good and the other bad; the Lord says it. What says the Lord? “Ye therefore hear me not, because ye are not of God.” This is what the Lord says. What then, he rejoins, dost thou say to that? Hear what I say. They are both of God, and not of God. By nature they are of God: by depravity they are not of God; for the good nature which is of God sinned voluntarily by believing the persuasive words of the devil, and was corrupted; and so it is seeking a physician, because no longer in health. That is what I say. But thou thinkest it impossible that they should be of God, and yet not of God. Hear why it is not impossible. They are of God, and yet not of God, in the same way as they are the children of Abraham, and yet not the children of Abraham. Here you have it. It is not as you say. Harken to the Lord Himself; it is He that said to them, “I know that ye are the children of Abraham.””

He refers to **John 8 (KJV):37** I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

He continues, “Could there be any lie with the Lord? Surely not. Then is it true what the Lord said? It is true. Then it is true that they were the children of Abraham? It is true. But listen to Himself denying it. He who said, “Ye are the children of Abraham,” Himself denied that they were the children of Abraham. “If ye are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that telleth you the truth, which I have heard from God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the works of your father,” that is, of the devil.”



He refers in context to **John 8 (KJV)**:38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. 39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. 41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. 42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. 45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

Augustine continues, “How, then, were they both Abraham’s children, and yet not his children? Both states He showed in them. They were both Abraham’s children in their carnal origin, and not his children in the sin of following the persuasion of the devil. So, also, apply it to our Lord and God, that they were both of Him, and not of Him. How were they of Him? Because He it was that created the man of whom they were born. How were they of Him? Because He is the Architect of nature,—Himself the Creator of flesh and spirit. How, then, were they not of Him? Because they had made themselves depraved. They were no longer of Him, because, imitating the devil, they had become the children of the devil.”

So Augustine is saying that man is not a sinner by nature, but by imitation of the devil. God is “the Architect of nature,—Himself the Creator of flesh and spirit”, he says. But men “had made themselves depraved”, and so “They were no longer of Him, because, imitating the devil, they had become the children of the devil”.

We can understand what he is saying here. Men are still men, as created by God. However, in the Scripture we read as in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

This nature is inherited from Adam. It is called the law of sin which is in our members, that is, in our flesh. Paul explains as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV)**:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

Paul is speaking as a born again believer here. We continue to read in **Romans 7 (KJV)**: 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

The reason he delights in the law of God after the inward man is because he has been born again by the Spirit of God, and he has a new divine nature in his spirit, as Peter reveals in

**2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

We continue to read in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

The law of sin is still in our members, that is, our flesh, even after we have been born again. We continue to read in **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? **25** I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

In the believer, there is now the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. **2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus refers to the new divine nature in our spirit after we have been born again, and to the eternal life which is now the believer's as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):11** And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. **12** He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. **13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Let us continue to read the next paragraph.

16. Therefore came the Lord God to man as a sinner. Thou hast heard the two names, both man and sinner. As man, he is of God; as a sinner, he is not of God. Let the moral evil in man be distinguished from his nature. Let that nature be owned, to the praise of the Creator; let the evil be acknowledged, that the physician may be called in to its cure. When the Lord then said, "He that is of God heareth the words of God: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." He did not distinguish the value of different natures, or find, beyond their own soul and body, any nature in men which had not been vitiated by sin; but foreknowing those who should yet believe, them He called of God, because yet to be born again of God by the adoption of regeneration. To these apply the words "He that is of God heareth the words of God." But that which follows, "Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God," was said to those who were not only corrupted by sin (for this evil was common to all), but also foreknown as those who would not believe with the faith that alone could deliver them from the bondage of sin. On this account He foreknew that those to whom He so spake would continue in that which they derived from the devil, that is, in their sins, and would die in the impiety in which they resembled him; and would not come to the regeneration wherein they would be the children of God, that is, be born of the God by whom they were created as men. In accordance with this predestinating purpose did the Lord speak; and not that He had found any man amongst them who either by regeneration was already of God, or by nature was no longer of God.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "Therefore came the Lord God to man as a sinner. Thou hast heard the two names, both man and sinner. As man, he is of God; as a sinner, he is not of God. Let the moral evil in man be distinguished from his nature. Let that nature be

owned, to the praise of the Creator; let the evil be acknowledged, that the physician may be called in to its cure. When the Lord then said, "He that is of God heareth the words of God: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." He did not distinguish the value of different natures, or find, beyond their own soul and body, any nature in men which had not been vitiated by sin;"

The word "vitiated" means "to make faulty or defective". (**Merriam Webster**)

Augustine continues, "but foreknowing those who should yet believe, them He called of God, because yet to be born again of God by the adoption of regeneration. To these apply the words "He that is of God heareth the words of God." But that which follows, "Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God," was said to those who were not only corrupted by sin (for this evil was common to all), but also foreknown as those who would not believe with the faith that alone could deliver them from the bondage of sin."

Nothing is said by Jesus in this Scripture in regards to foreknowing whether those He was speaking to would ever repent and believe. In the time that Jesus was speaking, they were not of God, and had not repented. They did not at that time hear the words of God.

Yet Augustine continues, "On this account He foreknew that those to whom He so spake would continue in that which they derived from the devil, that is, in their sins, and would die in the impiety in which they resembled him; and would not come to the regeneration wherein they would be the children of God, that is, be born of the God by whom they were created as men. In accordance with this predestinating purpose did the Lord speak; and not that He had found any man amongst them who either by regeneration was already of God, or by nature was no longer of God."

Let us continue reading in **John 8 (KJV):**46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? 47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. 48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? 49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. 50 And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. 51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. 52 Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. 53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? 54 Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: 55 Yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. 57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? 58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. 59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

The Lord has foreknowledge, but nothing is mentioned in these verses in regards to those He was speaking with at the time about whether they would ever repent or not. But the Scripture is clear. The whole human race is mortal, and has a sin nature inherited from Adam. Augustine acknowledged this as original sin, but he did not completely understand that it was

also a nature. This nature is still in the flesh of believers who have been born again. But because of the new divine nature in our spirits, we do not have to yield to this sin nature in our bodies.

## Summary

Augustine understands that “the fall of the first man” is responsible for “the origin and propagation of human death.”

He then explains that, “the human soul is truly affirmed to be immortal, yet it also has a certain death of its own”, that is “when God forsakes it”. He then explains, “Therefore the death of both—that is, of the whole man—occurs when the soul, forsaken by God, forsakes the body.” He then concludes, “And this death of the whole man is followed by that which, on the authority of the divine oracles, we call the second death. This the Saviour referred to when He said, “Fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28)”

The word, “destroy”, means “to render useless”. It’s not that the soul and body cease to exist in hell, but that they are ruined in torment. Augustine understood this. What he did not understand is that there is a division between soul and spirit, and that man is composed of body, soul, and spirit.

So before Christ, our spirit is dead in trespasses and sins. We have no relationship with God. Our souls are also in a sense dead to God, since they have no awareness of Him. But when we are born again, our spirit is made alive to God, and our souls are renewed day by day in a progressive sanctification.

Now Augustine understood that the sin of our parents, Adam and Eve, is passed down to all who are born of them, as he said, “Wherefore we must say that the first men were indeed so created, that if they had not sinned, they would not have experienced any kind of death; but that, having become sinners, they were so punished with death, that whatsoever sprang from their stock should also be punished with the same death. For nothing else could be born of them than that which they themselves had been.” And he says correctly, “what man was made, not when created, but when he sinned and was punished, this he propagated, so far as the origin of sin and death are concerned.” And he adds, “human nature was in his person vitiated and altered to such an extent, that he suffered in his members the warring of disobedient lust, and became subject to the necessity of dying.”

Now Augustine believed that it was by the ritual of baptism, or as he says, “the sacrament of regeneration”, that is, “the laver of regeneration”, that men and women are born again.

So because “our first parents had transgressed the commandment, divine grace forsook them, and they were confounded at their own wickedness; and therefore they took fig-leaves (which were possibly the first that came to hand in their troubled state of mind), and covered their shame; for though their members remained the same, they had shame now where they had none before.” And now “began the flesh to lust against the Spirit, (Galatians 5:17) in which strife we are born, deriving from the first transgression a seed of death, and bearing in our members, and in our vitiated nature, the contest or even victory of the flesh.”

He says it is the “death of the soul which takes place in sin”, and “It is the unbelievers who have died this death, to whom the Lord pointed when He said, “Let the dead bury their dead.” (Matthew 8:22, Luke 9:60)” It is true that all unbelievers are dead in trespasses and sins.

This is why we need a Savior.

Now we showed that man was tested in the Garden of Eden because sin was already in the universe. Satan had sinned, and judgment came upon the first earth. So man gets a second chance because sin was already in the world, while no sin existed before Satan sinned.

Augustine says correctly, "Therefore, if Adam had not sinned, he would not have been divested of his body, but would have been clothed upon with immortality and incorruption, that "mortality might have been swallowed up of life;" that is, that he might have passed from the natural body into the spiritual body."

And he shows that old age and death are the result of Adam's sin, and that "this very flesh of ours, which we now possess, is not therefore invulnerable", but "mortal".

And he affirms what "The apostle says to the Romans: "But if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. If therefore the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Romans 8:10-11) I think that so clear and open a sentence as this only requires to be read, and not expounded. The body, says he, is dead, not because of earthly frailty, as being made of the dust of the ground, but because of sin; what more do we want? And he is most careful in his words: he does not say "is mortal," but "dead."

And so he says, "For they are bound to remember that, although their body still bears that desert of sin, which is irrevocably bound to the condition of death, yet their spirit has already begun to live because of the righteousness of faith, although it had actually become extinct by the death, as it were, of unbelief. No small gift, therefore, he says, must you suppose to have been conferred upon you, by the circumstance that Christ is in you; inasmuch as in the body, which is dead because of sin, your spirit is even now alive because of righteousness; so that therefore you should not despair of the life even of your body." "For if the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Romans 8:11)

And he explains, "Again, in the clause which follows, "In which all have sinned," how cautiously, rightly, and unambiguously is the statement expressed! For if you understand that sin to be meant which by one man entered into the world, "In which [sin] all have sinned," it is surely clear enough, that the sins which are peculiar to every man, which they themselves commit and which belong simply to them, mean one thing; and that the one sin, in and by which all have sinned, means another thing; since all were that one man."

He is referring again to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

And to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Adam was the federal head of the human race. He alone, without sin, possessed the freedom to obey God or not to obey God. And now we, being his descendants, have a sin nature in our flesh as a result. So by Adam, sin entered into the world, and we are by nature children of wrath, even as others, because in Adam all die.

And Augustine also says, "But observe more attentively what he says, that "through the offence of one, many are dead", referring to (Romans 5:16).

We have to conclude with Augustine that the one offence gave to the whole human race



original sin. He has argued well here.

And he says, “And from this we gather that we have derived from Adam, in whom we all have sinned, not all our actual sins, but only original sin; whereas from Christ, in whom we are all justified, we obtain the remission not merely of that original sin, but of the rest of our sins also, which we have added.”

Now concerning **Original Sin**, speaking of Pelagius, he says, “The real objection against them is, that they refuse to confess that unbaptized infants are liable to the condemnation of the first man, and that original sin has been transmitted to them and requires to be purged by regeneration;”

And he explains, “because, whilst by the generation of the flesh only that sin is contracted which is original; yet by the regeneration of the Spirit there is effected the remission not of original sin only, but also of the sins of man’s own voluntary and actual commission.”

And he adds, “we are quickened together in Christ, in whom we are circumcised with the circumcision not made with the hand, (Colossians 2:11,13) but such as was prefigured by the old manual circumcision, that the body of sin might be done away (Romans 6:6) which was born with us from Adam.” The propagation of a condemned origin condemns us, unless we are cleansed by the likeness of sinful flesh, in which He was sent without sin, who nevertheless concerning sin condemned sin, having been made sin for us. (Romans 8:3, Galatians 3:13)”

And he says, “So, likewise, his first birth holds a man in that bondage from which nothing but his second birth delivers him.”

And he adds, “Owing, indeed, to God’s justice, who punishes, this fatal flaw has so far prevailed, that men are born with the fault of original sin; but yet its influence has not extended so far as to stop the birth of men.”

He also says, “For so excellent is a man in comparison with a beast, that man’s vice is beast’s nature; still man’s nature is never on this account changed into beast’s nature. God, therefore, condemns man because of the fault wherewithal his nature is disgraced, and not because of his nature, which is not destroyed in consequence of its fault.”

And he then explains, “Heaven forbid that we should think beasts are obnoxious to the sentence of condemnation! It is only proper that they should be free from our misery, inasmuch as they cannot partake of our blessedness. What, then, is there surprising or unjust in man’s being subjected to an impure spirit—not on account of nature, but on account of that impurity of his which he has contracted in the stain of his birth, and which proceeds, not from the divine work, but from the will of man;—since also the impure spirit itself is a good thing considered as spirit, but evil in that it is impure?”

God created good things, and spirit is a creation of God, so it is good, “but evil in that it is impure”. Before Christ, we are spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)...

It is not just something “contracted in the stain of his birth”, but a sinful nature in our flesh, where sin dwells as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

There is a law of sin in our members, that is, a nature to sin. Augustine then says, “For

the one is of God, and is His work, while the other emanates from man's own will."

Our spirit is dead in trespasses and sins before Christ. It is still the work of God, but must be born again to be pure. The impurity is not just "from man's own will", but is a nature in his flesh which has affected his will, and put it into bondage to sin. And the spirit of man, when he is born again, is able to overcome the flesh, as Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (KJV):2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

This law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is a new divine nature in our spirit that has been born of the Spirit of God.

Augustine rightly divides the word of God, as he refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):19** For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

And yet, Augustine cannot bring himself to call it a sin nature in our flesh, or even "the law of sin in our members". He calls it "**not really nature, but corruption**", and "**not a bodily substance or nature, but disorder**". It is simply as "**very often, indeed, if not always, the ailing character of parents is in a certain way implanted, and reappears in the bodies of their children.**"

The Scripture is clear that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh, even after we are saved, as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

But he also says, "**Wherefore, although even in persons whose natural birth is followed by regeneration through grace, there exists this carnal concupiscence which contends against the law of the mind, yet, seeing that it is remitted in the remission of sins, it is no longer accounted to them as sin, nor is it in any degree hurtful, unless consent is yielded to its motions for unlawful deeds.**"

He then continues, "**Let us, then, see what Cyprian thought concerning original sin, which entered by one man into the world.**"

Augustine points to Cyprian, who said, "**We had been limited and shut up into a narrow space by the commandment of innocence; nor would the infirmity and weakness of human frailty have any resource unless the divine mercy coming once more in aid should open some way of securing salvation by pointing out works of justice and mercy, so that by almsgiving we may wash away whatever foulness we subsequently contract.**"

But "**almsgiving**" does not "**wash away whatever foulness we subsequently contract**". Our salvation is secure by what Jesus has done for us. For "**whatever foulness we subsequently contract**", that is, sins we commit after we have been born again, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses. The blood of Jesus Christ is the only propitiation for our sins.

But Augustine continues, "**By this testimony this witness refutes two falsehoods of theirs,—the one, wherein they say that the human race draws no sin from Adam which needs cure and healing through Christ; the other, in which they say that the saints have no sin after baptism.**"

Concerning **Man's Nature**, he says, "'He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.'" Here, again, it is not of their nature as men, but of their depravity, that you are to think. In this way they are of God, and yet not of God. By

nature they are of God, in depravity they are not of God.”

He then says, “How were they of Him? Because He it was that created the man of whom they were born. How were they of Him? Because He is the Architect of nature,—Himself the Creator of flesh and spirit. How, then, were they not of Him? Because they had made themselves depraved. They were no longer of Him, because, imitating the devil, they had become the children of the devil.”

When man sinned, he became a child of the devil, and his body became mortal, and sin as a law, that is, a nature, is now in his members.

And he says, “When the Lord then said, “He that is of God heareth the words of God: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.” He did not distinguish the value of different natures, or find, beyond their own soul and body, any nature in men which had not been vitiated by sin;”

The word “vitiating” means “to make faulty or defective”. (**Merriam Webster**)

The Scripture is clear. The whole human race is mortal, and has a sin nature inherited from Adam. Augustine acknowledged this as original sin, but he did not understand that it was also a nature in our flesh. He would call it an infirmity, a defect, an impurity, and in other writings a disease. But this law of sin is a nature that is still in the flesh of believers who have been born again. But because of the new divine nature in our spirits, we do not have to yield to this sin nature in our bodies, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death in our members.

When we were in the flesh we could not please God as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):8** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Before Christ we did not have a choice. We were totally in the flesh. Now we have a choice. Let us mortify the deeds of the body, and really live.

# Salvation

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 4, On Baptism, Against the Donatists, Book VI, Chapter 17, paragraphs 28-29, page 487-488

### Chapter 17.

28. Monnulus of Girba said: "The truth of our mother, the Catholic Church, hath continued, and still continues among us, brethren, especially in the threefold nature of baptism, as our Lord says, 'Go, baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' (Matthew 28:19) Since, therefore, he goes on to say, "we know clearly that heretics have neither Father, Son, nor Holy Ghost, they ought, on coming to our mother, the Church, to be truly regenerated and baptized, that the cancer which they had, and the wrath of condemnation, and the destructive energy of error may be sanctified by the holy and heavenly laver."

29. To this we answer, That all who are baptized with the baptism that is consecrated in the words of the gospel have the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost in the sacrament alone; but that in heart and in life neither do those have them who live an abandoned and accursed life within.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins in paragraph 28, as he says, "Monnulus of Girba said: "The truth of our mother, the Catholic Church, hath continued, and still continues among us, brethren, especially in the threefold nature of baptism, as our Lord says, 'Go, baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' (Matthew 28:19)"

He refers to **Matthew 28 (KJV):19** Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Augustine then continues, "Since, therefore, he goes on to say, "we know clearly that heretics have neither Father, Son, nor Holy Ghost, they ought, on coming to our mother, the Church, to be truly regenerated and baptized, that the cancer which they had, and the wrath of condemnation, and the destructive energy of error may be sanctified by the holy and heavenly laver."

Augustine then responds in paragraph 29, "To this we answer, That all who are baptized with the baptism that is consecrated in the words of the gospel have the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost in the sacrament alone; but that in heart and in life neither do those have them who live an abandoned and accursed life within."

Augustine and the early Church in his time believed in regeneration by baptism, that is, they believed that one is born again when they are baptized. Augustine did not advocate rebaptism as long as they who had been "consecrated in the words of the gospel have the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost". But it appears, from Augustine's answer in paragraph 29, that he is making the presence of the Spirit of God, the Father, and the Son, in the life of the believer, that is, the one who is regenerated when baptized in his thinking, to be dependent on living a holy life. We will discuss this further as we proceed.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God**  
**Book XIX, Chapter 4, page 401-403**

Chapter 4.—What the Christians Believe Regarding the Supreme Good and Evil, in Opposition to the Philosophers, Who Have Maintained that the Supreme Good is in Themselves.

If, then, we be asked what the city of God has to say upon these points, and, in the first place, what its opinion regarding the supreme good and evil is, it will reply that life eternal is the supreme good, death eternal the supreme evil, and that to obtain the one and escape the other we must live rightly. And thus it is written, “The just lives by faith,” (Habakkuk 2:4) for we do not as yet see our good, and must therefore live by faith; neither have we in ourselves power to live rightly, but can do so only if He who has given us faith to believe in His help do help us when we believe and pray. As for those who have supposed that the sovereign good and evil are to be found in this life, and have placed it either in the soul or the body, or in both, or, to speak more explicitly, either in pleasure or in virtue, or in both; in repose or in virtue, or in both; in pleasure and repose, or in virtue, or in all combined; in the primary objects of nature, or in virtue, or in both,—all these have, with a marvelous shallowness, sought to find their blessedness in this life and in themselves. Contempt has been poured upon such ideas by the Truth, saying by the prophet, “The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men” (or, as the Apostle Paul cites the passage, “The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise”) “that they are vain.” (Psalm 94:11, 1 Corinthians 3:20)

For what flood of eloquence can suffice to detail the miseries of this life? Cicero, in the Consolation on the death of his daughter, has spent all his ability in lamentation; but how inadequate was even his ability here? For when, where, how, in this life can these primary objects of nature be possessed so that they may not be assailed by unforeseen accidents? Is the body of the wise man exempt from any pain which may dispel pleasure, from any disquietude which may banish repose? The amputation or decay of the members of the body puts an end to its integrity, deformity blights its beauty, weakness its health, lassitude its vigor, sleepiness or sluggishness its activity,—and which of these is it that may not assail the flesh of the wise man? Comely and fitting attitudes and movements of the body are numbered among the prime natural blessings; but what if some sickness makes the members tremble? What if a man suffers from curvature of the spine to such an extent that his hands reach the ground, and he goes upon all fours like a quadruped? Does not this destroy all beauty and grace in the body, whether at rest or in motion? What shall I say of the fundamental blessings of the soul, sense and intellect, of which the one is given for the perception, and the other for the comprehension of truth? But what kind of sense is it that remains when a man becomes deaf and blind? Where are reason and intellect when disease makes a man delirious? We can scarcely, or not at all, refrain from tears, when we think of or see the actions and words of such frantic persons, and consider how different from and even opposed to their own sober judgment and ordinary conduct their present demeanor is. And what shall I say of those who suffer from demoniacal possession? Where is their own intelligence hidden and buried while the malignant spirit is using their body and soul according to his own will? And who is quite sure that no such thing can happen to the wise man in this life? Then, as to the perception of truth, what can we hope for even in this way while in the body, as we read in the true book of Wisdom, “The corruptible body weigheth down the



soul, and the earthly tabernacle presseth down the mind that museth upon many things?” (Wisdom 9:15) And eagerness, or desire of action, if this is the right meaning to put upon the Greek ὀρμη, is also reckoned among the primary advantages of nature; and yet is it not this which produces those pitiable movements of the insane, and those actions which we shudder to see, when sense is deceived and reason deranged?

In fine, virtue itself, which is not among the primary objects of nature, but succeeds to them as the result of learning, though it holds the highest place among human good things, what is its occupation save to wage perpetual war with vices,—not those that are outside of us, but within; not other men’s, but our own,—a war which is waged especially by that virtue which the Greeks call σωφροσύνη, and we temperance, and which bridles carnal lusts, and prevents them from winning the consent of the spirit to wicked deeds? For we must not fancy that there is no vice in us, when, as the apostle says, “The flesh lusteth against the spirit;” (Galatians 5:17) for to this vice there is a contrary virtue, when, as the same writer says, **“The spirit lusteth against the flesh.”** “For these two,” he says, “are contrary one to the other, so that you cannot do the things which you would.” **But what is it we wish to do when we seek to attain the supreme good, unless that the flesh should cease to lust against the spirit, and that there be no vice in us against which the spirit may lust? And as we cannot attain to this in the present life, however ardently we desire it, let us by God’s help accomplish at least this, to preserve the soul from succumbing and yielding to the flesh that lusts against it, and to refuse our consent to the perpetration of sin. Far be it from us, then, to fancy that while we are still engaged in this intestine war, we have already found the happiness which we seek to reach by victory. And who is there so wise that he has no conflict at all to maintain against his vices?**

What shall I say of that virtue which is called prudence? Is not all its vigilance spent in the discernment of good from evil things, so that no mistake may be admitted about what we should desire and what avoid? And thus it is itself a proof that we are in the midst of evils, or that evils are in us; for it teaches us that it is an evil to consent to sin, and a good to refuse this consent. And yet this evil, to which prudence teaches and temperance enables us not to consent, is removed from this life neither by prudence nor by temperance. **And justice, whose office it is to render to every man his due, whereby there is in man himself a certain just order of nature, so that the soul is subjected to God, and the flesh to the soul, and consequently both soul and flesh to God,—does not this virtue demonstrate that it is as yet rather laboring towards its end than resting in its finished work? For the soul is so much the less subjected to God as it is less occupied with the thought of God; and the flesh is so much the less subjected to the spirit as it lusts more vehemently against the spirit. So long, therefore, as we are beset by this weakness, this plague, this disease, how shall we dare to say that we are safe? And if not safe, then how can we be already enjoying our final beatitude? Then that virtue which goes by the name of fortitude is the plainest proof of the ills of life, for it is these ills which it is compelled to bear patiently. And this holds good, no matter though the ripest wisdom coexists with it. And I am at a loss to understand how the Stoic philosophers can presume to say that these are no ills, though at the same time they allow the wise man to commit suicide and pass out of this life if they become so grievous that he cannot or ought not to endure them. But such is the stupid pride of these men who fancy that the supreme good can be found in this life, and that they can become happy by their own resources, that their wise man, or at least the man whom they fancifully depict as such, is always happy, even though he become blind, deaf, dumb, mutilated, racked**

with pains, or suffer any conceivable calamity such as may compel him to make away with himself; and they are not ashamed to call the life that is beset with these evils happy. O happy life, which seeks the aid of death to end it? If it is happy, let the wise man remain in it; but if these ills drive him out of it, in what sense is it happy? Or how can they say that these are not evils which conquer the virtue of fortitude, and force it not only to yield, but so to rave that it in one breath calls life happy and recommends it to be given up? For who is so blind as not to see that if it were happy it would not be fled from? And if they say we should flee from it on account of the infirmities that beset it, why then do they not lower their pride and acknowledge that it is miserable? Was it, I would ask, fortitude or weakness which prompted Cato to kill himself? For he would not have done so had he not been too weak to endure Cæsar's victory. Where, then, is his fortitude? It has yielded, it has succumbed, it has been so thoroughly overcome as to abandon, forsake, flee this happy life. Or was it no longer happy? Then it was miserable. How, then, were these not evils which made life miserable, and a thing to be escaped from?"

And therefore those who admit that these are evils, as the Peripatetics do, and the Old Academy, the sect which Varro advocates, express a more intelligible doctrine; but theirs also is a surprising mistake, for they contend that this is a happy life which is beset by these evils, even though they be so great that he who endures them should commit suicide to escape them. "Pains and anguish of body," says Varro, "are evils, and so much the worse in proportion to their severity; and to escape them you must quit this life." What life, I pray? This life, he says, which is oppressed by such evils. Then it is happy in the midst of these very evils on account of which you say we must quit it? Or do you call it happy because you are at liberty to escape these evils by death? What, then, if by some secret judgment of God you were held fast and not permitted to die, nor suffered to live without these evils? In that case, at least, you would say that such a life was miserable. It is soon relinquished, no doubt but this does not make it not miserable; for were it eternal, you yourself would pronounce it miserable. Its brevity, therefore, does not clear it of misery; neither ought it to be called happiness because it is a brief misery. Certainly there is a mighty force in these evils which compel a man—according to them even a wise man—to cease to be a man that he may escape them, though they say, and say truly, that it is as it were the first and strongest demand of nature that a man cherish himself, and naturally therefore avoid death, and should so stand his own friend as to wish and vehemently aim at continuing to exist as a living creature, and subsisting in this union of soul and body. There is a mighty force in these evils to overcome this natural instinct by which death is by every means and with all a man's efforts avoided, and to overcome it so completely that what was avoided is desired, sought after, and if it cannot in any other way be obtained, is inflicted by the man on himself. There is a mighty force in these evils which make fortitude a homicide,—if, indeed, that is to be called fortitude which is so thoroughly overcome by these evils, that it not only cannot preserve by patience the man whom it undertook to govern and defend, but is itself obliged to kill him. The wise man, I admit, ought to bear death with patience, but when it is inflicted by another. If, then, as these men maintain, he is obliged to inflict it on himself, certainly it must be owned that the ills which compel him to this are not only evils, but intolerable evils. **The life, then, which is either subject to accidents, or environed with evils so considerable and grievous, could never have been called happy, if the men who give it this name had condescended to yield to the truth, and to be conquered by valid arguments, when they inquired after the happy life, as they yield**

to unhappiness, and are overcome by overwhelming evils, when they put themselves to death, and if they had not fancied that the supreme good was to be found in this mortal life; for the very virtues of this life, which are certainly its best and most useful possessions, are all the more telling proofs of its miseries in proportion as they are helpful against the violence of its dangers, toils, and woes. For if these are true virtues,—and such cannot exist save in those who have true piety,—they do not profess to be able to deliver the men who possess them from all miseries; for true virtues tell no such lies, but they profess that by the hope of the future world this life, which is miserably involved in the many and great evils of this world, is happy as it is also safe. For if not yet safe, how could it be happy? And therefore the Apostle Paul, speaking not of men without prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice, but of those whose lives were regulated by true piety, and whose virtues were therefore true, says, “For we are saved by hope: now hope which is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” (Romans 8:24-25) As, therefore, we are saved, so we are made happy by hope. And as we do not as yet possess a present, but look for a future salvation, so is it with our happiness, and this “with patience;” for we are encompassed with evils, which we ought patiently to endure, until we come to the ineffable enjoyment of unmixed good; for there shall be no longer anything to endure. Salvation, such as it shall be in the world to come, shall itself be our final happiness. And this happiness these philosophers refuse to believe in, because they do not see it, and attempt to fabricate for themselves a happiness in this life, based upon a virtue which is as deceitful as it is proud.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “If, then, we be asked what the city of God has to say upon these points, and, in the first place, what its opinion regarding the supreme good and evil is, it will reply that life eternal is the supreme good, death eternal the supreme evil, and that to obtain the one and escape the other we must live rightly. And thus it is written, “The just lives by faith,” (Habakkuk 2:4) for we do not as yet see our good, and must therefore live by faith; neither have we in ourselves power to live rightly, but can do so only if He who has given us faith to believe in His help do help us when we believe and pray.”

He refers to **Habakkuk 2 (KJV):4** Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

But it is not a matter of living rightly. Once we have been born of the Spirit of God, we have eternal life. We are not condemned, and we have a standing of righteousness because God has justified us. If after we have been born again, we believe not, He abides faithful as we read in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):13** If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

But if we don't live rightly after we have been born again, we will still be saved, yet as by fire.

He then says, “As for those who have supposed that the sovereign good and evil are to be found in this life, and have placed it either in the soul or the body, or in both, or, to speak more explicitly, either in pleasure or in virtue, or in both; in repose or in virtue, or in both; in pleasure and repose, or in virtue, or in all combined; in the primary objects of nature, or in virtue, or in both,—all these have, with a marvelous shallowness, sought to find their blessedness in this life and in themselves. Contempt has been poured upon such ideas by the Truth, saying by the prophet, “The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men” (or, as the Apostle Paul cites the passage, “The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise”) “that they are vain.” (Psalm 94:11, 1 Corinthians

3:20)”

He refers to **Psalm 94 (KJV):11** The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.

And to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):20** And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

Augustine then asks, “For what flood of eloquence can suffice to detail the miseries of this life? Cicero, in the Consolation on the death of his daughter, has spent all his ability in lamentation; but how inadequate was even his ability here? For when, where, how, in this life can these primary objects of nature be possessed so that they may not be assailed by unforeseen accidents? Is the body of the wise man exempt from any pain which may dispel pleasure, from any disquietude which may banish repose? The amputation or decay of the members of the body puts an end to its integrity, deformity blights its beauty, weakness its health, lassitude its vigor, sleepiness or sluggishness its activity,—and which of these is it that may not assail the flesh of the wise man? Comely and fitting attitudes and movements of the body are numbered among the prime natural blessings; but what if some sickness makes the members tremble? What if a man suffers from curvature of the spine to such an extent that his hands reach the ground, and he goes upon all fours like a quadruped? Does not this destroy all beauty and grace in the body, whether at rest or in motion? What shall I say of the fundamental blessings of the soul, sense and intellect, of which the one is given for the perception, and the other for the comprehension of truth? But what kind of sense is it that remains when a man becomes deaf and blind? Where are reason and intellect when disease makes a man delirious? We can scarcely, or not at all, refrain from tears, when we think of or see the actions and words of such frantic persons, and consider how different from and even opposed to their own sober judgment and ordinary conduct their present demeanor is.”

To summarize, he mentions the miseries of this life experienced by some, such as death of a daughter, unforeseen accidents, the amputation or decay of the members of the body, and deformity blights its beauty, weakness its health, lassitude its vigor, sleepiness or sluggishness its activity, and some sickness makes the members tremble, a man suffers from curvature of the spine to such an extent that his hands reach the ground, and he goes upon all fours like a quadruped, a man becomes deaf and blind, disease makes a man delirious.

He continues, “**And what shall I say of those who suffer from demoniacal possession? Where is their own intelligence hidden and buried while the malignant spirit is using their body and soul according to his own will? And who is quite sure that no such thing can happen to the wise man in this life?** Then, as to the perception of truth, what can we hope for even in this way while in the body, as we read in the true book of Wisdom, “The corruptible body weigheth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle presseth down the mind that museth upon many things?” (Wisdom 9:15) And eagerness, or desire of action, if this is the right meaning to put upon the Greek **ὁρμη**, is also reckoned among the primary advantages of nature; and yet is it not this which produces those pitiable movements of the insane, and those actions which we shudder to see, when sense is deceived and reason deranged?”

He refers to **Wisdom 9 (Septuagint):15** For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things.

Then, speaking of demoniacal possession, note he asks above, “**Where is their own intelligence hidden and buried while the malignant spirit is using their body and soul according**



to his own will? And who is quite sure that no such thing can happen to the wise man in this life?”

Apparently “**demoniacal possession**” was still acknowledged in the time of Augustine. He continues, “Then, as to the perception of truth, what can we hope for even in this way while in the body, as we read in the true book of Wisdom, “The corruptible body weigheth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle presseth down the mind that museth upon many things?” (Wisdom 9:15) And eagerness, or desire of action, if this is the right meaning to put upon the Greek **ὀρμη**, is also reckoned among the primary advantages of nature; and yet is it not this which produces those pitiable movements of the insane, and those actions which we shudder to see, when sense is deceived and reason deranged?”

He refers to **Wisdom 9 (Septuagint):15** For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things.

The Greek word, **ὀρμη** (pronounced hor-mā') means, “(to put in motion), impetus, impulse; assault, violent attempt, Acts 14:5; metaphorically impulse of mind, purpose, will, James 3:4)”. **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, 1978 Edition, Harold K. Moulton, Page 292.**

This word, as a noun, is translated “assault” in **Acts 14 (KJV):5** And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them...

And also it is translated “will” in **James 3 (ESV):4** Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs.

And as a verb, it is translated “ran violently” in **Matthew 8 (KJV):32** And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

He continues, “In fine, virtue itself, which is not among the primary objects of nature, but succeeds to them as the result of learning, though it holds the highest place among human good things, what is its occupation save to wage perpetual war with vices,—not those that are outside of us, but within; not other men’s, but our own,—a war which is waged especially by that virtue which the Greeks call **σωφροσύνη** (pronounced so-fro-soo-nay), and we temperance, and which bridles carnal lusts, and prevents them from winning the consent of the spirit to wicked deeds? For we must not fancy that there is no vice in us, when, as the apostle says, “The flesh lusteth against the spirit;” (Galatians 5:17) for to this vice there is a contrary virtue, when, as the same writer says, “**The spirit lusteth against the flesh.**” “For these two,” he says, “are contrary one to the other, so that you cannot do the things which you would.”

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):17** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

He then asks, “**But what is it we wish to do when we seek to attain the supreme good, unless that the flesh should cease to lust against the spirit, and that there be no vice in us against which the spirit may lust?**”

And he answers, “**And as we cannot attain to this in the present life, however ardently we desire it, let us by God’s help accomplish at least this, to preserve the soul from succumbing and yielding to the flesh that lusts against it, and to refuse our consent to the perpetration of sin.**”



Far be it from us, then, to fancy that while we are still engaged in this intestine war, we have already found the happiness which we seek to reach by victory. And who is there so wise that he has no conflict at all to maintain against his vices?"

But we must remember that we have been set free as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Augustine continues, "What shall I say of that virtue which is called prudence? Is not all its vigilance spent in the discernment of good from evil things, so that no mistake may be admitted about what we should desire and what avoid? And thus it is itself a proof that we are in the midst of evils, or that evils are in us; for it teaches us that it is an evil to consent to sin, and a good to refuse this consent. And yet this evil, to which prudence teaches and temperance enables us not to consent, is removed from this life neither by prudence nor by temperance."

Yes, our flesh is mortal, and will not be changed until the resurrection. He continues, "And justice, whose office it is to render to every man his due, whereby there is in man himself a certain just order of nature, so that the soul is subjected to God, and the flesh to the soul, and consequently both soul and flesh to God,—does not this virtue demonstrate that it is as yet rather laboring towards its end than resting in its finished work?"

It is true that we groan within, waiting for the adoption as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):22** For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Augustine continues, "For the soul is so much the less subjected to God as it is less occupied with the thought of God; and the flesh is so much the less subjected to the spirit as it lusts more vehemently against the spirit. So long, therefore, as we are beset by this weakness, this plague, this disease, how shall we dare to say that we are safe?"

Augustine thought that our flesh had "this weakness, this plague, this disease" whereby "the flesh is so much the less subjected to the spirit as it lusts more vehemently against the spirit". He did not fully understand that the flesh is mortal, being a descendent of Adam, and that it has a sin nature, or "law of sin" in its members. But when we understand that we have been justified by faith, and we then have a standing with God as righteous and as sons and daughters, we find rest in Him.

Now Augustine is contending for the faith against the philosophers who think that this life is all there is, as he continues, "And if not safe, then how can we be already enjoying our final beatitude? Then that virtue which goes by the name of fortitude is the plainest proof of the ills of life, for it is these ills which it is compelled to bear patiently. And this holds good, no matter though the ripest wisdom coexists with it. And I am at a loss to understand how the Stoic philosophers can presume to say that these are no ills, though at the same time they allow the wise man to commit suicide and pass out of this life if they become so grievous that he cannot or ought not to endure them. But such is the stupid pride of these men who fancy that the supreme good can be found in this life, and that they can become happy by their own resources, that their wise man, or at least the man whom they fancifully depict as such, is always happy, even though he become blind, deaf, dumb, mutilated, racked with pains, or suffer any conceivable calamity such as may compel him to make away with himself; and they are not

ashamed to call the life that is beset with these evils happy. O happy life, which seeks the aid of death to end it? If it is happy, let the wise man remain in it; but if these ills drive him out of it, in what sense is it happy? Or how can they say that these are not evils which conquer the virtue of fortitude, and force it not only to yield, but so to rave that it in one breath calls life happy and recommends it to be given up? For who is so blind as not to see that if it were happy it would not be fled from? And if they say we should flee from it on account of the infirmities that beset it, why then do they not lower their pride and acknowledge that it is miserable? Was it, I would ask, fortitude or weakness which prompted Cato to kill himself? For he would not have done so had he not been too weak to endure Cæsar's victory. Where, then, is his fortitude? It has yielded, it has succumbed, it has been so thoroughly overcome as to abandon, forsake, flee this happy life. Or was it no longer happy? Then it was miserable. How, then, were these not evils which made life miserable, and a thing to be escaped from?"

He is trying to show the philosophers the way. Jesus spoke as in **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Augustine is taking us through all of the trials of this life, and showing us that there is a way that we can be blessed, if not in this life, then in the next with Jesus.

He continues, "And therefore those who admit that these are evils, as the Peripatetics do, and the Old Academy, the sect which Varro advocates, express a more intelligible doctrine; but theirs also is a surprising mistake, for they contend that this is a happy life which is beset by these evils, even though they be so great that he who endures them should commit suicide to escape them. "Pains and anguish of body," says Varro, "are evils, and so much the worse in proportion to their severity; and to escape them you must quit this life." What life, I pray? This life, he says, which is oppressed by such evils. Then it is happy in the midst of these very evils on account of which you say we must quit it? Or do you call it happy because you are at liberty to escape these evils by death? What, then, if by some secret judgment of God you were held fast and not permitted to die, nor suffered to live without these evils? In that case, at least, you would say that such a life was miserable. It is soon relinquished, no doubt but this does not make it not miserable; for were it eternal, you yourself would pronounce it miserable. Its brevity, therefore, does not clear it of misery; neither ought it to be called happiness because it is a brief misery. Certainly there is a mighty force in these evils which compel a man—according to them even a wise man—to cease to be a man that he may escape them, though they say, and say truly, that it is as it were the first and strongest demand of nature that a man cherish himself, and naturally therefore avoid death, and should so stand his own friend as to wish and vehemently aim at continuing to exist as a living creature, and subsisting in this union of soul and body. There is a mighty force in these evils to overcome this natural instinct by which death is by every means and with all a man's efforts avoided, and to overcome it so completely that what was avoided is desired, sought after, and if it cannot in any other way be obtained, is inflicted by the man on himself. There is a mighty force in these evils which make fortitude a homicide,—if, indeed, that is to be called fortitude which is so thoroughly overcome by these evils, that it not only cannot preserve by patience the man whom it undertook to govern and defend, but is itself obliged to kill him. The wise man, I admit, ought to bear death with patience, but when it is inflicted by another. If, then, as these men maintain, he is obliged to inflict it on himself, certainly it must be owned that the ills which compel him to this are not only evils, but intolerable evils."

He concludes that we must yield to the truth, as he continues, “The life, then, which is either subject to accidents, or environed with evils so considerable and grievous, could never have been called happy, if the men who give it this name had condescended to yield to the truth, and to be conquered by valid arguments, when they inquired after the happy life, as they yield to unhappiness, and are overcome by overwhelming evils, when they put themselves to death, and if they had not fancied that the supreme good was to be found in this mortal life; for the very virtues of this life, which are certainly its best and most useful possessions, are all the more telling proofs of its miseries in proportion as they are helpful against the violence of its dangers, toils, and woes. For if these are true virtues,—and such cannot exist save in those who have true piety,—they do not profess to be able to deliver the men who possess them from all miseries; for true virtues tell no such lies, but they profess that by the hope of the future world this life, which is miserably involved in the many and great evils of this world, is happy as it is also safe. For if not yet safe, how could it be happy? And therefore the Apostle Paul, speaking not of men without prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice, but of those whose lives were regulated by true piety, and whose virtues were therefore true, says, “For we are saved by hope: now hope which is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” (Romans 8:24-25)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):24** For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

He concludes, “As, therefore, we are saved, so we are made happy by hope. And as we do not as yet possess a present, but look for a future salvation, so is it with our happiness, and this “with patience;” for we are encompassed with evils, which we ought patiently to endure, until we come to the ineffable enjoyment of unmixed good; for there shall be no longer anything to endure. Salvation, such as it shall be in the world to come, shall itself be our final happiness. And this happiness these philosophers refuse to believe in, because they do not see it, and attempt to fabricate for themselves a happiness in this life, based upon a virtue which is as deceitful as it is proud.”

Augustine agrees with Paul, as we read in context in **Romans 8 (KJV):18** For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

But let us also remember the promise of Jesus in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

3. Now there would be no great merit and glorious blessedness in believing, if the Lord had always appeared in His Risen Body to the eyes of men. The Holy Ghost then hath brought this great gift to them that should believe, that Him whom they should not see with the eyes of flesh, they might with a mind sobered from carnal desires, and inebriated with spiritual longings, sigh after. Whence it was that when that disciple who had said that he would not believe, unless he touched with the hands His Scars, after he had handled the Lord’s Body, cried out as though awaking from sleep, “My Lord and my God;” the Lord said to him, “Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” (John 20:29) This blessedness hath the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, brought to us, that the form of a servant which He took from the Virgin’s womb, being removed from the eyes of flesh, the purified eye of the mind might be directed to This Form of God, in which He continued equal with the Father, even when He vouchsafed to appear in the Flesh; so as that with the Same Spirit filled the Apostle might say, “Though we have known Christ after the flesh; yet now we know Him so no longer.” (2 Corinthians 5:16) Because even the Flesh of Christ he knew not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, who, not by touching in curiosity, but in believing assured, acknowledgeth the power of His Resurrection; not saying in his heart, “Who hath ascended into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down; or, Who hath descended into the deep? that is, to bring back Christ from the dead.” “But,” saith he, “the word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, that Jesus is the Lord; and if thou shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:6-10) These, Brethren, are the words of the Apostle, pouring them forth with the holy inebriation of the Holy Ghost Himself.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Now there would be no great merit and glorious blessedness in believing, if the Lord had always appeared in His Risen Body to the eyes of men. The Holy Ghost then hath brought this great gift to them that should believe, that Him whom they should not see with the eyes of flesh, they might with a mind sobered from carnal desires, and inebriated with spiritual longings, sigh after. Whence it was that when that disciple who had said that he would not believe, unless he touched with the hands His Scars, after he had handled the Lord’s Body, cried out as though awaking from sleep, “My Lord and my God;” the Lord said to him, “Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” (John 20:29)”

He refers in context to **John 20 (KJV):25** The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. 26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. 27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. 28 And Thomas answered and said

unto him, My Lord and my God. 29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

He continues, “This blessedness hath the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, brought to us, that the form of a servant which He took from the Virgin’s womb, being removed from the eyes of flesh, the purified eye of the mind might be directed to This Form of God, in which He continued equal with the Father, even when He vouchsafed to appear in the Flesh; so as that with the Same Spirit filled the Apostle might say, “Though we have known Christ after the flesh; yet now we know Him so no longer.” (2 Corinthians 5:16)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):16** Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

When he says “This Form of God”, he is referring in context to **Philippians 2 (KJV):5** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

He continues, “Because even the Flesh of Christ he knew not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, who, not by touching in curiosity, but in believing assured, acknowledgeth the power of His Resurrection; not saying in his heart, “Who hath ascended into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down; or, Who hath descended into the deep? that is, to bring back Christ from the dead.” “But,” saith he, “the word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, that Jesus is the Lord; and if thou shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:6-10)”

He refers in context to **Romans 10 (KJV):6** But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) 7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

He concludes, “These, Brethren, are the words of the Apostle, pouring them forth with the holy inebriation of the Holy Ghost Himself.”

There is no clearer message of salvation than this Scripture in Romans, and Augustine affirmed this. The Lord is all about relationship. If we shall confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus, and will believe in our heart that God has raised him from the dead, we will be saved.



## Predestination

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Predestination of the Saints, Chapter 31, page 512-513

Chapter 31.—Christ Predestinated to Be the Son of God.

Therefore in Him who is our Head let there appear to be the very fountain of grace, whence, according to the measure of every man, He diffuses Himself through all His members. It is by that grace that every man from the beginning of his faith becomes a Christian, by which grace that one man from His beginning became Christ. Of the same Spirit also the former is born again of which the latter was born. By the same Spirit is effected in us the remission of sins, by which Spirit it was effected that He should have no sin. God certainly foreknew that He would do these things. This, therefore, is that same predestination of the saints which most especially shone forth in the Saint of saints; and who is there of those who rightly understand the declarations of the truth that can deny this predestination? For we have learned that the Lord of glory Himself was predestinated in so far as the man was made the Son of God. The teacher of the Gentiles exclaims, in the beginning of his epistles, “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God (which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures) concerning His Son, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was predestinated the Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of sanctification by the resurrection of the dead.” (Romans 1:1-4) Therefore Jesus was predestinated, so that He who was to be the Son of David according to the flesh should yet be in power the Son of God, according to the Spirit of sanctification, because He was born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary. This is that ineffably accomplished sole taking up of man by God the Word, so that He might truly and properly be called at the same time the Son of God and the Son of man,—Son of man on account of the man taken up, and the Son of God on account of the God only-begotten who took Him up, so that a Trinity and not a Quaternity might be believed in. Such a transporting of human nature was predestinated, so great, so lofty, and so sublime that there was no exalting it more highly,—just as on our behalf that divinity had no possibility of more humbly putting itself off, than by the assumption of man’s nature with the weakness of the flesh, even to the death of the cross. **As, therefore, that one man was predestinated to be our Head, so we being many are predestinated to be His members.** Here let human merits which have perished through Adam keep silence, and let that grace of God reign which reigns through Jesus Christ our Lord, the only Son of God, the one Lord. Let whoever can find in our Head the merits which preceded that peculiar generation, seek in us His members for those merits which preceded our manifold regeneration. For that generation was not recompensed to Christ, but given; that He should be born, namely, of the Spirit and the Virgin, separate from all entanglement of sin. Thus also our being born again of water and the Spirit is not recompensed to us for any merit, but freely given; and if faith has brought us to the laver of regeneration, we ought not therefore to suppose that we have first given anything, so that the regeneration of salvation should be recompensed to us again; because He made us to believe in Christ, who made for us a Christ on whom we believe. He makes in men the

beginning and the completion of the faith in Jesus who made the man Jesus the beginner and finisher of faith; (Hebrews 12:2) for thus, as you know, He is called in the epistle which is addressed to the Hebrews.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins at first here, “Therefore in Him who is our Head let there appear to be the very fountain of grace, whence, according to the measure of every man, He diffuses Himself through all His members. It is by that grace that every man from the beginning of his faith becomes a Christian, by which grace that one man from His beginning became Christ.”

It is by grace that we are saved as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Now Paul also refers to this “**grace, whence, according to the measure of every man He diffuses Himself through all His members**”, His body, as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Paul is saying here that we ought to “think soberly” of ourselves as we understand that God has given to each and every one a measure of faith, and this “according to the grace that is given to us” in verse 6. In verse 4 he says that there are “many members in one body”, referring to the body of believers in Christ, and that “all members have not the same office”. What he is referring to by the word “office” is a “place in the body” as a unique member in the body. That is, we all have different functions according to where we have been placed in the body of Christ. But “we, being many, are one body in Christ”, and we are all connected being “members one of another”. Then in verse 6, he notes that we have “gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us”. This will be evident in the way we “prophesy according to the proportion of faith”, or ministry, as we “wait on our ministering”, and “he that teacheth, on teaching”, or “he that exhorteth, on exhortation”, or “he that giveth...with simplicity”, or “he that ruleth, with diligence”, or “he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness”.

Augustine then says, “**Of the same Spirit also the former is born again of which the latter was born. By the same Spirit is effected in us the remission of sins, by which Spirit it was effected that He should have no sin. God certainly foreknew that He would do these things. This, therefore, is that same predestination of the saints which most especially shone forth in the Saint of saints; and who is there of those who rightly understand the declarations of the truth that can deny this predestination?**”

Augustine is saying that it is the same Spirit of God who gives us to be born again, as it was who brought about the virgin birth of Christ.

And just as “God certainly foreknew that He would do these things”, so therefore, “that same predestination of the saints which most especially shone forth in the Saint of saints”, speaking of Christ, took place. So just as He was predestinated, so we also have been predestinated.

Augustine then explains as he says, “For we have learned that the Lord of glory Himself was predestinated in so far as the man was made the Son of God. The teacher of the Gentiles exclaims, in the beginning of his epistles, “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God (which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures) concerning His Son, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was predestinated the Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of sanctification by the resurrection of the dead.” (Romans 1:1-4)” Therefore Jesus was predestinated, so that He who was to be the Son of David according to the flesh should yet be in power the Son of God, according to the Spirit of sanctification, because He was born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary.”

In the **Latin Vulgate** we read as in **Romans 1 (Douay Rheims)**: 1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God. 2 Which he had promised before, by his prophets, in the holy scriptures, 3 Concerning his Son, who was made to him of the seed of David, according to the flesh, 4 Who was predestinated the Son of God in power, according to the spirit of sanctification, by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead:

The Scripture actually reads as in **Romans 1 (KJV)**: 1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy Scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

The word “declared” in verse 4 in the Greek is **ὁρισθέντος** (pronounced ho-rē'sthentos) and is the genitive, singular, masculine participle, aorist 1, passive tense of the verb **ὀρίζω** (pronounced ho-rē'-zō), from (**ὄρος**, a bound, limit), and means to set bounds to, to bound; to restrict, as in Hebrews 4:7 Again, he **limiteth** a certain day, to settle, appoint definitively, Acts 17:26 ... and **hath determined** the times before appointed, and the **bounds** of their habitation; to fix determinately, Acts 2:23 Him, being delivered by the **determinate** counsel and foreknowledge of God, to decree, destine, Luke 22:22 And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: to constitute, appoint, Acts 10:42 ... and to testify that it is he which **was ordained** of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead. Acts 17:31 Because he **hath appointed** a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he **hath ordained**; to characterize with prescision, to set forth distinctively, **Romans 1:4** And declared *to be* the Son of God with power... absolutely to resolve, Acts 11:29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, **determined** to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, 1978 Edition, Harold K. Moulton, Page 292.**

We see the different translations of the verb **ὀρίζω** (pronounced ho-rē'-zō), above, according to the context in which it is found.

But the word “predestinate” is found in **Romans 8 (KJV)**: 29 For whom he did foreknow,

he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

The word “predestinate” in the Greek is **προώρισεν** (pronounced pro-ōrizen), which is the third person, singular, aorist 1, indicative of the verb **προορίζω** (pronounced prooridzō), which is composed of two Greek words, **πρό** (pronounced pro) (G4253) and **ορίζω** (pronounced ho-rē'-zō) (G3724) (with their Strong’s reference numbers G4253 and G3724), and meaning to limit or mark out beforehand; to design definitely beforehand, ordain beforehand, predestine.

**The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, 1978 Edition, Harold K. Moulton, Page 345.**

Note that the Greek word **πρό** (pronounced pro) above means before. And the Greek word **ορίζω** (pronounced ho-rē'-zō) we looked at when we defined the word “declared” in Romans 1:4 above, so it means to set bounds to.

So while Augustine follows the Latin Vulgate which mistranslates the word “declared” to be “predestinated” in Romans 1:4, the predestination of the Son of God is implied in other Scriptures as in **Acts 2 (KJV):23** Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

In this verse, although the word “determinate” is a translation of the Greek word **ορίζω** (pronounced ho-rē'-zō), as in Romans 1:4, it is in the dative, singular, feminine, participle, perfect, passive tense here in Acts 2:23. **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, 1978 Edition, Harold K. Moulton, Page 444.**

And it is used in a Greek construction with the word “counsel”. So in the Greek the first part of the verse looks like this:

τοῦτον τῇ ὀρισμένῃ βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ  
this one by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God

The dative implies “by means of”. So this Greek construction places the “determinate counsel” with the foreknowledge of God. And the same Greek word **προορίζω** (pronounced prooridzō), used in Romans 8:29 above, is translated “predestined” also in **Acts 4 (KJV):27** For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

And Jesus “was foreknown before the foundation of the world”, as we read in **1 Peter 1 (NASB):18** knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 20 For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you 21 who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

And He was “slain from the foundation of the world” as in **Revelation 13 (KJV):8** And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

And God knows what He has planned as we read in **Acts 15 (KJV):18** Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

And it was prophesied that He would be born of a virgin in **Isaiah 7 (KJV):14** Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Dr. Albert Grimes also says, “Thus, the whole plan and purpose of God was ordained before the foundation of the world, at which time God chose those who He was to redeem in Christ.

This is the plain statement of Scriptures, Ephesians 1:4, “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

Having chosen us, he adopted us through Christ as children into his family. Ephesians 1:5, “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”

So Christ as being ordained, and slain before the world’s foundation was delivered by the determinate counsel of God, as in Acts 2:23, “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” **The Doctrine of Christ, Lesson 2, page 11, by Dr. Albert Grimes.**

Augustine then continues, “This is that ineffably accomplished sole taking up of man by God the Word, so that He might truly and properly be called at the same time the Son of God and the Son of man,—Son of man on account of the man taken up, and the Son of God on account of the God only-begotten who took Him up, so that a Trinity and not a Quaternity might be believed in. Such a transporting of human nature was predestinated, so great, so lofty, and so sublime that there was no exalting it more highly,—just as on our behalf that divinity had no possibility of more humbly putting itself off, than by the assumption of man’s nature with the weakness of the flesh, even to the death of the cross.”

And this agrees with Paul in **Philippians 2 (KJV):5** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

And Augustine continues as he says, “**As, therefore, that one man was predestinated to be our Head, so we being many are predestinated to be His members. Here let human merits which have perished through Adam keep silence, and let that grace of God reign which reigns through Jesus Christ our Lord, the only Son of God, the one Lord.**”

That we are also predestinated Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (KJV):28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.



And in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):4** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Augustine then continues as he says, “Let whoever can find in our Head the merits which preceded that peculiar generation, seek in us His members for those merits which preceded our manifold regeneration. For that generation was not recompensed to Christ, but given; that He should be born, namely, of the Spirit and the Virgin, separate from all entanglement of sin. Thus also our being born again of water and the Spirit is not recompensed to us for any merit, but freely given; and if faith has brought us to the laver of regeneration, we ought not therefore to suppose that we have first given anything, so that the regeneration of salvation should be recompensed to us again; because He made us to believe in Christ, who made for us a Christ on whom we believe. He makes in men the beginning and the completion of the faith in Jesus who made the man Jesus the beginner and finisher of faith; (Hebrews 12:2) for thus, as you know, He is called in the epistle which is addressed to the Hebrews.”

Augustine is referring to **Hebrews 12 (KJV):2** Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus is the beginner, or author, and finisher of our faith. We are saved by a faith which we did not originate, but was given to us as a gift as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

And again, as Augustine testifies, and as we just read, “...He made us to believe in Christ, who made for us a Christ on whom we believe”.

Faith is the gift of God. He opens our hearts to believe as we read in **Acts 16 (KJV):14** And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

The very faith that saves us is given to us. It is not of works, lest anyone should boast. Faith brings us to baptism, but it is not baptism that saves us. We are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. Regeneration happens when we believe, and when we believe is when we receive Him as in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Faith is given, we receive Him, we believe on his name, and we are born again by the will of God.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Predestination of the Saints, Chapters 34-37, page 514-516**

Chapter 34 [XVII.]—The Special Calling of the Elect is Not Because They Have Believed, But in Order that They May Believe.

Let us, then, understand the calling whereby they become elected,—not those who are elected because they have believed, but who are elected that they may believe. For the Lord Himself also sufficiently explains this calling when He says, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” (John 15:16) For if they had been elected because they had believed, they themselves would certainly have first chosen Him by believing in Him, so that they should deserve to be elected. But He takes away this supposition altogether when He says, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” And yet they themselves, beyond a doubt, chose Him when they believed on Him. Whence it is not for any other reason that He says, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,” than because they did not choose Him that He should choose them, but He chose them that they might choose Him; because His mercy preceded them according to grace, not according to debt. Therefore He chose them out of the world while He was wearing flesh, but as those who were already chosen in Himself before the foundation of the world. This is the changeless truth concerning predestination and grace. For what is it that the apostle says, “As He hath chosen us in Himself before the foundation of the world”? (Ephesians 1:4) And assuredly, if this were said because God foreknew that they would believe, not because He Himself would make them believers, the Son is speaking against such a foreknowledge as that when He says, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you;” when God should rather have foreknown this very thing, that they themselves would have chosen Him, so that they might deserve to be chosen by Him. Therefore they were elected before the foundation of the world with that predestination in which God foreknew what He Himself would do; but they were elected out of the world with that calling whereby God fulfilled that which He predestinated. For whom He predestinated, them He also called, with that calling, to wit, which is according to the purpose. Not others, therefore, but those whom He predestinated, them He also called; nor others, but those whom He so called, them He also justified; nor others, but those whom He predestinated, called, and justified, them He also glorified; (Romans 8:28-30) assuredly to that end which has no end. Therefore God elected believers; but He chose them that they might be so, not because they were already so. The Apostle James says: “Has not God chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him?” (James 2:5) By choosing them, therefore; He makes them rich in faith, as He makes them heirs of the kingdom; because He is rightly said to choose that in them, in order to make which in them He chose them. I ask, who can hear the Lord saying, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,” and can dare to say that men believe in order to be elected, when they are rather elected to believe; lest against the judgment of truth they be found to have first chosen Christ to whom Christ says, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you”? (John 15:16)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Let us, then, understand the calling whereby they become elected,—not those who are elected because they have believed, but who are elected that they may believe. For the Lord Himself also sufficiently explains this calling when He says, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” (John 15:16) For if they had been elected because they had believed, they themselves would certainly have first chosen Him by believing in Him, so that they should deserve to be elected. But He takes away this supposition altogether when He says, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.””

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):16** Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

And speaking of this ordination, we also read as in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

And he continues, “And yet they themselves, beyond a doubt, chose Him when they believed on Him. Whence it is not for any other reason that He says, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,” than because they did not choose Him that He should choose them, but He chose them that they might choose Him; because His mercy preceded them according to grace, not according to debt. Therefore He chose them out of the world while He was wearing flesh, but as those who were already chosen in Himself before the foundation of the world. This is the changeless truth concerning predestination and grace. For what is it that the apostle says, “As He hath chosen us in Himself before the foundation of the world”? (Ephesians 1:4)”

He refers in context to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):4** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

And he continues, “And assuredly, if this were said because God foreknew that they would believe, not because He Himself would make them believers, the Son is speaking against such a foreknowledge as that when He says, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you;” when God should rather have foreknown this very thing, that they themselves would have chosen Him, so that they might deserve to be chosen by Him. Therefore they were elected before the foundation of the world with that predestination in which God foreknew what He Himself would do; but they were elected out of the world with that calling whereby God fulfilled that which He predestinated. For whom He predestinated, them He also called, with that calling, to wit, which is according to the purpose. Not others, therefore, but those whom He predestinated, them He also called; nor others, but those whom He so called, them He also justified; nor others, but those whom He predestinated, called, and justified, them He also glorified; (Romans 8:28-30) assuredly to that end which has no end.”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

He continues, “Therefore God elected believers; but He chose them that they might be so, not because they were already so. The Apostle James says: “Has not God chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him?” (James 2:5)”

He refers to **James 2 (KJV):5** Harken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

And he concludes, “By choosing them, therefore; He makes them rich in faith, as He

makes them heirs of the kingdom; because He is rightly said to choose that in them, in order to make which in them He chose them. I ask, who can hear the Lord saying, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,” and can dare to say that men believe in order to be elected, when they are rather elected to believe; lest against the judgment of truth they be found to have first chosen Christ to whom Christ says, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you”? (John 15:16)”

Here we see the true greatness of Augustine. And what is the greatness that we see, but that he rightly divides the word of truth. Now he was definitely influenced by the dogmas of the Church in his time. But here he defines our predestination without flaw according to the word of God.

#### Chapter 35 [XVIII.]—Election is for the Purpose of Holiness.

Who can hear the apostle saying, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us in all spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ; as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without spot in His sight; in love predestinating us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will, wherein He hath shown us favour in His beloved Son; in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins according to the riches of His grace, which hath abounded to us in all wisdom and prudence; that He might show to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself, in the dispensation of the fullness of times, to restore all things in Christ, which are in heaven, and in the earth, in Him: in whom also we have obtained a share, being predestinated according to the purpose; who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will, that we should be to the praise of his glory;” (Ephesians 1:3-12)—**who, I say, can hear these words with attention and intelligence, and can venture to have any doubt concerning a truth so clear as this which we are defending? God chose Christ’s members in Him before the foundation of the world; and how should He choose those who as yet did not exist, except by predestinating them? Therefore He chose us by predestinating us. Would he choose the unholy and the unclean? Now if the question be proposed, whether He would choose such, or rather the holy and unstained, who can ask which of these he may answer, and not give his opinion at once in favour of the holy and pure?**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Who can hear the apostle saying, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us in all spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ; as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without spot in His sight; in love predestinating us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will, wherein He hath shown us favour in His beloved Son; in whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins according to the riches of His grace, which hath abounded to us in all wisdom and prudence; that He might show to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself, in the dispensation of the fullness of times, to restore all things in Christ, which are in heaven, and in the earth, in Him: in whom also we have obtained a

share, being predestinated according to the purpose; who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will, that we should be to the praise of his glory;” (Ephesians 1:3-12)—”

He refers to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):**3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

He continues, as he then asks, “who, I say, can hear these words with attention and intelligence, and can venture to have any doubt concerning a truth so clear as this which we are defending? God chose Christ’s members in Him before the foundation of the world; and how should He choose those who as yet did not exist, except by predestinating them? Therefore He chose us by predestinating us.”

He then asks, “Would he choose the unholy and the unclean? Now if the question be proposed, whether He would choose such, or rather the holy and unstained, who can ask which of these he may answer, and not give his opinion at once in favour of the holy and pure?”

To understand his answer, we must read further.

Chapter 36.—God Chose the Righteous; Not Those Whom He Foresaw as Being of Themselves, But Those Whom He Predestinated for the Purpose of Making So.

“Therefore,” says the Pelagian, “He foreknew who would be holy and immaculate by the choice of free will, and on that account elected them before the foundation of the world in that same foreknowledge of His in which He foreknew that they would be such. Therefore He elected them,” says he, “before they existed, predestinating them to be children whom He foreknew to be holy and immaculate. Certainly He did not make them so; nor did He foresee that He would make them so, but that they would be so.” Let us, then, look into the words of the apostle and see whether He chose us before the foundation of the world because we were going to be holy and immaculate, or in order that we might be so. “Blessed,” says he, “be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us in all spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ; even as He hath chosen us in Himself before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted.” (Ephesians 1:3-4) Not, then, because we were to be so, but that we might be so. Assuredly it is certain,—assuredly it is manifest. Certainly we were to be such for the reason that He has chosen us, predestinating us to be such by His grace. Therefore “He blessed us with spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ Jesus, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and immaculate in His sight, in order



that we might not in so great a benefit of grace glory concerning the good pleasure of our will. “In which,” says he, “He hath shown us favour in His beloved Son,”—in which, certainly, His own will, He hath shown us favour. Thus, it is said, He hath shown us grace by grace, even as it is said, He has made us righteous by righteousness. “In whom,” he says, “we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which has abounded to us in all wisdom and prudence; that he might show to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure.” (Ephesians 1:7-9) In this mystery of His will, He placed the riches of His grace, according to His good pleasure, not according to ours, which could not possibly be good unless He Himself, according to His own good pleasure, should aid it to become so. But when he had said, “According to His good pleasure,” he added, “which He purposed in Him,” that is, in His beloved Son, “in the dispensation of the fullness of times to restore all things in Christ, which are in heaven, and which are in earth, in Him: in whom also we too have obtained a lot, being predestinated according to His purpose who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will; that we should be to the praise of His glory.” (Ephesians 1:10-12)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he defines the error of the Pelagian view, ““Therefore,” says the Pelagian, “He foreknew who would be holy and immaculate by the choice of free will, and on that account elected them before the foundation of the world in that same foreknowledge of His in which He foreknew that they would be such. Therefore He elected them,” says he, “before they existed, predestinating them to be children whom He foreknew to be holy and immaculate. Certainly He did not make them so; nor did He foresee that He would make them so, but that they would be so.””

Why is the Pelagian view in error? Because it is not supported by the Scriptures. Augustine then shows what the Scriptures teach as he continues, “Let us, then, look into the words of the apostle and see whether He chose us before the foundation of the world because we were going to be holy and immaculate, or in order that we might be so. “Blessed,” says he, “be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us in all spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ; even as He hath chosen us in Himself before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted.” (Ephesians 1:3-4)

Augustine refers to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

He then explains, “Not, then, because we were to be so, but that we might be so. Assuredly it is certain,—assuredly it is manifest. Certainly we were to be such for the reason that He has chosen us, predestinating us to be such by His grace. Therefore “He blessed us with spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ Jesus, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and immaculate in His sight, in order that we might not in so great a benefit of grace glory concerning the good pleasure of our will. “In which,” says he, “He hath shown us favour in His beloved Son,”—in which, certainly, His own will, He hath shown us favour. Thus, it is said, He hath shown us grace by grace, even as it is said, He has made us righteous by righteousness. “In whom,” he says, “we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace, which has

abounded to us in all wisdom and prudence; that he might show to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure.” (Ephesians 1:7-9)

He is referring in context to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):5** Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

God purposed in Himself that we would be His, as Augustine continues, “In this mystery of His will, He placed the riches of His grace, according to His good pleasure, not according to ours, which could not possibly be good unless He Himself, according to His own good pleasure, should aid it to become so. But when he had said, “According to His good pleasure,” he added, “which He purposed in Him,” that is, in His beloved Son, “in the dispensation of the fullness of times to restore all things in Christ, which are in heaven, and which are in earth, in Him: in whom also we too have obtained a lot, being predestinated according to His purpose who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will; that we should be to the praise of His glory.” (Ephesians 1:10-12)

He refers to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):10** That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

Augustine definitely believes that we were chosen according to the will of God, and not by our own will. And this agrees with the Scripture as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Augustine then explains more about God’s sovereign choice in the next section.

Chapter 37.—We Were Elected and Predestinated, Not Because We Were Going to Be Holy, But in Order that We Might Be So.

It would be too tedious to argue about the several points. But you see without doubt, you see with what evidence of apostolic declaration this grace is defended, in opposition to which human merits are set up, as if man should first give something for it to be recompensed to him again. Therefore God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, predestinating us to the adoption of children, not because we were going to be of ourselves holy and immaculate, but He chose and predestinated us that we might be so. Moreover, He did this according to the good pleasure of His will, so that nobody might glory concerning his own will, but about God’s will towards himself. He did this according to the riches of His grace, according to His goodwill, which He purposed in His beloved Son; in whom we have obtained a share, being predestinated according to the purpose, not ours, but His, who worketh all things to such an extent as that He worketh in us to will also. (Philippians 2:13) Moreover, He worketh according

to the counsel of His will, that we may be to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:11-12) For this reason it is that we cry that no one should glory in man, and, thus, not in himself; but whoever glorieth let him glory in the Lord, that he may be for the praise of His glory. Because He Himself worketh according to His purpose that we may be to the praise of His glory, and, of course, holy and immaculate, for which purpose He called us, predestinating us before the foundation of the world. Out of this, His purpose, is that special calling of the elect for whom He co-worketh with all things for good (Romans 8:28), because they are called according to His purpose, and “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” (Romans 11:29)

**Commentary:** Augustine summarizes what he has said before, as he continues, “It would be too tedious to argue about the several points. But you see without doubt, you see with what evidence of apostolic declaration this grace is defended, in opposition to which human merits are set up, as if man should first give something for it to be recompensed to him again. Therefore God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, predestinating us to the adoption of children, not because we were going to be of ourselves holy and immaculate, but He chose and predestinated us that we might be so. Moreover, He did this according to the good pleasure of His will, so that nobody might glory concerning his own will, but about God’s will towards himself. He did this according to the riches of His grace, according to His goodwill, which He purposed in His beloved Son; in whom we have obtained a share, being predestinated according to the purpose, not ours, but His, who worketh all things to such an extent as that He worketh in us to will also. (Philippians 2:13)

Again, Augustine is rightly dividing the word of God here. It is God who works in us to will and to do as we read in **Philippians 2 (KJV):13** For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

He continues, “Moreover, He worketh according to the counsel of His will, that we may be to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:11-12)”

He refers again to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):11** In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

He continues, “For this reason it is that we cry that no one should glory in man, and, thus, not in himself; but whoever glorieth let him glory in the Lord, that he may be for the praise of His glory.”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

He then concludes, “Because He Himself worketh according to His purpose that we may be to the praise of His glory, and, of course, holy and immaculate, for which purpose He called us, predestinating us before the foundation of the world. Out of this, His purpose, is that special calling of the elect for whom He co-worketh with all things for good (Romans 8:28), because they are called according to His purpose, and “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” (Romans 11:29)”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

Though he doesn't mention it here, it helps to understand man's condition and standing before God before accepting Christ, and why he needs salvation. For we read that all the world stands guilty before God in **Romans 3 (KJV):10** As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

The word "unprofitable" in the Greek is ἡχρειώθησαν (pronounced eh-chray-oh-theisan), and is in the third person, plural, aorist 1, indicative, passive tense of the verb ἡχρειόω (pronounced achreioō), which comes from ἄχρειος (pronounced ä-khrā'-os), and means useless, unprofitable, worthless." **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, 1978 Edition, Harold K. Moulton, Page 63.**

Wuest says, "The Hebrew here means "to go bad, become sour like milk." **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume I, Romans in the Greek New Testament, Page 55.**

Wuest is referring in context to **Psalms 14 (KJV):1** The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. 2 The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. 3 They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

The word "filthy" is a translation of the Hebrew word אָלַח (pronounced 'alach), meaning to become sour like milk, metaphorically, to be corrupted, in a moral sense. The word is also used in **Job 15 (KJV):16** How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?

And it is also used in context in **Psalms 53 (KJV):2** God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. 3 Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. **Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, page 50.**

Dr. Albert Grimes says, "The word "unprofitable" speaks of fruit that has spoiled rotten. This is the picture of man. It is further stated in Romans 7:18, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." **Doctrines of Salvation, Lesson 1: The Doctrine of Man, Page 8.**

We continue to read in **Romans 3 (KJV):13** Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes. 19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

All the world is guilty before God, and comes short of the glory of God as in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

And more of man's condition is also revealed in **Romans 1 (KJV):18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world

are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

And we read also in **Ephesians 4 (KJV)**:17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Being in such a state, it is understandable that man is helpless as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV)**:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

We were just natural men and women as we read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV)**:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Until the light of the Gospel shined in our hearts and minds, we were in complete darkness. In fact we were darkness, as we read in **Ephesians 5 (KJV)**:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

He is our light as we read in **John 1 (KJV)**:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

And we heard the Holy Spirit speaking to us, and then He opened our hearts to believe the truth and we received Him as in **John 1 (KJV)**:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And now we are not our own, for we have been bought with a price as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV)**:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.



**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings**  
**On the Predestination of the Saints, Chapter 27, page 511**

Chapter 27.—The Book of Wisdom Obtains in the Church the Authority of Canonical Scripture.

And since these things are so, the judgment of the book of Wisdom ought not to be repudiated, since for so long a course of years that book has deserved to be read in the Church of Christ from the station of the readers of the Church of Christ, and to be heard by all Christians, from bishops downwards, even to the lowest lay believers, penitents, and catechumens, with the veneration paid to divine authority. For assuredly, if, from those who have been before me in commenting on the divine Scriptures, I should bring forward a defense of this judgment, which we are now called upon to defend more carefully and copiously than usual against the new error of the Pelagians,—that is, that God’s grace is not given according to our merits, and that it is given freely to whom it is given, because it is neither of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy; but that by righteous judgment it is not given to whom it is not given, because there is no unrighteousness with God;—if, therefore, I should put forth a defense of this opinion from Catholic commentators on the divine oracles who have preceded us, assuredly these brethren for whose sake I am now discoursing would acquiesce, for this you have intimated in your letters. What need is there, then, for us to look into the writings of those who, before this heresy sprang up, had no necessity to be conversant in a question so difficult of solution as this, which beyond a doubt they would have done if they had been compelled to answer such things? Whence it arose that they touched upon what they thought of God’s grace briefly in some passages of their writings, and cursorily; but on those matters which they argued against the enemies of the Church, and in exhortations to every virtue by which to serve the living and true God for the purpose of attaining eternal life and true happiness, they dwelt at length. But the grace of God, what it could do, shows itself artlessly by its frequent mention in prayers; for what God commands to be done would not be asked for from God, unless it could be given by Him that it should be done.

**Commentary:** It was Augustine’s judgment that the book of Wisdom was to be included in the Scriptures, as he begins, “And since these things are so, the judgment of the book of Wisdom ought not to be repudiated, since for so long a course of years that book has deserved to be read in the Church of Christ from the station of the readers of the Church of Christ, and to be heard by all Christians, from bishops downwards, even to the lowest lay believers, penitents, and catechumens, with the veneration paid to divine authority.”

It was to be read “with the veneration paid to divine authority”. Today the book of Wisdom is included in the Apocrypha, and we Protestants do not include it in the Canon of Scripture, although Roman Catholics still include it in their Bibles.

Augustine then continues, “For assuredly, if, from those who have been before me in commenting on the divine Scriptures, I should bring forward a defense of this judgment, which we are now called upon to defend more carefully and copiously than usual against the new error of the Pelagians,—that is, that God’s grace is not given according to our merits, and that it is given freely to whom it is given, because it is neither of him that willeth, nor of him that

runneth, but of God that showeth mercy; but that by righteous judgment it is not given to whom it is not given, because there is no unrighteousness with God;”

In his defense of our predestination, Augustine says that God’s grace is “given freely to whom it is given, because it is neither of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy”, and he refers to Romans 9:16, as we read in context in **Romans 9 (KJV)**:9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. 10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; 11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. 14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. 17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. 18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. 19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

Augustine continues, “—if, therefore, I should put forth a defense of this opinion from Catholic commentators on the divine oracles who have preceded us, assuredly these brethren for whose sake I am now discoursing would acquiesce, for this you have intimated in your letters. What need is there, then, for us to look into the writings of those who, before this heresy sprang up, had no necessity to be conversant in a question so difficult of solution as this, which beyond a doubt they would have done if they had been compelled to answer such things?”

Augustine was writing against the heresy of the Pelagians. He is saying that no one had written to the extent that he had written on the subject of grace and predestination before, because the need had not presented itself as it now has with the writings of Pelagius.

He continues, “Whence it arose that they touched upon what they thought of God’s grace briefly in some passages of their writings, and cursorily; but on those matters which they argued against the enemies of the Church, and in exhortations to every virtue by which to serve the living and true God for the purpose of attaining eternal life and true happiness, they dwelt at length. But the grace of God, what it could do, shows itself artlessly by its frequent mention in prayers; for what God commands to be done would not be asked for from God, unless it could be given by Him that it should be done.”

God’s grace abounds toward us in all wisdom and prudence as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV)**:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the

forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

And we stand in grace as we read in context in **Romans 5 (KJV)**:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XIV. Chapter III. 29–36, paragraph 8, page 97**

8. “He that cometh from heaven is above all; and what He hath seen and heard, that testifieth He; and His testimony no man receiveth.” If no man, to what purpose came He? He means, no man of a certain class. There are some people prepared for the wrath of God, to be damned with the devil; of these, none receiveth the testimony of Christ. For if none at all, not any man, received, what could these words mean, “But he that received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true”? Not certainly, then, no man, if thou sayest thyself, “He that received His testimony has set to his seal that God is true.” Perhaps John, on being questioned, would answer and say, I know what I have said, in saying no man. **There are, in fact, people born to God’s wrath, and thereunto foreknown. For God knows who they are that will and that will not believe; He knows who they are that shall persevere in that in which they have believed, and who that shall fall away; and all that shall be for eternal life are numbered by God; and He knows already the people set apart. And if He knows this, and has given to the prophets by His Spirit to know it, He gave this also to John.** Now John was observing, not with his eye,—for as regards himself he is earth, and speaketh of earth,—but with that grace of the Spirit which he received of God, he saw a certain people, ungodly, unbelieving. Contemplating that people in its unbelief, he says, “His testimony, who came from heaven, no man receiveth.” No man of whom? Of them who shall be on the left hand, of them to whom it shall be said, “Go into the everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels.” Who are they that do receive it? They who shall be at the right hand, they to whom it shall be said, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom which is prepared for you from the beginning of the world.” He observes, then, in the Spirit a dividing, but in the human race a mingling together; and that which is not yet separated locally, he separated in the understanding, in the view of the heart; and he saw two peoples, one of believers, one of unbelievers. Fixing his thought on the unbelievers, he says, “He that cometh from heaven is above all; and what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth and no man receiveth His testimony.” He then turned his thought from the left hand, and looked at the right, and proceeded to say, “He that received His testimony has set to his seal that God is true.” What means “has set to his seal that God is true,” if it be not that man is a liar, and God is true? **For no human being can speak any truth, unless he be enlightened by Him who cannot lie. God, then, is true; but Christ is God. Wouldest thou prove this? Receive His testimony and thou findest it. For “he that hath received His testimony has set to his seal that God is true.” Who is true? The same who came from heaven, and is above all, is God, and true. But if thou dost not yet understand Him to be God, thou hast not yet received His testimony: receive it, and thou putteth thy seal to it; confidently thou understandest, definitely thou acknowledgest, that God is true.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins here as he says, ““He that cometh from heaven is above all; and what He hath seen and heard, that testifieth He; and His testimony no man receiveth.”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):31** He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. 32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

He continues, “If no man, to what purpose came He? He means, no man of a certain class. There are some people prepared for the wrath of God, to be damned with the devil; of these, none receiveth the testimony of Christ. For if none at all, not any man, received, what could these words mean, “But he that received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true”? Not certainly, then, no man, if thou sayest thyself, “He that received His testimony has set to his seal that God is true.””

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):33** He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

In John 3:32 above, we should understand that no man of his own power receives His testimony. To receive is given by the grace of God.

He continues, “Perhaps John, on being questioned, would answer and say, I know what I have said, in saying no man. **There are, in fact, people born to God’s wrath, and thereunto foreknown. For God knows who they are that will and that will not believe; He knows who they are that shall persevere in that in which they have believed, and who that shall fall away; and all that shall be for eternal life are numbered by God; and He knows already the people set apart. And if He knows this, and has given to the prophets by His Spirit to know it, He gave this also to John.**”

And Augustine agrees with Paul, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

And Jesus spoke as in **John 6 (KJV):64** But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Augustine then continues, “Now John was observing, not with his eye,—for as regards himself he is earth, and speaketh of earth,—but with that grace of the Spirit which he received of God, he saw a certain people, ungodly, unbelieving. Contemplating that people in its unbelief, he says, “His testimony, who came from heaven, no man receiveth.””

Again he refers to **John 3 (KJV):31** He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. 32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

To help us understand what John the Baptist is saying in verse 32 above, we could also read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

It is the natural man that does not receive his testimony. It is foolishness to him. We are

spiritual because we have received the Spirit of God as we read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

We cannot receive his testimony until we receive the Spirit of God. This happens when we are given faith to believe in Jesus Christ.

He continues, “No man of whom? Of them who shall be on the left hand, of them to whom it shall be said, “Go into the everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels.” Who are they that do receive it? They who shall be at the right hand, they to whom it shall be said, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom which is prepared for you from the beginning of the world.””

He refers in context to **Matthew 25 (KJV):31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

This Scripture refers to the judgment of the nations just after the tribulation period of seven years. Those nations who treated the Lord's brethren, the Jews, accordingly, shall be allowed access into the Kingdom of the thousand year reign of Christ. Those who did not will be turned away in everlasting punishment. Augustine did not comprehend this.

He continues, “He observes, then, in the Spirit a dividing, but in the human race a mingling together; and that which is not yet separated locally, he separated in the understanding, in the view of the heart; and he saw two peoples, one of believers, one of unbelievers.”

It was Augustine's perception that the Church was already reigning with Christ in the thousand year reign of Christ which is spoken of in Revelation 20:1-7. He also thought that this judgment in Matthew 25:31-46 was the final judgment. But the final judgment occurs after the



thousand year reign of Christ, as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):8** And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

This white throne judgment takes place in heaven, whereas the judgment in Matthew 25:31-46 is on earth. The white throne judgment is for the wicked dead only.

Augustine concludes, “Fixing his thought on the unbelievers, he says, “He that cometh from heaven is above all; and what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth and no man receiveth His testimony.” He then turned his thought from the left hand, and looked at the right, and proceeded to say, “He that received His testimony has set to his seal that God is true.”” What means “has set to his seal that God is true,” if it be not that man is a liar, and God is true? **For no human being can speak any truth, unless he be enlightened by Him who cannot lie. God, then, is true; but Christ is God. Wouldest thou prove this? Receive His testimony and thou findest it. For “he that hath received His testimony has set to his seal that God is true.” Who is true? The same who came from heaven, and is above all, is God, and true. But if thou dost not yet understand Him to be God, thou hast not yet received His testimony: receive it, and thou putttest thy seal to it; confidently thou understandest, definitely thou acknowledgest, that God is true.”**

We can agree with Augustine’s encouragement to unbelievers to receive His testimony. But God is sovereign and knows those who are His.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate CV. Chapter XVII. 1–5, paragraph 6-8, page 397-398**

6. But this predestination He still more clearly disclosed in respect of His own glorification, wherewith He was glorified by the Father, when He added, “With the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee.” The proper order of the words is, “which I had with Thee before the world was.” **To this apply His words, “And now glorify Thou me;” that is to say, as then, so also now: as then, by predestination; so also now, by consummation: do Thou in the world what had already been done with Thee before the world: do in its own time what Thou hast determined before all times.** This, some have imagined, should be so understood as if the human nature, which was assumed by the Word, were converted into the Word, and the man

were changed into God; yea, were we reflecting with some care on the opinions they have advanced, as if the humanity were lost in the Godhead. For no one would go the length of saying that out of such a transmutation of the humanity the Word of God is either doubled or increased, so that either what was one should now be two, or what was less should now be greater. Accordingly, if with His human nature changed and converted into the Word, the Word of God will still be as great as He was, and what He was, where is the humanity, if it is not lost?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But this predestination He still more clearly disclosed in respect of His own glorification, wherewith He was glorified by the Father, when He added, “With the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee.””

He refers first to **John 17 (Douay Rheims):5** And now glorify thou me, O Father, with thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with thee.

He continues, “The proper order of the words is, “which I had with Thee before the world was.”

And so we read as in **John 17 (KJV):5** And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

He continues, “**To this apply His words, “And now glorify Thou me;” that is to say, as then, so also now: as then, by predestination; so also now, by consummation: do Thou in the world what had already been done with Thee before the world: do in its own time what Thou hast determined before all times.**”

This determination is mentioned in **Acts 2 (KJV):23** Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

And to **Revelation 13 (KJV):8** And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

He continues, “This, some have imagined, should be so understood as if the human nature, which was assumed by the Word, were converted into the Word, and the man were changed into God; yea, were we reflecting with some care on the opinions they have advanced, as if the humanity were lost in the Godhead. For no one would go the length of saying that out of such a transmutation of the humanity the Word of God is either doubled or increased, so that either what was one should now be two, or what was less should now be greater. Accordingly, if with His human nature changed and converted into the Word, the Word of God will still be as great as He was, and what He was, where is the humanity, if it is not lost?”

And he agrees with the Scripture as we read in **John 1 (KJV):14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Let us continue to read in the next paragraph.

7. But to this opinion, which I certainly do not see to be conformable to the truth, there is nothing to urge us, if, when the Son says, “And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was,” we understand the predestination of the glory of His human nature, as thereafter, from being mortal, to become immortal with the Father: and that this had already been done by predestination before the

world was, as also in its own time it was done in the world. For if the apostle has said of us, “According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world,” (Ephesians 1:4) why should it be thought incongruous with the truth, if the Father glorified our Head at the same time as He chose us in Him to be His members? For we were chosen in the same way as He was glorified; inasmuch as before the world was, neither we nor the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, (1 Timothy 2:5) were yet in existence. But He who, in as far as He is His Word, of His own self “made even those things which are yet to come,” and “callethe those things which are not as though they were,” (Romans 4:17) certainly, in respect of His manhood as Mediator between God and men, was Himself glorified on our behalf by God the Father before the foundation of the world, if it be so that we also were then chosen in Him. For what saith the apostle? “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren: and whom He did predestinate, them He also called.” (Romans 8:28-30)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “But to this opinion, which I certainly do not see to be conformable to the truth, there is nothing to urge us, if, when the Son says, “And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was,” we understand the predestination of the glory of His human nature, as thereafter, from being mortal, to become immortal with the Father: and that this had already been done by predestination before the world was, as also in its own time it was done in the world.”

And this is what we also read in **Revelation 13 (KJV):8** And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

He continues, “For if the apostle has said of us, “According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world,” (Ephesians 1:4) why should it be thought incongruous with the truth, if the Father glorified our Head at the same time as He chose us in Him to be His members?”

He refers to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):4** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

The Scripture is clear, as Augustine has said. He continues, “For we were chosen in the same way as He was glorified; inasmuch as before the world was, neither we nor the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, (1 Timothy 2:5) were yet in existence.”

He refers to **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

He continues, “But He who, in as far as He is His Word, of His own self “made even those things which are yet to come,” and “callethe those things which are not as though they were,” (Romans 4:17) certainly, in respect of His manhood as Mediator between God and men, was Himself glorified on our behalf by God the Father before the foundation of the world, if it be so that we also were then chosen in Him.”

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):17** (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

He continues, “For what saith the apostle? “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren: and whom He did predestinate, them He also called.” (Romans 8:28-30)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):**28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Let us continue to read in the next paragraph.

8. But perhaps we shall have some fear in saying that He was predestinated, because the apostle seems to have said so only in reference to our being made conformable to His image. As if, indeed, any one, faithfully considering the rule of faith, were to deny that the Son of God was predestinated, who yet cannot deny that He was man. For it is rightly said that He was not predestinated in respect of His being the Word of God, God with God. For how could He be predestinated, seeing He already was what He was, without beginning and without ending, everlasting? But that, which as yet was not, had to be predestinated, in order that it might come to pass in its time, even as it was predestinated so to come before all times. Accordingly, whoever denies predestination of the Son of God, denies that He was also Himself the Son of man. But, on account of those who are disputatious, let us also on this subject listen to the apostle in the exordium of his epistles. For both in the first of his epistles, which is that to the Romans, and in the beginning of the epistle itself, we read: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called [to be] an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was made for Him of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was predestinated (Romans 1:1-4) the Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” (Romans 1:1-4) In respect, then, of this predestination also, He was gloried before the world was, in order that His glory might be, by the resurrection from the dead, with the Father, at whose right hand He sitteth. Accordingly, when He saw that the time of this, His predestinated glorification, was now come, in order that what had already been done in predestination might also be done now in actual accomplishment, He said in His prayer, “And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was:” as if He had said, The glory which I had with Thee, that is, that glory which I had with Thee in Thy predestination, it is time that I should have with Thee also in sitting at Thy right hand. But as the discussion of this question has already kept us long, what follows must be taken into consideration in another discourse.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “But perhaps we shall have some fear in saying that He was predestinated, because the apostle seems to have said so only in reference to our being made conformable to His image. As if, indeed, any one, faithfully considering the rule of faith, were to deny that the Son of God was predestinated, who yet cannot deny that He was man. For it is rightly said that He was not predestinated in respect of His being the Word of

God, God with God. For how could He be predestinated, seeing He already was what He was, without beginning and without ending, everlasting? But that, which as yet was not, had to be predestinated, in order that it might come to pass in its time, even as it was predestinated so to come before all times. Accordingly, whoever denies predestination of the Son of God, denies that He was also Himself the Son of man.”

And we could add that He works all things after the counsel of His own will as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):11** In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

Augustine continues, “But, on account of those who are disputatious, let us also on this subject listen to the apostle in the exordium of his epistles. For both in the first of his epistles, which is that to the Romans, and in the beginning of the epistle itself, we read: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called [to be] an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was made for Him of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was predestinated (Romans 1:1-4) the Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” (Romans 1:1-4)”

He refers to **Romans 1 (KJV):1** Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

The Greek word translated “declared” in verse 4 is **ὁρίζω** (pronounced ho-rē'-zō), and means “to mark out or bound (“horizon”), i.e. (figuratively) to appoint, decree, specify:—declare, determine, limit, ordain.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3724.**

The Greek word translated “predestinated” in Ephesians 1:11 above is **προορίζω** (pronounced pro-o-rē'-zō), and means “to limit in advance, i.e. (figuratively) predetermine:—determine before, ordain, predestinate.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4309.**

The Greek word, **προορίζω**, is made up of two Greek words, **πρό** (pronounced pro'), which is “a primary preposition; “fore”, i.e. in front of, prior (figuratively, superior) to:—above, ago, before, or ever.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4253**, and **ορίζω**, meaning as above, “to mark out or bound (“horizon”), i.e. (figuratively) to appoint, decree, specify:—declare, determine, limit, ordain.”

Again, Augustine was influenced by the **Latin Vulgate** translation by Jerome, as we read in **Romans 1 (Douay Rheims):4** Who was predestinated the Son of God in power, according to the spirit of sanctification, by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead:

It is clear without this reference, that the Lord Jesus Christ was predestinated to be the Son of God, that is, in reference to His manhood, as Augustine has said.

He continues, “In respect, then, of this predestination also, He was gloried before the world was, in order that His glory might be, by the resurrection from the dead, with the Father, at whose right hand He sitteth. Accordingly, when He saw that the time of this, His predestinated glorification, was now come, in order that what had already been done in predestination might also be done now in actual accomplishment, He said in His prayer, “And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee



before the world was:” as if He had said, The glory which I had with Thee, that is, that glory which I had with Thee in Thy predestination, it is time that I should have with Thee also in sitting at Thy right hand.”

He refers to **John 17 (KJV):5** And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

He concludes, “But as the discussion of this question has already kept us long, what follows must be taken into consideration in another discourse.”

## **Faith, God’s Gift**

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Predestination of the Saints, Chapter 39-43, page 517-519**

#### **Chapter 39—The Beginning of Faith is God’s Gift.**

Finally, also, in what follows this testimony, the apostle gives thanks to God on behalf of those who have believed;—not, certainly, because the gospel has been declared to them, but because they have believed. For he says, “In whom also after ye had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the pledge of our inheritance, to the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of His glory. Wherefore I also, after I had heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and with reference to all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you.” (Ephesians 1:13-16) Their faith was new and recent on the preaching of the gospel to them, which faith when he hears of, the apostle gives thanks to God on their behalf. If he were to give thanks to man for that which he might either think or know that man had not given, it would be called a flattery or a mockery, rather than a giving of thanks. “Do not err, for God is not mocked;” (Galatians 6:7) **for His gift is also the beginning of faith**, unless the apostolic giving of thanks be rightly judged to be either mistaken or fallacious. What then? Does that not appear as the beginning of the faith of the Thessalonians, for which, nevertheless, the same apostle gives thanks to God when he says, “For this cause also we thank God without ceasing, because when ye had received from us the word of the hearing of God, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh in you and which ye believed”? (1 Thessalonians 2:13) What is that for which he here gives thanks to God? Assuredly it is a vain and idle thing if He to whom he gives thanks did not Himself do the thing. But, since this is not a vain and idle thing, certainly God, to whom he gave thanks concerning this work, Himself did it; that when they had received the word of the hearing of God, they received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God. God, therefore, worketh in the hearts of men with that calling according to His purpose, of which we have spoken a great deal, that they should not hear the gospel in vain, but when they heard it, should be converted and believe, receiving it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Finally, also, in what follows this testimony, the apostle gives thanks to God on behalf of those who have believed;—not, certainly, because

the gospel has been declared to them, but because they have believed. For he says, “In whom also after ye had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the pledge of our inheritance, to the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of His glory. Wherefore I also, after I had heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and with reference to all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you.” (Ephesians 1:13-16)”

He refers to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):13** In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. 15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

So it was in whom they trusted, after hearing the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation, and in whom also after that they believed, that they were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. In other words, they had faith in Him.

Augustine then continues, “Their faith was new and recent on the preaching of the gospel to them, which faith when he hears of, the apostle gives thanks to God on their behalf. If he were to give thanks to man for that which he might either think or know that man had not given, it would be called a flattery or a mockery, rather than a giving of thanks. “Do not err, for God is not mocked;” (Galatians 6:7)”

He refers to **Galatians 6 (KJV):7** Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

He continues, “**for His gift is also the beginning of faith**, unless the apostolic giving of thanks be rightly judged to be either mistaken or fallacious. What then? Does that not appear as the beginning of the faith of the Thessalonians, for which, nevertheless, the same apostle gives thanks to God when he says, “For this cause also we thank God without ceasing, because when ye had received from us the word of the hearing of God, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh in you and which ye believed”? (1 Thessalonians 2:13)”

He refers to **1 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):13** For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

And we read also in **Romans 10 (KJV):17** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

He concludes, “What is that for which he here gives thanks to God? Assuredly it is a vain and idle thing if He to whom he gives thanks did not Himself do the thing. But, since this is not a vain and idle thing, certainly God, to whom he gave thanks concerning this work, Himself did it; that when they had received the word of the hearing of God, they received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God. God, therefore, worketh in the hearts of men with that calling according to His purpose, of which we have spoken a great deal, that they should not hear the gospel in vain, but when they heard it, should be converted and believe, receiving it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God.”

Faith is God’s gift as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved

through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

#### Chapter 40 [XX.]—Apostolic Testimony to the Beginning of Faith Being God's Gift.

Moreover, we are admonished that the beginning of men's faith is God's gift, since the apostle signifies this when, in the Epistle to the Colossians, he says, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same in giving of thanks. Withal praying also for us that God would open unto us the door of His word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which also I am in bonds, that I may so make it manifest as I ought to speak." (Colossians 4:2-4) How is the door of His word opened, except when the sense of the hearer is opened so that he may believe, and, having made a beginning of faith, may admit those things which are declared and reasoned, for the purpose of building up wholesome doctrine, lest, by a heart closed through unbelief, he reject and repel those things which are spoken? Whence, also, he says to the Corinthians: "But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great and evident door is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." (1 Corinthians 16:8-9) What else can be understood here, save that, when the gospel had been first of all preached there by him, many had believed, and there had appeared many adversaries of the same faith, in accordance with that saying of the Lord, "No one cometh unto me, unless it were given him of my Father;" (John 6:65) and, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given?" (Luke 8:10) Therefore, there is an open door in those to whom it is given, but there are many adversaries among those to whom it is not given.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "Moreover, we are admonished that the beginning of men's faith is God's gift, since the apostle signifies this when, in the Epistle to the Colossians, he says, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same in giving of thanks. Withal praying also for us that God would open unto us the door of His word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which also I am in bonds, that I may so make it manifest as I ought to speak." (Colossians 4:2-4)"

He refers to **Colossians 4 (KJV):2** Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; 3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: 4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

He continues, as he explains, "How is the door of His word opened, except when the sense of the hearer is opened so that he may believe, and, having made a beginning of faith, may admit those things which are declared and reasoned, for the purpose of building up wholesome doctrine, lest, by a heart closed through unbelief, he reject and repel those things which are spoken? Whence, also, he says to the Corinthians: "But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great and evident door is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." (1 Corinthians 16:8-9)"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 16 (KJV):8** But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. 9 For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

He continues to explain, "What else can be understood here, save that, when the gospel had been first of all preached there by him, many had believed, and there had appeared many adversaries of the same faith, in accordance with that saying of the Lord, "No one cometh unto

me, unless it were given him of my Father;" (John 6:65) and, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given"? (Luke 8:10)"

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):65** And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

And to **Luke 8 (KJV):10** And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

He concludes, "Therefore, there is an open door in those to whom it is given, but there are many adversaries among those to whom it is not given.

Augustine is in agreement with the Scriptures.

#### Chapter 41.—Further Apostolic Testimonies.

And again, the same apostle says to the same people, in his second Epistle: "When I had come to Troas for the gospel of Christ, and a door had been opened unto me in the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus, my brother: but, making my farewell to them, I went away into Macedonia." (2 Corinthians 2:12-13) To whom did he bid farewell but to those who had believed,—**to wit, in whose hearts the door was opened for his preaching of the gospel?** But attend to what he adds, saying, "Now thanks be unto God, who always causes us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place: because we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them who are saved, and in them who perish: to some, indeed, we are the savour of death unto death, but to some the savour of life unto life." (2 Corinthians 2:14-16) See concerning what this most zealous soldier and invincible defender of grace gives thanks. See concerning what he gives thanks,—that the apostles are a sweet savour of Christ unto God, both in those who are saved by His grace, and in those who perish by His judgment. But in order that those who little understand these things may be less enraged, he himself gives a warning when he adds the words: "And who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Corinthians 2:16) But let us return to the opening of the door by which the apostle signified the beginning of faith in his hearers. For what is the meaning of, "Withal praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of the word," (Colossians 4:3) unless it is a most manifest demonstration that even the very beginning of faith is the gift of God? For it would not be sought for from Him in prayer, unless it were believed to be given by Him. **This gift of heavenly grace had descended to that seller of purple (Acts 16:14) for whom, as Scripture says in the Acts of the Apostles, "The Lord opened her heart, and she gave heed unto the things which were said by Paul;" for she was so called that she might believe. Because God does what He will in the hearts of men, either by assistance or by judgment; so that, even through their means, may be fulfilled what His hand and counsel have predestinated to be done.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins here as he says, "And again, the same apostle says to the same people, in his second Epistle: "When I had come to Troas for the gospel of Christ, and a door had been opened unto me in the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus, my brother: but, making my farewell to them, I went away into Macedonia." (2 Corinthians 2:12-13)"

He refers to **2 Corinthians 2 (KJV):12** Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach

Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, 13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

He continues, “To whom did he bid farewell but to those who had believed,—**to wit, in whose hearts the door was opened for his preaching of the gospel?** But attend to what he adds, saying, “Now thanks be unto God, who always causes us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place: because we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them who are saved, and in them who perish: to some, indeed, we are the savour of death unto death, but to some the savour of life unto life.” (2 Corinthians 2:14-16)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. 15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: 16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

He continues, as he explains, “See concerning what this most zealous soldier and invincible defender of grace gives thanks. See concerning what he gives thanks,—that the apostles are a sweet savour of Christ unto God, both in those who are saved by His grace, and in those who perish by His judgment. But in order that those who little understand these things may be less enraged, he himself gives a warning when he adds the words: “And who is sufficient for these things?” (2 Corinthians 2:16) But let us return to the opening of the door by which the apostle signified the beginning of faith in his hearers. For what is the meaning of, “Withal praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of the word,” (Colossians 4:3) unless it is a most manifest demonstration that even the very beginning of faith is the gift of God?”

He refers again to **Colossians 4 (KJV):3** Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

He continues, “For it would not be sought for from Him in prayer, unless it were believed to be given by Him.”

God answers our prayers. And he opens doors where the word of the Gospel is spoken, and those who trust and believe are saved.

He concludes, “**This gift of heavenly grace had descended to that seller of purple (Acts 16:14) for whom, as Scripture says in the Acts of the Apostles, “The Lord opened her heart, and she gave heed unto the things which were said by Paul;” for she was so called that she might believe. Because God does what He will in the hearts of men, either by assistance or by judgment; so that, even through their means, may be fulfilled what His hand and counsel have predestinated to be done.”**

He refers in context to **Acts 16 (KJV):14** And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

And to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):11** In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:



This is how we are regenerated. We are born of God, as in **John 3 (KJV):8** The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

And again in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

## Chapter 42.—Old Testament Testimonies.

Therefore also it is in vain that objectors have alleged, that what we have proved by Scripture testimony from the books of Kings and Chronicles is not pertinent to the subject of which we are discoursing: such, for instance, as that when God wills that to be done which ought only to be done by the willing men, their hearts are inclined to will this,—inclined, that is to say, by His power, who, in a marvelous and ineffable manner, worketh in us also to will. What else is this than to say nothing, and yet to contradict? Unless perchance, they have given some reason to you for the view that they have taken, which reason you have preferred to say nothing about in your letters. But what that reason can be I do not know. Whether, possibly, since we have shown that God has so acted on the hearts of men, and has induced the wills of those whom He pleased to this point, that Saul or David should be established as king,—do they not think that these instances are appropriate to this subject, because to reign in this world temporally is not the same thing as to reign eternally with God? And so do they suppose that God inclines the wills of those whom He pleases to the attainment of earthly kingdoms, but does not incline them to the attainment of a heavenly kingdom? But I think that it was in reference to the kingdom of heaven, and not to an earthly kingdom, that it was said, “Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies;” (Psalm 119:36) or, “The steps of a man are ordered by the Lord, and He will will His way;” (Psalm 37:23) or, “The will is prepared by the Lord;” or, “Let our Lord be with us as with our fathers; let Him not forsake us, nor turn Himself away from us; let Him incline our hearts unto Him, that we may walk in all His ways;” (1 Kings 8:57-58) or, “I will give them a heart to know me, and ears that hear;” (Baruch 2:31) or, “I will give them another heart, and a new spirit will I give them.” (Ezekiel 11:19) Let them also hear this, “I will give my Spirit within you, and I will cause you to walk in my righteousness; and ye shall observe my judgments, and do them.” (Ezekiel 36:27) Let them hear, “Man’s goings are directed by the Lord, and how can a man understand His ways?” (Proverbs 20:24) Let them hear, “Every man seemeth right to himself, but the Lord directeth the hearts.” (Proverbs 21:2) **Let them hear, “As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” (Acts 13:48)** Let them hear these passages, and whatever others of the kind I have not mentioned in which God is declared to prepare and to convert men’s wills, even for the kingdom of heaven and for eternal life. And consider what sort of a thing it is to believe that God worketh men’s wills for the foundation of earthly kingdoms, but that men work their own wills for the attainment of the kingdom of heaven.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Therefore also it is in vain that objectors have alleged, that what we have proved by Scripture testimony from the books of Kings and Chronicles is not pertinent to the subject of which we are discoursing: such, for instance, as that

when God wills that to be done which ought only to be done by the willing men, their hearts are inclined to will this,—inclined, that is to say, by His power, who, in a marvelous and ineffable manner, worketh in us also to will.”

And so it is written in **Philippians 2 (KJV):13** For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

He continues, “What else is this than to say nothing, and yet to contradict? Unless perchance, they have given some reason to you for the view that they have taken, which reason you have preferred to say nothing about in your letters. But what that reason can be I do not know. Whether, possibly, since we have shown that God has so acted on the hearts of men, and has induced the wills of those whom He pleased to this point, that Saul or David should be established as king,—do they not think that these instances are appropriate to this subject, because to reign in this world temporally is not the same thing as to reign eternally with God? And so do they suppose that God inclines the wills of those whom He pleases to the attainment of earthly kingdoms, but does not incline them to the attainment of a heavenly kingdom? But I think that it was in reference to the kingdom of heaven, and not to an earthly kingdom, that it was said, “Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies;” (Psalm 119:36) or, “The steps of a man are ordered by the Lord, and He will will His way;” (Psalm 37:23) or, “The will is prepared by the Lord;” or, “Let our Lord be with us as with our fathers; let Him not forsake us, nor turn Himself away from us; let Him incline our hearts unto Him, that we may walk in all His ways;” (1 Kings 8:57-58) or, “I will give them a heart to know me, and ears that hear;” (Baruch 2:31) or, “I will give them another heart, and a new spirit will I give them.” (Ezekiel 11:19)

He refers to **Psalms 119 (KJV):36** Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

And to **Psalms 37 (KJV):23** The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.

And to **1 Kings 8 (KJV):57** The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us: 58 That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.

And to **Baruch 2 (Septuagint):31** And shall know that I am the Lord their God: for I will give them an heart, and ears to hear:

And to **Ezekiel 11 (KJV):19** And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

He continues, “Let them also hear this, “I will give my Spirit within you, and I will cause you to walk in my righteousness; and ye shall observe my judgments, and do them.” (Ezekiel 36:27)”

He refers in context to **Ezekiel 36 (KJV):26** A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

He continues, “Let them hear, “Man’s goings are directed by the Lord, and how can a man understand His ways?” (Proverbs 20:24) Let them hear, “Every man seemeth right to himself, but the Lord directeth the hearts.” (Proverbs 21:2)”

He refers to **Proverbs 20 (KJV):24** Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?

And to **Proverbs 21 (KJV):2** Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts.

And he continues, “Let them hear, “As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” (Acts 13:48)”

And he refers to **Acts 13 (KJV):48** And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

And he concludes, “Let them hear these passages, and whatever others of the kind I have not mentioned in which God is declared to prepare and to convert men’s wills, even for the kingdom of heaven and for eternal life. And consider what sort of a thing it is to believe that God worketh men’s wills for the foundation of earthly kingdoms, but that men work their own wills for the attainment of the kingdom of heaven.”

Augustine is in agreement with the Scriptures.

## Chapter 43 [XXI.]—Conclusion.

I have said a great deal, and, perchance, I could long ago have persuaded you what I wished, and am still speaking this to such intelligent minds as if they were obtuse, to whom even what is too much is not enough. But let them pardon me, for a new question has compelled me to this. Because, although in my former little treatises I had proved by sufficiently appropriate proofs that faith also was the gift of God, there was found this ground of contradiction, viz., that those testimonies were good for this purpose, to show that the increase of faith was God’s gift, but that the beginning of faith, whereby a man first of all believes in Christ, is of the man himself, and is not the gift of God,—but that God requires this, so that when it has preceded, other gifts may follow, as it were on the ground of this merit, and these are the gifts of God; and that none of them is given freely, although in them God’s grace is declared, which is not grace except as being gratuitous. And you see how absurd all this is.

Wherefore I determined, as far as I could, to set forth that this very beginning also is God’s gift. And if I have done this at a greater length than perhaps those on whose account I did it might wish, I am prepared to be reproached for it by them, so long as they nevertheless confess that, although at greater length than they wished, although with the disgust and weariness of those that understand, I have done what I have done: that is, I have taught that even the beginning of faith, as continence, patience, righteousness, piety, and the rest, concerning which there is no dispute with them, is God’s gift. Let this, therefore, be the end of this treatise, lest too great length in this one may give offence.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine is in agreement with the Scriptures. Paul says that faith is a fruit of the Spirit as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

And again, faith comes by hearing as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):17** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Faith is God's gift to those He has predestined as we read again in **Romans 8 (KJV):28** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

## **Justification by Faith**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine  
On the Psalms, Psalm LXVIII, paragraph 37, page 298**

37. "There shall come ambassadors out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall prevent the hands of Him" (ver. 31). Under the name of Egypt or of Ethiopia, he hath signified the faith of all nations, from a part the whole: calling the preachers of reconciliation ambassadors. "For Christ," he saith, "we have an embassy, God as it were exhorting through us: we beseech you for Christ to be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:20) Not then of the Israelites alone, whence the Apostles were chosen, but also from the rest of the nations that there should be preachers of Christian peace, in this manner hath been mystically prophesied. But by that which he saith, "shall prevent the hands of Him," he saith this, shall prevent the vengeance of Him: to wit, by turning to Him, in order that their sins may be forgiven, lest by continuing sinners they be punished. Which thing also in another Psalm is said, "Let us come before the face of Him in confession." (Psalm 95:2) As by hands he signifieth vengeance, so by face, revelation and presence, which will be in the Judgment. Because then, by Egypt and Ethiopia he hath signified the nations of the whole world; immediately he hath subjoined, "to God (are) the kingdoms of the earth." Not to Sabellius, not to Arius, not to Donatus, not to the rest of the bulls stiff necked, but "to God (are) the kingdoms of the earth." But the greater number of Latin copies, and especially the Greek, have the verses so punctuated, that there is not one verse in these words, "to God the kingdoms of the earth," but, "to God," is at the end of the former verse, and so there is said, "Ethiopia shall come before the hands of her to God," and then there followeth in another verse, "Kingdoms of the earth, sing ye to God, psalm ye to the Lord" (ver. 32). **By which punctuation, doubtless to be preferred by the agreement of many copies, and those deserving of credit, there seemeth to me to be implied faith which precedeth works: because without the merits of good works through faith the ungodly is justified, just as the Apostle said, "To one believing in Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness:" (Romans 4:5) in order that afterwards faith itself through love may begin to work.** For those alone are to be called good works, which are done through love of God. But these faith must needs go before, so that from thence these may begin, not from these this.... This is faith, whereof to the Church Herself is said in the Song of Songs, "Thou shalt come and shalt pass hence from the beginning of faith." (Canticles 4:8, Septuagint) For She hath come like the chariot of God in thousands of men rejoicing, having a prosperous course, and She hath passed over from this world to the Father: in order that there may come to pass in Her that which the Bridegroom Himself saith, who hath passed hence from this world to the Father, (John 13:1) "I

will that where I am, these also may be with Me:” (John 17:24) but from the beginning of faith. Because then in order that good works may follow, faith doth precede; and there are not any good works, save those which follow faith preceding: nothing else seemeth to have been meant in, “Ethiopia shall come before the hands of her to God,” but, Ethiopia shall believe in God. For thus she “shall come before the hands of her,” that is, the works of her. Of whom, except of Ethiopia herself? For this in the Greek is not ambiguous: for the word “of her” there in the feminine gender most clearly hath been put down. And thus nothing else hath been said than “Ethiopia shall come before her hands to God,” that is, by believing in God she shall come before her works. **For, “I judge,” saith the Apostle, “that a man is justified through faith without the works of the Law. Is He God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles?” (Romans 3:28)** So then Ethiopia, which seemeth to be the utmost limit of the Gentiles, is justified through faith, without the works of the Law....For the expression in Greek, χειρα αὐτῆς, which most copies have, both of “hand of her” and “her own hand” may be understood: but that which is uncommon in the Greek copies, χειρας αὐτῆς, by both “hands of her” and “her own hands,” in Latin may be expressed.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““There shall come ambassadors out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall prevent the hands of Him” (ver. 31).”

He refers to **Psalms 68 (Septuagint):31** Ambassadors shall arrive out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall hasten to stretch out her hand readily to God.

And to **Psalms 68 (KJV):31** Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

He continues, “Under the name of Egypt or of Ethiopia, he hath signified the faith of all nations, from a part the whole: calling the preachers of reconciliation ambassadors. “For Christ,” he saith, “we have an embassy, God as it were exhorting through us: we beseech you for Christ to be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 5 (Douay Rheims):20** For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us, for Christ, we beseech you, be reconciled to God.

And to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):20** Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

He continues, “Not then of the Israelites alone, whence the Apostles were chosen, but also from the rest of the nations that there should be preachers of Christian peace, in this manner hath been mystically prophesied. But by that which he saith, “shall prevent the hands of Him,” he saith this, shall prevent the vengeance of Him: to wit, by turning to Him, in order that their sins may be forgiven, lest by continuing sinners they be punished. Which thing also in another Psalm is said, “Let us come before the face of Him in confession.” (Psalm 95:2)”

He refers to **Psalms 95 (Septuagint):2** Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise to him with psalms.

And to **Psalms 94 (Douay Rheims):2** Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving; and make a joyful noise to him with psalms.

He continues, “As by hands he signifieth vengeance, so by face, revelation and presence, which will be in the Judgment. Because then, by Egypt and Ethiopia he hath signified the nations of the whole world; immediately he hath subjoined, “to God (are) the kingdoms of the earth.” Not to Sabellius, not to Arius, not to Donatus, not to the rest of the bulls stiffnecked, but



“to God (are) the kingdoms of the earth.” But the greater number of Latin copies, and especially the Greek, have the verses so punctuated, that there is not one verse in these words, “to God the kingdoms of the earth,” but, “to God,” is at the end of the former verse, and so there is said, “Ethiopia shall come before the hands of her to God,” and then there followeth in another verse, “Kingdoms of the earth, sing ye to God, psalm ye to the Lord” (ver. 32).”

He refers to **Psalm 68 (Septuagint):32** Sing to God, ye kingdoms of the earth; sing psalms to the Lord. Pause.

And in context to **Psalm 67 (Douay Rheims):32** Ambassadors shall come out of Egypt: Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands to God. 33 Sing to God, ye kingdoms of the earth: sing ye to the Lord: Sing ye to God,

He continues, “By which punctuation, doubtless to be preferred by the agreement of many copies, and those deserving of credit, there seemeth to me to be implied faith which precedeth works: because without the merits of good works through faith the ungodly is justified, just as the Apostle said, “To one believing in Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Romans 4:5) in order that afterwards faith itself through love may begin to work.”

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):5** But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

And to **Galatians 5 (KJV):6** For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

He continues, “For those alone are to be called good works, which are done through love of God. But these faith must needs go before, so that from thence these may begin, not from these this....This is faith, whereof to the Church Herself is said in the Song of Songs, “Thou shalt come and shalt pass hence from the beginning of faith.” (Canticles 4:8, Septuagint)”

He refers to Song of Solomon, that is, **Canticles 4 (Septuagint):8** Come from Libanus, my bride, come from Libanus: thou shalt come and pass from the top of Faith, from the top of Sanir and Hermon, from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

He continues, “For She hath come like the chariot of God in thousands of men rejoicing, having a prosperous course, and She hath passed over from this world to the Father: in order that there may come to pass in Her that which the Bridegroom Himself saith, who hath passed hence from this world to the Father, (John 13:1) “I will that where I am, these also may be with Me.” (John 17:24) but from the beginning of faith.”

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):1** Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

And to **John 17 (KJV):24** Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

He continues, “Because then in order that good works may follow, faith doth precede; and there are not any good works, save those which follow faith preceding: nothing else seemeth to have been meant in, “Ethiopia shall come before the hands of her to God,” but, Ethiopia shall believe in God. For thus she “shall come before the hands of her,” that is, the works of her. Of whom, except of Ethiopia herself? For this in the Greek is not ambiguous: for the word “of her” there in the feminine gender most clearly hath been put down. And thus

nothing else hath been said than “Ethiopia shall come before her hands to God,” that is, by believing in God she shall come before her works. For, “I judge,” saith the Apostle, “that a man is justified through faith without the works of the Law. Is He God of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles?” (Romans 3:28)”

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):28** Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also...

He continues, “So then Ethiopia, which seemeth to be the utmost limit of the Gentiles, is justified through faith, without the works of the Law....For the expression in Greek, **χεῖρα αὐτῆς** (pronounced ka-rah o-tes), which most copies have, both of “hand of her” and “her own hand” may be understood: but that which is uncommon in the Greek copies, **χειρας αὐτῆς**, (pronounced ka-rahs o-tes) by both “hands of her” and “her own hands,” in Latin may be expressed.”

However he may have arrived at his conclusion, we can agree with Augustine that faith precedes good works, for that is the clear meaning in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):8** For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm CXI, paragraph 3, page 545**

3. “Confession and glorious deeds are His work” (ver. 3). What is a more glorious deed than to justify the ungodly? But perhaps the work of man preventeth that glorious work of God, so that when he hath confessed his sins, he deserveth to be justified....This is the glorious work of the Lord: for he loveth most, to whom most is forgiven. (Luke 7:42-48) This is the glorious work of the Lord: for “where sin abounded, there did grace much more abound.” (Romans 5:20) But perhaps a man would deserve justification from works. “Not,” saith he, “of works, lest any man boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” (Ephesians 2:9-10) For a man worketh not righteousness save he be justified: but by “believing on Him that justifieth the ungodly,” (Romans 4:5) he beginneth with faith; that good may not by preceding show what he hath deserved, but by following what he hath received....

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Confession and glorious deeds are His work” (ver. 3).”

He refers to **Psalms 111 (Septuagint):3** Glory and wealth shall be in his house: and his justice remaineth for ever and ever.

He refers to **Psalms 111 (KJV):3** His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

He continues, “What is a more glorious deed than to justify the ungodly? But perhaps the work of man preventeth that glorious work of God, so that when he hath confessed his sins, he deserveth to be justified....This is the glorious work of the Lord: for he loveth most, to whom most is forgiven. (Luke 7:42-48)”

He refers to **Luke 7 (KJV):42** And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? 43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. 45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. 48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

He continues, “This is the glorious work of the Lord: for “where sin abounded, there did grace much more abound.” (Romans 5:20)”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):20** Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

He continues, “But perhaps a man would deserve justification from works. “Not,” saith he, “of works, lest any man boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” (Ephesians 2:9-10)”

He refers to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):9** Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

He concludes, “For a man worketh not righteousness save he be justified: but by “believing on Him that justifieth the ungodly,” (Romans 4:5) he beginneth with faith; that good may not by preceding show what he hath deserved, but by following what he hath received....”

Augustine has rightly divided the word of God here.

## Perseverance

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapter 15, page 531

Chapter 15.—Why God Willed that He Should Be Asked for that Which He Might Give Without Prayer.

Wherefore, also He willed that He should be asked that we may not be led into temptation, because if we are not led, we by no means depart from Him. And this might have been given to us even without our praying for it, but by our prayer He willed us to be admonished from whom we receive these benefits. For from whom do we receive but from Him from whom it is right for us to ask? Truly in this matter let not the Church look for laborious disputations, but consider its own daily prayers. It prays that the unbelieving may believe; therefore God converts to the faith. It prays that believers may persevere; therefore God gives perseverance to the end. God foreknew that He would do this. This is the very predestination of the saints, “whom He has chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and unspotted before Him in love; predestinating them unto the adoption of children by

Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He hath shown them favour in His beloved Son, in whom they have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace, which has abounded towards them in all wisdom and prudence; that He might show them the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Him, in the dispensation of the fullness of times to restore all things in Christ which are in heaven and which are in earth; in Him, in whom also we have obtained a lot, being predestinated according to His purpose who worketh all things.” (Ephesians 1:4-11) Against a trumpet of truth so clear as this, what man of sober and watchful faith can receive any human arguments?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Wherefore, also He willed that He should be asked that we may not be led into temptation, because if we are not led, we by no means depart from Him.”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

He continues, “And this might have been given to us even without our praying for it, but by our prayer He willed us to be admonished from whom we receive these benefits. For from whom do we receive but from Him from whom it is right for us to ask? Truly in this matter let not the Church look for laborious disputations, but consider its own daily prayers. It prays that the unbelieving may believe; therefore God converts to the faith. **It prays that believers may persevere; therefore God gives perseverance to the end. God foreknew that He would do this.**”

He then explains, “**This is the very predestination of the saints, “whom He has chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and unspotted before Him in love; predestinating them unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He hath shown them favour in His beloved Son, in whom they have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace, which has abounded towards them in all wisdom and prudence; that He might show them the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Him, in the dispensation of the fullness of times to restore all things in Christ which are in heaven and which are in earth; in Him, in whom also we have obtained a lot, being predestinated according to His purpose who worketh all things.”** (Ephesians 1:4-11) Against a trumpet of truth so clear as this, what man of sober and watchful faith can receive any human arguments?

He refers to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):4** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; 9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: 11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

Yes, this is indeed “a trumpet of truth so clear”. God gives perseverance to those He has predestinated and chosen.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapter 21, page 532-533**

Chapter 21 [IX.]—Instances of the Unsearchable Judgments of God.

Therefore, of two infants, equally bound by original sin, why the one is taken and the other left; and of two wicked men of already mature years, why this one should be so called as to follow Him that calleth, while that one is either not called at all, or is not called in such a manner,—the judgments of God are unsearchable. But of two pious men, why to the one should be given perseverance unto the end, and to the other it should not be given, God’s judgments are even more unsearchable. Yet to believers it ought to be a most certain fact that the former is of the predestinated, the latter is not. “For if they had been of us,” says one of the predestinated, who had drunk this secret from the breast of the Lord, “certainly they would have continued with us.” (1 John 2:19) **What, I ask, is the meaning of, “They were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would certainly have continued with us”? Were not both created by God—both born of Adam—both made from the earth, and given from Him who said, “I have created all breath,” (Isaiah 57:16 LXX) souls of one and the same nature? Lastly, had not both been called, and followed Him that called them? And had not both become, from wicked men, justified men, and both been renewed by the laver of regeneration? But if he were to hear this who beyond all doubt knew what he was saying, he might answer and say: These things are true. In respect of all these things, they were of us. Nevertheless, in respect of a certain other distinction, they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they certainly would have continued with us. What then is this distinction? God’s books lie open, let us not turn away our view; the divine Scripture cries aloud, let us give it a hearing. They were not of them, because they had not been “called according to the purpose;” they had not been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; they had not gained a lot in Him; they had not been predestinated according to His purpose who worketh all things. For if they had been this, they would have been of them, and without doubt they would have continued with them.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Therefore, of two infants, equally bound by original sin, why the one is taken and the other left; and of two wicked men of already mature years, why this one should be so called as to follow Him that calleth, while that one is either not called at all, or is not called in such a manner,—the judgments of God are unsearchable.”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):33** O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

He continues, “But of two pious men, why to the one should be given perseverance unto the end, and to the other it should not be given, God’s judgments are even more unsearchable. Yet to believers it ought to be a most certain fact that the former is of the predestinated, the latter is not. “For if they had been of us,” says one of the predestinated, who had drunk this secret from the breast of the Lord, “certainly they would have continued with us.” (1 John 2:19)



The apostle John is the one “who had drunk this secret from the breast of the Lord”, as we read in **John 13 (KJV):25** He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

And in **John 21 (KJV):20** Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

And Augustine refers in context to **1 John 2 (KJV):18** Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

He then explains, “What, I ask, is the meaning of, “They were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would certainly have continued with us”? Were not both created by God—both born of Adam—both made from the earth, and given from Him who said, “I have created all breath,” (Isaiah 57:16 LXX) souls of one and the same nature?”

He refers to **Isaiah 57 (LXX):16** I will not take vengeance on you for ever, neither will I be always angry with you: for my Spirit shall go forth from me, and I have created all breath.

But we also read as in **Isaiah 57 (KJV):16** For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.

He continues, “Lastly, had not both been called, and followed Him that called them? And had not both become, from wicked men, justified men, and both been renewed by the laver of regeneration? But if he were to hear this who beyond all doubt knew what he was saying, he might answer and say: These things are true. In respect of all these things, they were of us. Nevertheless, in respect of a certain other distinction, they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they certainly would have continued with us. What then is this distinction? God's books lie open, let us not turn away our view; the divine Scripture cries aloud, let us give it a hearing. They were not of them, because they had not been “called according to the purpose;” they had not been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; they had not gained a lot in Him; they had not been predestinated according to His purpose who worketh all things. For if they had been this, they would have been of them, and without doubt they would have continued with them.”

However, let us read in context again in **1 John 2 (KJV):18** Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

John tells us that they were “antichrists” who went out from them. These were as seed cast on the path as Jesus spoke in **Matthew 13 (KJV):18** Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. 20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. 22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

The antichrists were never born again by faith in Jesus Christ. They only appeared to be one of the hearers. In reality, they were not born again. Augustine is relying on these being “renewed by the laver of regeneration”. This regeneration will not happen if there is not faith in Jesus Christ. And it is by grace that we are saved through faith, unless we did not really believe.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapter 38-40, page 540-542**

Chapter 38 [XV.]—Against the Preaching of Predestination the Same Objections May Be Alleged as Against Predestination.

But they say, as you write: “That no one can be aroused by the incentives of rebuke if it be said in the assembly of the Church to the multitude of hearers: The definite meaning of God’s will concerning predestination stands in such wise, that **some of you will receive the will to obey and will come out of unbelief unto faith, or will receive perseverance and abide in the faith**; but others who are lingering in the delight of sins have not yet arisen, for the reason that the aid of pitying grace has not yet indeed raised you up. But yet, if there are any whom by His grace He has predestinated to be chosen, who are not yet called, ye shall receive that grace by which you may will and be chosen; and if any obey, if ye are predestinated to be rejected, the strength to obey shall be withdrawn from you, so that you may cease to obey.” Although these things may be said, they ought not so to deter us from confessing the true grace of God,—that is, the grace which is not given to us in respect of our merits,—and from confessing the predestination of the saints in accordance therewith, even as we are not deterred from confessing God’s foreknowledge, although one should thus speak to the people concerning it, and say: “Whether you are now living righteously or unrighteously, you shall be such by and by as the Lord has foreknown that you will be,—either good, if He has foreknown you as good, or bad, if He has foreknown you as bad.” For if on the hearing of this some should be turned to torpor and slothfulness, and from striving should go headlong to lust after their own desires, is it therefore to be counted that what has been said about the foreknowledge of God is false? If God has foreknown that they will be good, will they not be good, whatever be the depth of evil in which they are now engaged? And if He has foreknown them evil, will they not be evil, whatever goodness may now be discerned in them? There was a man in our monastery, who, when the brethren rebuked him for doing some things that ought not to be done, and for not doing some things that ought to be done, replied, “Whatever I may now be, I shall be such as God has foreknown that I shall be.” And this man certainly both said what was true, and was not profited by this truth for good, but so far made way in evil as to desert the society of the monastery, and become a dog returned to his vomit; and, nevertheless, it is uncertain what he is yet to become. For the sake of souls of this kind, then, is the truth which is spoken about God’s foreknowledge either to be denied or to be kept back,—at such times, for instance, when, if it is not spoken, other errors are incurred?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But they say, as you write: “That no one can

be aroused by the incentives of rebuke if it be said in the assembly of the Church to the multitude of hearers: The definite meaning of God's will concerning predestination stands in such wise, that"

He then lists four possibilities:

- "some of you will receive the will to obey and will come out of unbelief unto faith, or will receive perseverance and abide in the faith;
- but others who are lingering in the delight of sins have not yet arisen, for the reason that the aid of pitying grace has not yet indeed raised you up.
- But yet, if there are any whom by His grace He has predestinated to be chosen, who are not yet called, ye shall receive that grace by which you may will and be chosen
- and if any obey, if ye are predestinated to be rejected, the strength to obey shall be withdrawn from you, so that you may cease to obey."

He then continues, "Although these things may be said, they ought not so to deter us from confessing the true grace of God,—that is, the grace which is not given to us in respect of our merits,—and from confessing the predestination of the saints in accordance therewith, even as we are not deterred from confessing God's foreknowledge, although one should thus speak to the people concerning it, and say: "Whether you are now living righteously or unrighteously, you shall be such by and by as the Lord has foreknown that you will be,—either good, if He has foreknown you as good, or bad, if He has foreknown you as bad."

So we should not be deterred "from confessing the true grace of God", and thus, speaking the truth, for God is true as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):4** God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

He continues, "For if on the hearing of this some should be turned to torpor and slothfulness, and from striving should go headlong to lust after their own desires, is it therefore to be counted that what has been said about the foreknowledge of God is false? If God has foreknown that they will be good, will they not be good, whatever be the depth of evil in which they are now engaged? And if He has foreknown them evil, will they not be evil, whatever goodness may now be discerned in them?"

God's foreknowledge is true as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

He then concludes, "There was a man in our monastery, who, when the brethren rebuked him for doing some things that ought not to be done, and for not doing some things that ought to be done, replied, "Whatever I may now be, I shall be such as God has foreknown that I shall be." And this man certainly both said what was true, and was not profited by this truth for good, but so far made way in evil as to desert the society of the monastery, and become a dog returned to his vomit; and, nevertheless, it is uncertain what he is yet to become. For the sake of souls of this kind, then, is the truth which is spoken about God's foreknowledge either to be denied or to be kept back,—at such times, for instance, when, if it is not spoken, other errors are incurred?

To his question we must answer no, the truth which is spoken about God's foreknowledge must be spoken, but in love. However, we must understand that some are babes in Christ, and cannot bear strong meat yet, as we read in **Hebrews 5 (KJV):** 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

#### Chapter 39 [XVI]—Prayer and Exhortation.

There are some, moreover, who either do not pray at all, or pray coldly, because, from the Lord's words, they have learnt that God knows what is necessary for us before we ask it of Him. Must the truth of this declaration be given up, or shall we think that it should be erased from the gospel because of such people? **Nay, since it is manifest that God has prepared some things to be given even to those who do not pray for them, such as the beginning of faith, and other things not to be given except to those who pray for them, such as perseverance even unto the end, certainly he who thinks that he has this latter from himself does not pray to have it. Therefore we must take care lest, while we are afraid of exhortation growing lukewarm, prayer should be stifled and arrogance stimulated.**

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine is wise. The truth must be taught, and upheld. However, the word of God must be rightly divided. Perseverance is not a requirement for salvation, but it is a requirement for rewards, as we shall see.

#### Chapter 40.—When the Truth Must Be Spoken, When Kept Back.

**Therefore let the truth be spoken, especially when any question impels us to declare it; and let them receive it who are able, lest, perchance, while we are silent on account of those who cannot receive it, they be not only defrauded of the truth but be taken captive by falsehood, who are able to receive the truth whereby falsehood may be avoided. For it is easy, nay, and it is useful, that some truth should be kept back because of those who are incapable of apprehending it. For whence is that word of our Lord: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now"? (John 16:12) And that of the apostle: "I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal: as if unto babes in Christ I have given you to drink milk, and not meat, for hitherto ye were not able, neither yet indeed now are ye able"? (1 Corinthians 3:1-2)** Although, in a certain manner of speaking, it might happen that what is said should be both milk to infants and meat for grown-up persons. As "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," (John 1:1) what Christian can keep it back? Who can receive it? Or what in sound doctrine can be found more comprehensive? And yet this is not kept back either from infants or from grown-up people, nor is it hidden from infants by those who are mature. But the reason of keeping back the truth is one, the necessity of speaking the truth is another. It would be a tedious business to inquire into or to put down all the reasons for keeping back the truth; of which, nevertheless, there is this one,—lest we should make those who do not understand worse, while wishing to make those who do understand more learned; although these latter do not become more learned when we withhold any such thing on the one

hand, but also do not become worse. When, however, a truth is of such a nature that he who cannot receive it is made worse by our speaking it, and he who can receive it is made worse by our silence concerning it, what do we think is to be done? **Must we not speak the truth, that he who can receive it may receive it, rather than keep silence, so that not only neither may receive it, but that even he who is more intelligent should himself be made worse?** For if he should hear and receive it, by his means also many might learn. For in proportion as he is more capable of learning, he is the more fitted for teaching others. The enemy of grace presses on and urges in all ways to make us believe that grace is given according to our deservings, and thus grace is no more grace; and are we unwilling to say what we can say by the testimony of Scripture? Do we fear, forsooth, to offend by our speaking him who is not able to receive the truth? And are we not afraid lest by our silence he who can receive the truth may be involved in falsehood?

**Commentary:** Augustine is wise again, as he begins, **“Therefore let the truth be spoken, especially when any question impels us to declare it; and let them receive it who are able, lest, perchance, while we are silent on account of those who cannot receive it, they be not only defrauded of the truth but be taken captive by falsehood, who are able to receive the truth whereby falsehood may be avoided.”**

We are to speak the truth in love, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):15** But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

This is so that we may grow up into him in all things. But Augustine is wise yet again, as he then warns, **“For it is easy, nay, and it is useful, that some truth should be kept back because of those who are incapable of apprehending it. For whence is that word of our Lord: “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now”? (John 16:12)”**

He refers to **John 16 (KJV):12** I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

And he continues, **“And that of the apostle: “I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal: as if unto babes in Christ I have given you to drink milk, and not meat, for hitherto ye were not able, neither yet indeed now are ye able”? (1 Corinthians 3:1-2)”**

He refers to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. **2** I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

He then continues, **“Although, in a certain manner of speaking, it might happen that what is said should be both milk to infants and meat for grown-up persons. As “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” (John 1:1) what Christian can keep it back?”**

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He then explains, **“Who can receive it? Or what in sound doctrine can be found more comprehensive? And yet this is not kept back either from infants or from grown-up people, nor is it hidden from infants by those who are mature. But the reason of keeping back the truth is one, the necessity of speaking the truth is another. It would be a tedious business to inquire into or to put down all the reasons for keeping back the truth; of which, nevertheless, there is this one,—lest we should make those who do not understand worse, while wishing to make those**



who do understand more learned; although these latter do not become more learned when we withhold any such thing on the one hand, but also do not become worse. When, however, a truth is of such a nature that he who cannot receive it is made worse by our speaking it, and he who can receive it is made worse by our silence concerning it, what do we think is to be done?"

He then concludes, "Must we not speak the truth, that he who can receive it may receive it, rather than keep silence, so that not only neither may receive it, but that even he who is more intelligent should himself be made worse? For if he should hear and receive it, by his means also many might learn. For in proportion as he is more capable of learning, he is the more fitted for teaching others. The enemy of grace presses on and urges in all ways to make us believe that grace is given according to our deservings, and thus grace is no more grace; and are we unwilling to say what we can say by the testimony of Scripture? Do we fear, forsooth, to offend by our speaking him who is not able to receive the truth? And are we not afraid lest by our silence he who can receive the truth may be involved in falsehood?"

Let our answer be as the apostles' prayer in **Acts 4 (KJV):29** And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, 30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. 31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

When Paul spoke to the elders at Ephesus, he said that he had kept back nothing that was profitable for them as we read in **Acts 20 (KJV):16** For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. 17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

And he said in **Acts 20 (KJV):26** Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

And he said in **Acts 20 (KJV):35** I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapter 41, page 542**

Chapter 41.—Predestination Defined as Only God's Disposing of Events in His Foreknowledge.

For either predestination must be preached, in the way and degree in which the Holy Scripture plainly declares it, so that in the predestinated the gifts and calling of God may be

without repentance; or it must be avowed that God's grace is given according to our merits,—which is the opinion of the Pelagians; although that opinion of theirs, as I have often said already, may be read in the Proceedings of the Eastern bishops to have been condemned by the lips of Pelagius himself. Further, those on whose account I am discoursing are only removed from the heretical perversity of the Pelagians, inasmuch as, although they will not confess that they who by God's grace are made obedient and so abide, are predestinated, they still confess, nevertheless, that this grace precedes their will to whom it is given; in such a way certainly as that grace may not be thought to be given freely, as the truth declares, but rather according to the merits of a preceding will, as the Pelagian error says, in contradiction to the truth. Therefore, also, grace precedes faith; otherwise, if faith precedes grace, beyond a doubt will also precedes it, because there cannot be faith without will. But if grace precedes faith because it precedes will, certainly it precedes all obedience; it also precedes love, by which alone God is truly and pleasantly obeyed. And all these things grace works in him to whom it is given, and in whom it precedes all these things. [XVII.] Among these benefits there remains perseverance unto the end, which is daily asked for in vain from the Lord, if the Lord by His grace does not effect it in him whose prayers He hears. See now how foreign it is from the truth to deny that perseverance even to the end of this life is the gift of God; since He Himself puts an end to this life when He wills, and if He puts an end before a fall that is threatening, He makes the man to persevere even unto the end. But more marvelous and more manifest to believers is the largess of God's goodness, that this grace is given even to infants, although there is no obedience at that age to which it may be given. To whomsoever, therefore, God gives His gifts, beyond a doubt He has foreknown that He will bestow them on them, and in His foreknowledge He has prepared them for them. Therefore, those whom He predestinated, them He also called with that calling which I am not reluctant often to make mention of, of which it is said, "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Romans 11:29) For the ordering of His future works in His foreknowledge, which cannot be deceived and changed, is absolute, and is nothing but, predestination. But, as he whom God has foreknown to be chaste, although he may regard it as uncertain, so acts as to be chaste, so he whom He has predestinated to be chaste, although he may regard that as uncertain, does not, therefore, fail to act so as to be chaste because he hears that he is to be what he will be by the gift of God. Nay, rather, his love rejoices, and he is not puffed up as if he had not received it. Not only, therefore, is he not hindered from this work by the preaching of predestination, but he is even assisted to it, so that although he glories he may glory in the Lord.

**Commentary:** Augustine is wise again, as he begins, "For either predestination must be preached, in the way and degree in which the Holy Scripture plainly declares it, so that in the predestinated the gifts and calling of God may be without repentance; or it must be avowed that God's grace is given according to our merits,—which is the opinion of the Pelagians; although that opinion of theirs, as I have often said already, may be read in the Proceedings of the Eastern bishops to have been condemned by the lips of Pelagius himself."

Contending for the faith against error is what drew Augustine to use his gifts to the utmost. This made him rise up without fear, and rightly divide the word of truth to the glory of God. Our predestination is clearly stated in the Scriptures. To Augustine, one will persevere if they have truly been predestinated by God.

He then continues, “Further, those on whose account I am discoursing are only removed from the heretical perversity of the Pelagians, inasmuch as, although they will not confess that they who by God’s grace are made obedient and so abide, are predestinated, they still confess, nevertheless, that this grace precedes their will to whom it is given; in such a way certainly as that grace may not be thought to be given freely, as the truth declares, but rather according to the merits of a preceding will, as the Pelagian error says, in contradiction to the truth.”

And Augustine defends the faith, as it is in the Scriptures in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

We are born again of God, and “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

He continues, as he then explains, “Therefore, also, grace precedes faith; otherwise, if faith precedes grace, beyond a doubt will also precedes it, because there cannot be faith without will. **But if grace precedes faith because it precedes will, certainly it precedes all obedience; it also precedes love, by which alone God is truly and pleasantly obeyed. And all these things grace works in him to whom it is given, and in whom it precedes all these things. [XVII.] Among these benefits there remains perseverance unto the end, which is daily asked for in vain from the Lord, if the Lord by His grace does not effect it in him whose prayers He hears.**”

The apostle Peter writes as in **1 Peter 1 (KJV):1** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

We who have believed “are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”. And so, “Among these benefits there remains perseverance unto the end”. Those who are predestined by God will persevere unto the end.

Augustine continues, “**See now how foreign it is from the truth to deny that perseverance even to the end of this life is the gift of God; since He Himself puts an end to this life when He wills, and if He puts an end before a fall that is threatening, He makes the man to persevere even unto the end.** But more marvelous and more manifest to believers is the largess of God’s goodness, that this grace is given even to infants, although there is no obedience at that age to which it may be given. To whomsoever, therefore, God gives His gifts, beyond a doubt He has foreknown that He will bestow them on them, and in His foreknowledge He has prepared them for them. Therefore, those whom He predestinated, them He also called with that calling which I am not reluctant often to make mention of, of which it is said, “The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” (Romans 11:29)”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):29** For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

He concludes, “For the ordering of His future works in His foreknowledge, which cannot

be deceived and changed, is absolute, and is nothing but, predestination. But, as he whom God has foreknown to be chaste, although he may regard it as uncertain, so acts as to be chaste, so he whom He has predestinated to be chaste, although he may regard that as uncertain, does not, therefore, fail to act so as to be chaste because he hears that he is to be what he will be by the gift of God. Nay, rather, his love rejoices, and he is not puffed up as if he had not received it. Not only, therefore, is he not hindered from this work by the preaching of predestination, but he is even assisted to it, so that although he glories he may glory in the Lord.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):31** That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

And we read in **Acts 15 (KJV):18** Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

And we are His workmanship as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

And the truth sets us free as Jesus revealed in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

The truth brings rest to our souls, as we read in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapter 47-55, page 544-548**

Chapter 47.—Predestination is Sometimes Signified Under the Name of Foreknowledge.

These gifts, therefore, of God, which are given to the elect who are called according to God’s purpose, among which gifts is both the beginning of belief and perseverance in the faith to the termination of this life, as I have proved by such a concurrent testimony of reasons and authorities,—these gifts of God, I say, if there is no such predestination as I am maintaining, are not foreknown by God. But they are foreknown. This, therefore, is the predestination which I maintain. [XVIII.] Consequently sometimes the same predestination is signified also under the name of foreknowledge; as says the apostle, “God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.” (Romans 11:2) Here, when he says, “He foreknew,” the sense is not rightly understood except as “He predestinated,” as is shown by the context of the passage itself. For he was speaking of the remnant of the Jews which were saved, while the rest perished. For above he had said that the prophet had declared to Israel, “All day long I have stretched forth my hands to an unbelieving and a gainsaying people.” (Romans 10:21) And as if it were answered, What, then, has become of the promises of God to Israel? He added in continuation, “I say, then, has God cast away His people? God forbid! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.” Then he added the words which I am now treating: “God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew.” And in order to show that the remnant had been left by God’s grace, not by any merits of their works, he went on to add, “Know ye not

what the Scripture saith in Elias, in what way he maketh intercession with God against Israel?" (Romans 11:2) and the rest. "But what," says he, "saith the answer of God unto him? 'I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee before Baal.'" (Romans 11:4) For He says not, "There are left to me," or "They have reserved themselves to me," but, "I have reserved to myself." "Even so, then, at this present time also there is made a remnant by the election of grace. And if of grace, then it is no more by works; otherwise grace is no more grace." And connecting this with what I have above quoted, "What then?" (Romans 11:5-6) and in answer to this inquiry, he says, "Israel hath not obtained that which he was seeking for, but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." Therefore, in the election, and in this remnant which were made so by the election of grace, he wished to be understood the people which God did not reject, because He foreknew them. This is that election by which He elected those, whom He willed, in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without spot in His sight, in love, predestinating them unto the adoption of sons. No one, therefore, who understands these things is permitted to doubt that, when the apostle says, "God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew," He intended to signify predestination. For He foreknew the remnant which He should make so according to the election of grace. That is, therefore, He predestinated them; for without doubt He foreknew if He predestinated; but to have predestinated is to have foreknown that which He should do.

**Commentary:** Augustine is wise yet again, as he begins, "These gifts, therefore, of God, which are given to the elect who are called according to God's purpose, among which gifts is both the beginning of belief and perseverance in the faith to the termination of this life, as I have proved by such a concurrent testimony of reasons and authorities,—these gifts of God, I say, if there is no such predestination as I am maintaining, are not foreknown by God. But they are foreknown. This, therefore, is the predestination which I maintain. [XVIII.] Consequently sometimes the same predestination is signified also under the name of foreknowledge; as says the apostle, "God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew." (Romans 11:2)"

He refers in context to **Romans 11 (NKJV):2** God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 3 "Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"? 4 But what does the divine response say to him? "I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5 Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

He continues, "Here, when he says, "He foreknew," the sense is not rightly understood except as "He predestinated," as is shown by the context of the passage itself. For he was speaking of the remnant of the Jews which were saved, while the rest perished. For above he had said that the prophet had declared to Israel, "All day long I have stretched forth my hands to an unbelieving and a gainsaying people." (Romans 10:21)"

He refers to **Romans 10 (KJV):21** But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

He then continues, "And as if it were answered, What, then, has become of the promises of God to Israel? He added in continuation, "I say, then, has God cast away His people? God forbid! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin."



He refers to **Romans 11 (NKJV):1** I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

He continues, “Then he added the words which I am now treating: “God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew.” And in order to show that the remnant had been left by God’s grace, not by any merits of their works, he went on to add, “Know ye not what the Scripture saith in Elias, in what way he maketh intercession with God against Israel?” (Romans 11:2) and the rest.

He refers in context to **Romans 11 (NKJV):2** God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 3 “Lord, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life”?

He then continues, ““But what,” says he, “saith the answer of God unto him? ‘I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee before Baal.’” (Romans 11:4)

He refers to **Romans 11 (NKJV):4** But what does the divine response say to him? “I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”

And he continues, “For He says not, “There are left to me,” or “They have reserved themselves to me,” but, “I have reserved to myself.” “Even so, then, at this present time also there is made a remnant by the election of grace. And if of grace, then it is no more by works; otherwise grace is no more grace.” And connecting this with what I have above quoted, “What then?” (Romans 11:5-6)”

He refers to **Romans 11 (NKJV):5** Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

He continues, “and in answer to this inquiry, he says, “Israel hath not obtained that which he was seeking for, but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.””

He refers to **Romans 11 (NKJV):7** What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

And he explains, “Therefore, in the election, and in this remnant which were made so by the election of grace, he wished to be understood the people which God did not reject, because He foreknew them. This is that election by which He elected those, whom He willed, in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without spot in His sight, in love, predestinating them unto the adoption of sons. No one, therefore, who understands these things is permitted to doubt that, when the apostle says, “God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew,” He intended to signify predestination. For He foreknew the remnant which He should make so according to the election of grace. That is, therefore, He predestinated them; for without doubt He foreknew if He predestinated; but to have predestinated is to have foreknown that which He should do.”

Augustine is in agreement with the Scriptures, and has rightly divided them.

Chapter 48 [XIX.]—Practice of Cyprian and Ambrose.

What, then, hinders us, when we read of God’s foreknowledge in some commentators on

God's word, and they are treating of the calling of the elect, from understanding the same predestination? For they would perchance have rather used in this matter this word which, moreover, is better understood, and which is not inconsistent with, nay, is in accordance with, the truth which is declared concerning the predestination of grace. This I know, that no one has been able to dispute, except erroneously, against that predestination which I am maintaining in accordance with the Holy Scriptures. Yet I think that they who ask for the opinions of commentators on this matter ought to be satisfied with men so holy and so laudably celebrated everywhere in the faith and Christian doctrine as Cyprian and Ambrose, of whom I have given such clear testimonies; and that for both doctrines—that is, that they should both believe absolutely and preach everywhere that the grace of God is gratuitous, as we must believe and declare it to be; and that they should not think that preaching opposed to the preaching whereby we exhort the indolent or rebuke the evil; because these celebrated men also, although they were preaching God's grace in such a manner as that one of them said, "That we must boast in nothing, because nothing is our own;" and the other, "Our heart and our thoughts are not in our own power;" yet ceased not to exhort and rebuke, in order that the divine commands might be obeyed. Neither were they afraid of its being said to them, "Why do you exhort us, and why do you rebuke us, if no good thing that we have is from us, and if our hearts are not in our own power?" These holy men could by no means fear that such things should be said to them, since they were of the mind to understand that it is given to very few to receive the teaching of salvation through God Himself, or through the angels of heaven, without any human preaching to them; but that it is given to many to believe in God through human agency. Yet, in whatever manner the word of God is spoken to man, beyond a doubt for man to hear it in such a way as to obey it, is God's gift.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine is wise yet again, as he says, "This I know, that no one has been able to dispute, except erroneously, against that predestination which I am maintaining in accordance with the Holy Scriptures."

His reliance on the Scriptures was his strength.

And he concludes, "Yet, in whatever manner the word of God is spoken to man, beyond a doubt for man to hear it in such a way as to obey it, is God's gift."

Chapter 49.—Further References to Cyprian and Ambrose.

Wherefore, the above mentioned most excellent commentators on the divine declarations both preached the true grace of God as it ought to be preached,—that is, as a grace preceded by no human deservings,—and urgently exhorted to the doing of the divine commandments, that they who might have the gift of obedience should hear what commands they ought to obey. For if any merits of ours precede grace, certainly it is the merit of some deed, or word, or thought, wherein also is understood a good will itself. But he very briefly summed up the kinds of all deservings who said, "We must glory in nothing, because nothing is our own." And he who says, "Our heart and our thoughts are not in our own power," did not pass over acts and words also, for there is no act or word of man which does not proceed from the heart and the thought. But what more could that most glorious martyr and most luminous doctor Cyprian say concerning this matter, than when he impressed upon us that it behooves us to pray, in the

Lord's Prayer, even for the adversaries of the Christian faith, showing what he thought of the beginning of the faith, that it also is God's gift, and pointing out that the Church of Christ prays daily for perseverance unto the end, because none but God gives that perseverance to those who have persevered? Moreover, the blessed Ambrose, when he was expounding the passage where the Evangelist Luke says, "It seemed good to me also," (Luke 1:3) says, "What he declares to have seemed good to himself cannot have seemed good to him alone. For not alone by human will did it seem good, but as it pleased Him who speaks in me, Christ, who effects that that which is good may also seem good to us: for whom He has mercy on He also calls. And therefore he who follows Christ may answer, when he is asked why he wished to become a Christian, 'It seemed good to me also.' And when he says this, he does not deny that it seemed good to God; for the will of men is prepared by God. For it is God's grace that God should be honoured by the saint." Moreover, in the same work,—that is, in the exposition of the same Gospel, when he had come to that place where the Samaritans would not receive the Lord when His face was as going to Jerusalem,—he says, "Learn at the same time that He would not be received by those who were not converted in simpleness of mind. For if He had been willing, He would have made them devout who were undevout. And why they would not receive Him, the evangelist himself mentioned, saying, 'Because His face was as of one going towards Jerusalem.' (Luke 9:53) But the disciples earnestly desired to be received into Samaria. But God calls those whom He makes worthy, and makes religious whom He will." **What more evident, what more manifest do we ask from commentators on God's word, if we are pleased to hear from them what is clear in the Scriptures? But to these two, who ought to be enough, let us add also a third, the holy Gregory, who testifies that it is the gift of God both to believe in God and to confess what we believe, saying, "I beg of you confess the Trinity of one godhead; but if ye wish otherwise, say that it is of one nature, and God will be besought that a voice shall be given to you by the Holy Spirit;" that is, God will be besought to allow a voice to be given to you by which you may confess what you believe. "For He will give, I am certain. He who gave what is first, will give also what is second." He who gave belief, will also give confession.**

**Commentary:** In summary, of perseverance, Augustine says, "But what more could that most glorious martyr and most luminous doctor Cyprian say concerning this matter, than when he impressed upon us that it behooves us to pray, in the Lord's Prayer, even for the adversaries of the Christian faith, showing what he thought of the beginning of the faith, that it also is God's gift, and pointing out that the Church of Christ prays daily for perseverance unto the end, because none but God gives that perseverance to those who have persevered?"

Of predestination, Augustine notes that not only Cyprian and Ambrose taught the Biblical truth of predestination, but also "holy Gregory", that is, Gregory of Nazianzus, "who testifies that it is the gift of God both to believe in God and to confess what we believe, saying, "I beg of you confess the Trinity of one godhead; but if ye wish otherwise, say that it is of one nature, and God will be besought that a voice shall be given to you by the Holy Spirit;"

Augustine concludes, "that is, God will be besought to allow a voice to be given to you by which you may confess what you believe. "For He will give, I am certain. He who gave what is first, will give also what is second." He who gave belief, will also give confession."

Gregory of Nazianzus lived from 329 – 25 January 390), also known as Gregory the Theologian or Gregory Nazianzen, was a 4th-century Archbishop of Constantinople, and theologian. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregory\\_of\\_Nazianzus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregory_of_Nazianzus)

#### Chapter 50.—Obedience Not Discouraged by Preaching God’s Gifts.

Such doctors, and so great as these, when they say that there is nothing of which we may boast as if of our own which God has not given us, and that our very heart and our thoughts are not in our own power; and when they give the whole to God, and confess that from Him we receive that we are converted to Him in such wise as to continue,—that that which is good appears also to us to be good, and we wish for it,—that we honour God and receive Christ,—that from undevout people we are made devout and religious,—that we believe in the Trinity itself, and also confess with our voice what we believe:—certainly attribute all these things to God’s grace, acknowledge them as God’s gifts, and testify that they come to us from Him, and are not from ourselves. But will any one say that they in such wise confessed that grace of God as to venture to deny His foreknowledge, which not only learned but unlearned men also confess? Again, if they had so known that God gives these things that they were not ignorant that He foreknew that He would give them, and could not have been ignorant to whom He would give them: beyond a doubt they had known the predestination which, as preached by the apostles, we laboriously and diligently maintain against the modern heretics. Nor would it be with any manner of justice said, nevertheless, to them because they preach obedience, and fervently exhort, to the extent of the ability of each one, to its practice, “If you do not wish that the obedience to which you are stirring us up should grow cold in our heart, forbear to preach to us that grace of God by which you confess that God gives what you are exhorting us to do.”

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine understood God’s grace. God is our creator and Lord. He is worthy of praise, and all of our heart. And it is the truth that sets us free as Jesus reveals in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

To understand God’s predestination, we must not lean on our own understanding, but trust in the Lord with all our heart as we read in **Proverbs 3 (KJV):5** Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

#### Chapter 51 [XX.]—Predestination Must Be Preached.

Wherefore, if both the apostles and the teachers of the Church who succeeded them and imitated them did both these things,—that is, both truly preached the grace of God which is not given according to our merits, and inculcated by wholesome precepts a pious obedience,—what is it which these people of our time think themselves rightly bound by the invincible force of truth to say, “Even if what is said of the predestination of God’s benefits be true, yet it must not be preached to the people”? It must absolutely be preached, so that he who has ears to hear, may hear. And who has them if he has not received them from Him who says, “I will give them a

heart to know me, and ears to hear?” (Baruch 2:31) Assuredly, he who has not received may reject; while, yet, he who receives may take and drink, may drink and live. For as piety must be preached, that, by him who has ears to hear, God may be rightly worshipped; modesty must be preached, that, by him who has ears to hear, no illicit act may be perpetrated by his fleshly nature; charity must be preached, that, by him who has ears to hear, God and his neighbours may be loved;—so also must be preached such a predestination of God’s benefits that he who has ears to hear may glory, not in himself, but in the Lord.

**Commentary:** In summary, he refers to **Baruch (Douay Rheims):31** And they shall know that I am the Lord their God: and I will give them a heart, and they shall understand: and ears, and they shall hear.

Augustine note’s the importance of speaking the truth. This is according to Scripture as we read in **Psalms 15 (KJV):1** Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? **2** He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.

And in **Proverbs 8 (KJV):7** For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

And in **Proverbs 12 (KJV):17** He that speaketh truth sheweth forth righteousness: but a false witness deceit.

And in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):25** Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

We see the importance of truth as Jesus spoke in **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

The truth makes us free as we read in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; **32** And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Chapter 52.—Previous Writings Anticipatively Refuted the Pelagian Heresy.

But in respect of their saying “that it was not necessary that the hearts of so many people of little intelligence should be disquieted by the uncertainty of this kind of disputation, since the Catholic faith has been defended for so many years, with no less advantage, without this definition of predestination, as well against others as especially against the Pelagians, in so many books that have gone before, as well of Catholics and others as our own;”—I much wonder that they should say this, and not observe—to say nothing of other writings in this place—that those very treatises of mine were both composed and published before the Pelagians had begun to appear; and that they do not see in how many passages of those treatises I was unawares cutting down a future Pelagian heresy, by preaching the grace by which God delivers us from evil errors and from our habits, without any preceding merits of ours,—doing this according to His gratuitous mercy. And this I began more fully to apprehend in that disputation which I wrote to Simplicianus, the bishop of the Church of Milan, of blessed memory, in the beginning of my episcopate, when, moreover, I both perceived and asserted that the beginning of faith is God’s gift.



**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine earnestly contended for the faith as Jude encouraged in **Jude 1 (KJV):3** Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Augustine was combatting heresy. To do so, it is necessary to speak the truth in love.

Chapter 53.—Augustin’s “Confessions.”

And which of my smaller works has been able to be more generally and more agreeably known than the books of my Confessions? And although I published them before the Pelagian heresy had come into existence, certainly in them I said to my God, and said it frequently, “Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt.” Which words of mine, Pelagius at Rome, when they were mentioned in his presence by a certain brother and fellow bishop of mine, could not bear; and contradicting somewhat too excitedly, nearly came to a quarrel with him who had mentioned them. But what, indeed, does God primarily and chiefly command, but that we believe on Him? And this, therefore, He Himself gives, if it is well said to Him, “Give what Thou commandest.” And, moreover, in those same books, in respect of what I have related concerning my conversion, when God converted me to that faith which, with a most miserable and raging talkativeness, I was destroying, do you not remember that it was so narrated how I showed that I was granted to the faithful and daily tears of my mother, that I should not perish? Where certainly I declared that God by His grace converted to the true faith the wills of men, which were not only averse to it, but even adverse to it. Further, in what manner I besought God concerning my growth in perseverance, you know, and you are able to review if you wish it. Therefore, that all the gifts of God which in that work I either asked for or praised, were foreknown by God that He would give, and that He could never be ignorant of the persons to whom He would give them, who can dare, I will not say to deny, but even to doubt? This is the manifest and assured predestination of the saints, which subsequently necessity compelled me more carefully and laboriously to defend when I was already disputing against the Pelagians. For I learnt that each special heresy introduced its own peculiar questions into the Church—against which the sacred Scripture might be more carefully defended than if no such necessity compelled their defense. And what compelled those passages of Scripture in which predestination is commended to be defended more abundantly and clearly by that labour of mine, than the fact that the Pelagians say that God’s grace is given according to our merits; for what else is this than an absolute denial of grace?

**Commentary:** In summary, to highlight, Augustine says, “Where certainly I declared that God by His grace converted to the true faith the wills of men, which were not only averse to it, but even adverse to it.”

The word “**averse**” means “having an active feeling of repugnance, dislike, or distaste” (**Merriam Webster**)

Augustine rightly has concluded that “that God’s grace is” not “given according to our merits”, as the Pelagians were teaching.

And he says, “Where certainly I declared that God by His grace converted to the true faith the wills of men, which were not only averse to it, but even adverse to it. Further, in what

manner I besought God concerning my growth in perseverance, you know, and you are able to review if you wish it. Therefore, that all the gifts of God which in that work I either asked for or praised, were foreknown by God that He would give, and that He could never be ignorant of the persons to whom He would give them, who can dare, I will not say to deny, but even to doubt?"

He says that he grew "in perseverance", which he counts as a gift of God.

And he rightly concludes, "And what compelled those passages of Scripture in which predestination is commended to be defended more abundantly and clearly by that labour of mine, than the fact that the Pelagians say that God's grace is given according to our merits; for what else is this than an absolute denial of grace?"

Chapter 54 [XXI.]—Beginning and End of Faith is of God.

Therefore that this opinion, which is displeasing to God, and hostile to those gratuitous benefits of God whereby we are delivered, may be destroyed, I maintain that both the beginning of faith and the perseverance therein, even to the end, are, according to the Scriptures—of which I have already quoted many—God's gifts. Because if we say that the beginning of faith is of ourselves, so that by it we deserve to receive other gifts of God, the Pelagians conclude that God's grace is given according to our merits. And this the Catholic faith held in such dread, that Pelagius himself, in fear of condemnation, condemned it. And, moreover, if we say that our perseverance is of ourselves, not of God, they answer that we have the beginning of our faith of ourselves in such wise as the end, thus arguing that we have that beginning of ourselves much more, if of ourselves we have the continuance unto the end, since to perfect is much greater than to begin; and thus repeatedly they conclude that the grace of God is given according to our merits. But if both are God's gifts, and God foreknew that He would give these His gifts (and who can deny this?), predestination must be preached,—that God's true grace, that is, the grace which is not given according to our merits, may be maintained with insuperable defense.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine again argues well for the doctrine of predestination, as it is in the Scriptures, and as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):4** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

Chapter 55.—Testimony of His Previous Writings and Letters.

And, indeed, in that treatise of which the title is, Of Rebuke and Grace, which could not suffice for all my lovers, I think that I have so established that it is the gift of God also to persevere to the end, as I have either never before or almost never so expressly and evidently maintained this in writing, unless my memory deceives me. But I have now said this in a way in which no one before me has said it. Certainly the blessed Cyprian, in the Lord's Prayer, as I have already shown, so explained our petitions as to say that in its very first petition we were

asking for perseverance, asserting that we pray for it when we say, “Hallowed be Thy name,” (Matthew 6:9) although we have been already hallowed in baptism,—so that we may persevere in that which we have begun to be. Let those, however, to whom, in their love for me, I ought not to be ungrateful, who profess that they embrace, over and above that which comes into the argument, all my views, as you write,—let those, I say, see whether, in the latter portions of the first book of those two which I wrote in the beginning of my episcopate, before the appearance of the Pelagian heresy, to Simplicianus, the bishop of Milan, there remained anything whereby it might be called in question that God’s grace is not given according to our merits; and whether I have not there sufficiently argued that even the beginning of faith is God’s gift; **and whether from what is there said it does not by consequence result, although it is not expressed, that even perseverance to the end is not given, except by Him who has predestinated us to His kingdom and glory.** Then, did not I many years ago publish that letter which I had already written to the holy Paulinus, bishop of Nola, against the Pelagians, which they have lately begun to contradict? Let them also look into that letter which I sent to Sixtus, the presbyter of the Roman Church when we contended in a very sharp conflict against the Pelagians, and they will find it such as is that one to Paulinus. Whence they may gather that the same sort of things were already said and written several years ago against the Pelagian heresy, and that it is to be wondered at that these should now displease them; **although I should wish that no one would so embrace all my views as to follow me, except in those things in which he should see me not to have erred.** For I am now writing treatises in which I have undertaken to retract my smaller works, for the purpose of demonstrating that even I myself have not in all things followed myself; but I think that, with God’s mercy, I have written progressively, and not begun from perfection; since, indeed, I speak more arrogantly than truly, if even now I say that I have at length in this age of mine arrived at perfection, without any error in what I write. But the difference is in the extent and the subject of an error, and in the facility with which any one corrects it, or the pertinacity with which one endeavours to defend his error. Certainly there is good hope of that man whom the last day of this life shall find so progressing that whatever was wanting to his progress may be added to him, and that he should be adjudged rather to need perfecting than punishment.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine says, “it is the gift of God also to persevere to the end”. And he says, “Certainly the blessed Cyprian, in the Lord’s Prayer, as I have already shown, so explained our petitions as to say that in its very first petition we were asking for perseverance, asserting that we pray for it when we say, “Hallowed be Thy name,” (Matthew 6:9) although we have been already hallowed in baptism,—so that we may persevere in that which we have begun to be.”

And he adds, “**and whether from what is there said it does not by consequence result, although it is not expressed, that even perseverance to the end is not given, except by Him who has predestinated us to His kingdom and glory.**”

Augustine was willing to be corrected as should we all be willing, as he says, “**although I should wish that no one would so embrace all my views as to follow me, except in those things in which he should see me not to have erred.**” When we understand that we are saved by grace through faith, and that this is how we are born again, and our spirit is made alive to God with a new divine nature, and this is the time when we are justified by God, and given a standing of

righteousness, this brings rest to our souls. The burden of keeping ourselves saved is lifted. We can then enter into the rest of service as Jesus taught in **Matthew 11 (KJV):**28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapter 57, page 548-549**

Chapter 57 [XXII.]—How Predestination Must Be Preached So as Not to Give Offence.

And yet this doctrine must not be preached to congregations in such a way as to seem to an unskilled multitude, or a people of slower understanding, to be in some measure confuted by that very preaching of it. Just as even the foreknowledge of God, which certainly men cannot deny, seems to be refuted if it be said to them, “Whether you run or sleep, you shall be that which He who cannot be deceived has foreknown you to be.” And it is the part of a deceitful or an unskilled physician so to compound even a useful medicament, that it either does no good or does harm. But it must be said, “So run that you may lay hold; (1 Corinthians 9:24) and thus by your very running you may know yourselves to be foreknown as those who should run lawfully.” and in whatever other manner the foreknowledge of God may be so preached, that the slothfulness of man may be repulsed.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine refers in context to **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):**24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

The word of God must be rightly divided as Paul taught in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):**15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

But that we may know ourselves “to be foreknown”, let us test ourselves as we read in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):**5 Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapters 62-68, page 550-552**

Chapter 62.—Prayer to Be Inculcated, Nevertheless.

But I do not think that manner which I have said should be adopted in the preaching of predestination ought to be sufficient for him who speaks to the congregation, except he adds this, or something of this kind, saying, “You, therefore, ought also to hope for that perseverance

in obedience from the Father of Lights, from whom cometh down every excellent gift and every perfect gift, (James 1:17) and to ask for it in your daily prayers; and in doing this ought to trust that you are not aliens from the predestination of His people, because it is He Himself who bestows even the power of doing this. And far be it from you to despair of yourselves, because you are bidden to have your hope in Him, not in yourselves. For cursed is every one who has hope in man; (Jeremiah 17:5) and it is good rather to trust in the Lord than to trust in man, because blessed are all they that put their trust in Him. (Psalm 118:8) Holding this hope, serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice unto Him with trembling. (Psalm 2:11) Because no one can be certain of the life eternal which God who does not lie has promised to the children of promise before the times of eternity,—no one, unless that life of his, which is a state of trial upon the earth, is completed. (Job 7:1) But He will make us to persevere in Himself unto the end of that life, since we daily say to Him, ‘Lead us not into temptation.’” (Matthew 6:13) When these things and things of this kind are said, whether to few Christians or to the multitude of the Church, why do we fear to preach the predestination of the saints and the true grace of God,—that is, the grace which is not given according to our merits,—as the Holy Scripture declares it? Or, indeed, must it be feared that a man should then despair of himself when his hope is shown to be placed in God, and should not rather despair of himself if he should, in his excess of pride and unhappiness, place it in himself?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But I do not think that manner which I have said should be adopted in the preaching of predestination ought to be sufficient for him who speaks to the congregation, except he adds this, or something of this kind, saying, “You, therefore, ought also to hope for that perseverance in obedience from the Father of Lights, from whom cometh down every excellent gift and every perfect gift, (James 1:17) and to ask for it in your daily prayers; and in doing this ought to trust that you are not aliens from the predestination of His people, because it is He Himself who bestows even the power of doing this.”

He refers in context to **James 1 (KJV):16** Do not err, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. 18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Nothing is mentioned in these verses about hoping for perseverance. But his concern is that someone would only hear that they had been predestinated, and not that they needed to surrender to God, and receive Jesus.

He continues, “And far be it from you to despair of yourselves, because you are bidden to have your hope in Him, not in yourselves. For cursed is every one who has hope in man; (Jeremiah 17:5)”

He refers in context to **Jeremiah 17 (KJV):5** Thus saith the Lord; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. 6 For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited. 7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. 8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her



leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

He continues, “and it is good rather to trust in the Lord than to trust in man, because blessed are all they that put their trust in Him. (Psalm 118:8)”

He refers in context to **Psalm 118 (KJV):8** It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. 9 It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

And to **Psalm 2 (KJV):12** Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

He continues, “Holding this hope, serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice unto Him with trembling. (Psalm 2:11)”

He refers to **Psalm 2 (KJV):11** Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

He continues, “Because no one can be certain of the life eternal which God who does not lie has promised to the children of promise before the times of eternity,—no one, unless that life of his, which is a state of trial upon the earth, is completed. (Job 7:1)”

He refers to **Job 7 (Septuagint):1** Is not the life of man upon earth a state of trial? and his existence as that of a hireling by the day?

And to **Job 7 (KJV):1** Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? Are not his days also like the days of an hireling?

However, we can know that we have eternal life as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

He continues, “But He will make us to persevere in Himself unto the end of that life, since we daily say to Him, ‘Lead us not into temptation.’” (Matthew 6:13)”

And he refers here to **Matthew 6 (KJV):13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

He then concludes, “When these things and things of this kind are said, whether to few Christians or to the multitude of the Church, why do we fear to preach the predestination of the saints and the true grace of God,—that is, the grace which is not given according to our merits,—as the Holy Scripture declares it? Or, indeed, must it be feared that a man should then despair of himself when his hope is shown to be placed in God, and should not rather despair of himself if he should, in his excess of pride and unhappiness, place it in himself?”

And we read in **1 John 4 (KJV):18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

Augustine is in agreement with the Scriptures again here.

## Chapter 63 [XXIII.]—The Testimony of the Whole Church in Her Prayers.

And I wish that those who are slow and weak of heart, who cannot, or cannot as yet, understand the Scriptures or the explanations of them, would so hear or not hear our arguments in this question as to consider more carefully their prayers, which the Church has always used and will use, even from its beginnings until this age shall be completed. For of this matter, which I am now compelled not only to mention, but even to protect and defend against these new heretics, the Church has never been silent in its prayers, although in its discourses it has not thought that it need be put forth, as there was no adversary compelling it. For when was not

prayer made in the Church for unbelievers and its opponents that they should believe? When has any believer had a friend, a neighbour, a wife, who did not believe, and has not asked on their behalf from the Lord for a mind obedient to the Christian faith? And who has there ever been who has not prayed for himself that he might abide in the Lord? **And who has dared, not only with his voice, but even in thought, to blame the priest who invokes the Lord on behalf of believers, if at any time he has said, “Give to them, O Lord, perseverance in Thee to the end!” and has not rather responded, over such a benediction of his, as well with confessing lips as believing heart, “Amen”?** Since in the Lord’s Prayer itself the believers do not pray for anything else, especially when they say that petition, “Lead us not into temptation,” save that they may **persevere in holy obedience**. As, therefore, the Church has both been born and grows and has grown in these prayers, so it has been born and grows and has grown in this faith, by which faith it is believed that God’s grace is not given according to the merits of the receivers. For, certainly, the Church would not pray that faith should be given to unbelievers, unless it believed that God converts to Himself both the averse and adverse wills of men. Nor would the Church pray that it might persevere in the faith of Christ, not deceived nor overcome by the temptations of the world, unless it believed that the Lord has our heart in His power, in such wise as that the good which we do not hold save by our own will, we nevertheless do not hold except He worketh in us to will also. **For if the Church indeed asks these things from Him, but thinks that the same things are given to itself by itself, it makes use of prayers which are not true, but perfunctory,—which be far from us! For who truly groans, desiring to receive what he prays for from the Lord, if he thinks that he receives it from himself, and not from the Lord?**

**Commentary:** In summary, it was the “**adversary compelling**” the Church that made Augustine rise up to defend it, and earnestly contend for the faith. And of perseverance, he says, “**And who has dared, not only with his voice, but even in thought, to blame the priest who invokes the Lord on behalf of believers, if at any time he has said, “Give to them, O Lord, perseverance in Thee to the end!” and has not rather responded, over such a benediction of his, as well with confessing lips as believing heart, “Amen”?** Since in the Lord’s Prayer itself the believers do not pray for anything else, especially when they say that petition, “Lead us not into temptation,” save that they may persevere in holy obedience.”

And Jesus spoke as in **John 15 (KJV):5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Our prayers should never be “**not true, but perfunctory**”, as we are warned by Jesus in **Matthew 6 (KJV):7** But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

The word “**perfunctory**” means “: characterized by routine or superficiality: MECHANICAL a *perfunctory* smile”. (**Merriam Webster**)

But we should pray as John taught in **1 John 5 (KJV):14** And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

We must pray “according to his will”, that is, according to the truth in the word of God.

And this especially since “we know not what to pray for as we ought,” says the apostle, “but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered; and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to God.” (Romans 8:26) What is “the Spirit Himself maketh intercession,” but, “causes to make intercession,” “with groanings that cannot be uttered,” but “truthful,” since the Spirit is truth? For He it is of whom the apostle says in another place, “God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, “crying, Abba, Father!” (Galatians 4:6) And here what is the meaning of “crying,” but “making to cry,” by that figure of speech whereby we call a day that makes people glad, a glad day? And this he makes plain elsewhere when he says, “For you have not received the Spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the Spirit of the adoption of sons, in whom we cry, Abba, Father.” (Romans 8:15) He there said, “crying,” but here, “in whom we cry;” opening up, that is to say, the meaning with which he said “crying,”—that is, as I have already explained, “causing to cry,” when we understand that this is also itself the gift of God, that with a true heart and spiritually we cry to God. Let them, therefore, observe how they are mistaken who think that our seeking, asking, knocking is of ourselves, and is not given to us; and say that this is the case because grace is preceded by our merits; that it follows them when we ask and receive, and seek and find, and it is opened to us when we knock. And they will not understand that this is also of the divine gift, that we pray; that is, that we ask, seek, and knock. For we have received the spirit of adoption of sons, in which we cry, Abba, Father. And this the blessed Ambrose also said. For he says, “To pray to God also is the work of spiritual grace, as it is written, No one says, Jesus is the Lord, but in the Holy Spirit.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “And this especially since “we know not what to pray for as we ought,” says the apostle, “but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered; and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to God.” (Romans 8:26)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):26** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

He then explains, “What is “the Spirit Himself maketh intercession,” but, “causes to make intercession,” “with groanings that cannot be uttered,” but “truthful,” since the Spirit is truth? For He it is of whom the apostle says in another place, “God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, “crying, Abba, Father!” (Galatians 4:6)”

He refers to **Galatians 4 (KJV):6** And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

He then explains, “And here what is the meaning of “crying,” but “making to cry,” by that figure of speech whereby we call a day that makes people glad, a glad day? And this he makes plain elsewhere when he says, “For you have not received the Spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the Spirit of the adoption of sons, in whom we cry, Abba, Father.” (Romans 8:15)”

He refers here to **Romans 8 (KJV):15** For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

He then explains, “He there said, “crying,” but here, “in whom we cry;” opening up, that is to say, the meaning with which he said “crying,”—that is, as I have already explained, “causing to cry,” when we understand that this is also itself the gift of God, that with a true heart and spiritually we cry to God.”

He then continues, “Let them, therefore, observe how they are mistaken who think that our seeking, asking, knocking is of ourselves, and is not given to us; and say that this is the case because grace is preceded by our merits; that it follows them when we ask and receive, and seek and find, and it is opened to us when we knock. And they will not understand that this is also of the divine gift, that we pray; that is, that we ask, seek, and knock.”

He refers to **Matthew 7 (KJV):7** Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

He concludes, “For we have received the spirit of adoption of sons, in which we cry, Abba, Father. And this the blessed Ambrose also said. For he says, “To pray to God also is the work of spiritual grace, as it is written, No one says, Jesus is the Lord, but in the Holy Spirit.”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):1** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. 3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Augustine is in accord with the Scriptures.

## Chapter 65.—The Church’s Prayers Imply the Church’s Faith.

These things, therefore, which the Church asks from the Lord, and always has asked from the time she began to exist, God so foreknew that He would give to His called, that He has already given them in predestination itself; as the apostle declares without any ambiguity. For, writing to Timothy, he says, “Labour along with the gospel according to the power of God, who saves us, and calls us with His holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the times of eternity, but is now made manifest by the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ.” (2 Timothy 1:8-10) Let him, therefore, say that the Church at any time has not had in its belief the truth of this predestination and grace, which is now maintained with a more careful heed against the late heretics; let him say this who dares to say that at any time it has not prayed, or not truthfully prayed, as well that unbelievers might believe, as that believers might persevere. And if the Church has always prayed for these benefits, it has always believed them to be certainly God’s gifts; nor was it ever right for it to deny that they were foreknown by Him. And thus Christ’s Church has never failed to hold the faith of this predestination, which is now being defended with new solicitude against these modern heretics.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “These things, therefore, which the Church asks from the Lord, and always has asked from the time she began to exist, God so foreknew

that He would give to His called, that He has already given them in predestination itself; as the apostle declares without any ambiguity. For, writing to Timothy, he says, “Labour along with the gospel according to the power of God, who saves us, and calls us with His holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the times of eternity, but is now made manifest by the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ.” (2 Timothy 1:8-10)”

He refers to **2 Timothy 1 (KJV):8** Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; 9 Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

He then concludes, “Let him, therefore, say that the Church at any time has not had in its belief the truth of this predestination and grace, which is now maintained with a more careful heed against the late heretics; let him say this who dares to say that at any time it has not prayed, or not truthfully prayed, as well that unbelievers might believe, as that believers might persevere. And if the Church has always prayed for these benefits, it has always believed them to be certainly God’s gifts; nor was it ever right for it to deny that they were foreknown by Him. And thus Christ’s Church has never failed to hold the faith of this predestination, which is now being defended with new solicitude against these modern heretics.”

Augustine has proved the doctrine of predestination. That it is present in the word of God is what makes it true. Apparently no one in the universal, or Catholic, Church in his time, had spoken against this doctrine, except for Pelagius.

The Church is composed of men and women who have believed in Jesus Christ. We do not trust in man, but in the Lord, as Augustine also has said. So we do not put our trust in the Church, but in the Biblical truth in the word of God, the Scriptures, rightly divided. Augustine has done well to defend this truth.

Chapter 66 [XXIV.]—Recapitulation and Exhortation.

But what more shall I say? I think that I have taught sufficiently, or rather more than sufficiently, that both the beginning of faith in the Lord, and continuance in the Lord unto the end, are God’s gifts. And other good things which pertain to a good life, whereby God is rightly worshipped, even they themselves on whose behalf I am writing this treatise concede to be God’s gifts. Further, they cannot deny that God has foreknown all His gifts, and the people on whom He was going to bestow them. As, therefore, other things must be preached so that he who preaches them may be heard with obedience, so predestination must be preached so that he who hears these things with obedience may glory not in man, and therefore not in himself, but in the Lord; for this also is God’s precept, and to hear this precept with obedience—to wit, that he who glories should glory in the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:31)—in like manner as the rest, is God’s gift. And he who has not this gift,—I shrink not from saying it,—whatever others he has, has them in vain. That the Pelagians may have this we pray, and that our own brethren may have it more abundantly. Let us not, therefore, be prompt in arguments and indolent in prayers. Let us pray, dearly beloved, let us pray that the God of grace may give even to our enemies, and



especially to our brethren and lovers, to understand and confess that after that great and unspeakable ruin wherein we have all fallen in one, no one is delivered save by God's grace, and that grace is not repaid according to the merits of the receivers as if it were due, but is given freely as true grace, with no merits preceding.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "But what more shall I say? I think that I have taught sufficiently, or rather more than sufficiently, that both the beginning of faith in the Lord, and continuance in the Lord unto the end, are God's gifts."

And this is contained in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

He continues, "And other good things which pertain to a good life, whereby God is rightly worshipped, even they themselves on whose behalf I am writing this treatise concede to be God's gifts. Further, they cannot deny that God has foreknown all His gifts, and the people on whom He was going to bestow them. As, therefore, other things must be preached so that he who preaches them may be heard with obedience, so predestination must be preached so that he who hears these things with obedience may glory not in man, and therefore not in himself, but in the Lord; for this also is God's precept, and to hear this precept with obedience—to wit, that he who glories should glory in the Lord (1 Corinthians 1:31)—in like manner as the rest, is God's gift. And he who has not this gift,—I shrink not from saying it,—whatever others he has, has them in vain. That the Pelagians may have this we pray, and that our own brethren may have it more abundantly. Let us not, therefore, be prompt in arguments and indolent in prayers."

He refers to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):31** That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

And he concludes, "Let us pray, dearly beloved, let us pray that the God of grace may give even to our enemies, and especially to our brethren and lovers, to understand and confess that after that great and unspeakable ruin wherein we have all fallen in one, no one is delivered save by God's grace, and that grace is not repaid according to the merits of the receivers as if it were due, but is given freely as true grace, with no merits preceding."

Salvation is the gift of God, as Augustine has written, and as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Chapter 67.—The Most Eminent Instance of Predestination is Christ Jesus.

But there is no more illustrious instance of predestination than Jesus Himself, concerning which also I have already argued in the former treatise; and in the end of this I have chosen to insist upon it. There is no more eminent instance, I say, of predestination than the Mediator Himself. If any believer wishes thoroughly to understand this doctrine, let him consider Him, and in Him he will find himself also. The believer, I say; who in Him believes and confesses the true human nature that is our own, however singularly elevated by assumption by God the Word into the only Son of God, so that He who assumed, and what He assumed, should be one person in Trinity. For it was not a Quaternity that resulted from the assumption of man, but it remained a Trinity, inasmuch as that assumption ineffably made the truth of one person in God and man. Because we say that Christ was not only God, as the Manichean heretics contend; nor only man,

as the Photinian heretics assert; nor in such wise man as to have less of anything which of a certainty pertains to human nature,—whether a soul, or in the soul itself a rational mind, or flesh not taken of the woman, but made from the Word converted and changed into flesh,—all which three false and empty notions have made the three various and diverse parties of the Apollinarian heretics; **but we say that Christ was true God, born of God the Father without any beginning of time; and that He was also true or very man, born of human mother in the certain fullness of time; and that His humanity, whereby He is less than the Father, does not diminish aught from His divinity, whereby He is equal to the Father. For both of them are One Christ—who, moreover, most truly said in respect of the God, “I and the Father are one;” (John 10:30) and most truly said in respect of the man, “My Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28)** He, therefore, who made of the seed of David this righteous man, who never should be unrighteous, without any merit of His preceding will, is the same who also makes righteous men of unrighteous, without any merit of their will preceding; that He might be the head, and they His members. He, therefore, who made that man with no precedent merits of His, neither to deduce from His origin nor to commit by His will any sin which should be remitted to Him, the same makes believers on Him with no preceding merits of theirs, to whom He forgives all sin. He who made Him such that He never had or should have an evil will, the same makes in His members a good will out of an evil one. Therefore He predestinated both Him and us, because both in Him that He might be our head, and in us that we should be His body, He foreknew that our merits would not precede, but that His doings should.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he explains, “But there is no more illustrious instance of predestination than Jesus Himself, concerning which also I have already argued in the former treatise; and in the end of this I have chosen to insist upon it. There is no more eminent instance, I say, of predestination than the Mediator Himself. If any believer wishes thoroughly to understand this doctrine, let him consider Him, and in Him he will find himself also. The believer, I say; who in Him believes and confesses the true human nature that is our own, however singularly elevated by assumption by God the Word into the only Son of God, so that He who assumed, and what He assumed, should be one person in Trinity.”

And this is most easily understood as we read in **Philippians 2 (KJV):5** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

As Jesus was humble, so must we be humble.

Augustine then continues, “For it was not a Quaternity that resulted from the assumption of man, but it remained a Trinity, inasmuch as that assumption ineffably made the truth of one person in God and man.”

Augustine then delineates three beliefs of the Apollinarian heretics, as he continues:

- 1.) “Because we say that Christ was not only God, as the Manichean heretics contend;
- 2.) nor only man, as the Photinian heretics assert;
- 3.) nor in such wise man as to have less of anything which of a certainty pertains to human nature,—whether a soul, or in the soul itself a rational mind, or flesh not taken of the woman, but made from the Word converted and changed into flesh,—all which three false and empty notions have made the three various and diverse parties of the Apollinarian heretics;”

He then continues, “but we say that Christ was true God, born of God the Father without any beginning of time; and that He was also true or very man, born of human mother in the certain fullness of time; and that His humanity, whereby He is less than the Father, does not diminish aught from His divinity, whereby He is equal to the Father. For both of them are One Christ—who, moreover, most truly said in respect of the God, “I and the Father are one;” (John 10:30) and most truly said in respect of the man, “My Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28)

Augustine correctly teaches that Jesus is one with the Father from the beginning, as he refers to **John 10 (KJV):30** I and my Father are one.

And we read also in **John 17 (KJV):5** And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

And as to the humanity of the Son of God, the Father is greater as he also refers to **John 14 (KJV):28** Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

Augustine continues, as he then explains, “He, therefore, who made of the seed of David this righteous man, who never should be unrighteous, without any merit of His preceding will, is the same who also makes righteous men of unrighteous, without any merit of their will preceding; that He might be the head, and they His members. He, therefore, who made that man with no precedent merits of His, neither to deduce from His origin nor to commit by His will any sin which should be remitted to Him, the same makes believers on Him with no preceding merits of theirs, to whom He forgives all sin. He who made Him such that He never had or should have an evil will, the same makes in His members a good will out of an evil one. Therefore He predestinated both Him and us, because both in Him that He might be our head, and in us that we should be His body, He foreknew that our merits would not precede, but that His doings should.”

Augustine has defended the faith.

Chapter 68.—Conclusion.

Let those who read this, if they understand, give God thanks, and let those who do not understand, pray that they may have the inward Teacher, from whose presence comes knowledge and understanding. (Proverbs 2:6) But let those who think that I am in error, consider again and again carefully what is here said, lest perchance they themselves may be mistaken. And when, by means of those who read my writings, I become not only wiser, but even more perfect, I acknowledge God’s favour to me; and this I especially look for at the hands of the teachers of the Church, if what I write comes into their hands, and they condescend to acknowledge it.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine concludes as he refers to **Proverbs 2 (KJV):6** For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.

We can agree with Augustine here. And in regards to perseverance, we could add that God justifies the believing sinner as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (ESV):11** And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

And as Augustine has said, it is the ones whom God has foreknown that he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, and it is those whom He predestinated that He called, and those whom He called, He justified, and those whom He justified, He glorified as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The righteousness of God by faith in Christ Jesus is our security in the Lord. And the righteousness of God endureth forever, as we read in **Psalms 111 (KJV):1** Praise ye the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. 2 The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. 3 His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

This is the righteousness that was imputed to us when we believed as we read in **Roman 3 (KJV):20** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

So the righteousness of those God has justified endures forever as we read in **Psalms 112 (KJV):1** Praise ye the Lord. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments. 2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed. 3 Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever. 4 Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. 5 A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion. 6 Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. 7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. 8 His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies. 9 He hath dispersed,

he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

Once we have been born again, we have eternal life in our spirit which has been born again of the Spirit of God. God justifies us, and puts His righteousness down to our account. This is our security. If we then wander away from the path, we shall still be saved, yet as by fire. But let us make our calling and election sure as Peter warns in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):10** Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

And let us examine ourselves as we read in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

If we have truly from the heart believed in Jesus Christ we will be saved as we have read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

## The Sacraments

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate LIII. Chapter XII. 37–43, paragraph 10, page 294**

10. And, look you! So also say I, that those who have such lofty ideas of themselves as to suppose that so much must be attributed to the powers of their own will, that they deny their need of the divine assistance in order to a righteous life, cannot believe on Christ. **For the mere syllables of Christ's name, and the Christian sacraments, are of no profit, where faith in Christ is itself resisted. For faith in Christ is to believe in Him that justifieth the ungodly; (Romans 4:5) to believe in the Mediator, without whose interposition we cannot be reconciled unto God; to believe in the Saviour, who came to seek and to save that which was lost; (Luke 19:10) to believe in Him who said, "Without me ye can do nothing."** Because, then, being ignorant of that righteousness of God that justifieth the ungodly, he wishes to set up his own to satisfy the minds of the proud, such a man cannot believe on Christ. And so, those Jews "could not believe:" not that men cannot be changed for the better; but so long as their ideas run in such a direction, they cannot believe. Hence they are blinded and hardened; for, denying the need of divine assistance, they are not assisted. God foreknew this regarding these Jews who were blinded and hardened, and the prophet by His Spirit foretold it.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "And, look you! So also say I, that those who have such lofty ideas of themselves as to suppose that so much must be attributed to the powers of their own will, that they deny their need of the divine assistance in order to a righteous life, cannot believe on Christ. **For the mere syllables of Christ's name, and the Christian sacraments, are of no profit, where faith in Christ is itself resisted. For faith in Christ is to believe in Him**



that justifieth the ungodly; (Romans 4:5) to believe in the Mediator, without whose interposition we cannot be reconciled unto God; to believe in the Saviour, who came to seek and to save that which was lost; (Luke 19:10) to believe in Him who said, “Without me ye can do nothing.””

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):5** But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

And to **Luke 19 (KJV):10** For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

And to **John 15 (KJV):5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

He continues, “Because, then, being ignorant of that righteousness of God that justifieth the ungodly, he wishes to set up his own to satisfy the minds of the proud, such a man cannot believe on Christ.”

He refers context to **Romans 10 (KJV):1** Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

And Paul testifies in **Philippians 3 (KJV):9** And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

Augustine continues, “And so, those Jews “could not believe:” not that men cannot be changed for the better; but so long as their ideas run in such a direction, they cannot believe.”

He refers to **John 12 (KJV):37** But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. 41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

He concludes, “Hence they are blinded and hardened; for, denying the need of divine assistance, they are not assisted. God foreknew this regarding these Jews who were blinded and hardened, and the prophet by His Spirit foretold it.”

And we read in **Isaiah 53 (KJV):1** Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

And in **Isaiah 6 (KJV):9** And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

We see Augustine’s faith in Christ here. So, as he says, “the Christian sacraments, are of no profit, where faith in Christ is itself resisted”.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine**

**Tractate CXX. Chapter XIX. 31–42, and XX. 1-9, paragraph 2, page 432-433**

2. “Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear laid open His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.” **A suggestive word was made use of by the evangelist, in not saying pierced, or wounded His side, or anything else, but “opened;” that thereby, in a sense, the gate of life might be thrown open, from whence have flowed forth the sacraments of the Church, without which there is no entrance to the life which is the true life. That blood was shed for the remission of sins; that water it is that makes up the healthgiving cup, and supplies at once the laver of baptism and water for drinking.** This was announced beforehand, when Noah was commanded to make a door in the side of the ark, (Genesis 6:16) whereby the animals might enter which were not destined to perish in the flood, and by which the Church was prefigured. Because of this, the first woman was formed from the side of the man when asleep, (Genesis 2:22) and was called Life, and the mother of all living. (Genesis 3:20) Truly it pointed to a great good, prior to the great evil of the transgression (in the guise of one thus lying asleep). This second Adam bowed His head and fell asleep on the cross, that a spouse might be formed for Him from that which flowed from the sleeper’s side. O death, whereby the dead are raised anew to life! What can be purer than such blood? What more healthgiving than such a wound?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear laid open His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.””

In verse 34, the **Latin Vulgate** reads as in **John 19 (Douay Rheims):34** But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side: and immediately there came out blood and water.

The word “opened” in the Greek is **νύσσω** (pronounced nü's-sō), apparently a primary word; to prick ("nudge"):—pierce. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3572.**

And so we read as in **John 19 (KJV):32** Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: 34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

He continues, **“A suggestive word was made use of by the evangelist, in not saying pierced, or wounded His side, or anything else, but “opened;” that thereby, in a sense, the gate of life might be thrown open, from whence have flowed forth the sacraments of the Church, without which there is no entrance to the life which is the true life.”**

He again refers to the **Latin Vulgate** as we read in **John 19 (Douay Rheims):34** But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side: and immediately there came out blood and water.

But there is an example of the Greek usage of the word “opened” in **Matthew 2 (KJV):11** And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense and myrrh.

The word “opened” in the Greek here is **ἀνοίγω** (pronounced ä-noi'-gō), from G303 and οἶγω οἶγō (to open); to open up (literally or figuratively, in various applications):—open. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G455.**

This Greek word is translated “open” 77 times in the King James Version of the Bible.

Augustine's reliance on the **Latin Vulgate** has led him to believe that there is evidence here for the sacraments of the Church. But the word "sacraments" is not found anywhere in the Bible. This is a name that has been given to certain rituals, such as baptism, and the Lord's Supper, or Communion. But in using the word "sacraments", they have added meaning to the rituals which has no basis in the Scriptures.

The rituals of baptism and the Lord's Supper, or Communion, do not give life. They are only reminders that one has received life by faith in Jesus Christ. And without faith, they are of no profit, as Augustine said previously.

Augustine continues, "That blood was shed for the remission of sins; that water it is that makes up the health-giving cup, and supplies at once the laver of baptism and water for drinking. This was announced beforehand, when Noah was commanded to make a door in the side of the ark, (Genesis 6:16) whereby the animals might enter which were not destined to perish in the flood, and by which the Church was prefigured."

He refers to **Genesis 6 (KJV):16** A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

He continues, "Because of this, the first woman was formed from the side of the man when asleep, (Genesis 2:22) and was called Life, and the mother of all living. (Genesis 3:20)"

He refers to **Genesis 2 (KJV):22** And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

And to **Genesis 3 (KJV):20** And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

He continues, "Truly it pointed to a great good, prior to the great evil of the transgression (in the guise of one thus lying asleep). This second Adam bowed His head and fell asleep on the cross, that a spouse might be formed for Him from that which flowed from the sleeper's side. O death, whereby the dead are raised anew to life! What can be purer than such blood? What more health-giving than such a wound?"

And by His wounds we are healed as we read in **Isaiah 53 (KJV):5** But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm LXXIV, paragraph 1, page 342-343**

1. This Psalm's Title is, "Of the Understanding of Asaph." Asaph in Latin is translated congregation, in Greek Synagogue. Let us see what this Synagogue hath understood. But let us understand firstly Synagogue: from thence we shall understand what the Synagogue hath understood. Every congregation is spoken of under the general name of Synagogue: one both of beasts and of men may be called a congregation; but here there is no congregation of beasts when we heard "understanding."...for this the Psalm's Title doth prescribe, saying, "Of the understanding of Asaph." It is therefore a certain understanding congregation whereof we are about to hear the voice. But since properly Synagogue is said of the congregation of the people of Israel, so that wheresoever we may have heard Synagogue, we are no longer wont to

understand any but the people of the Jews; let us see whether perchance the voice in this Psalm be not of that same people. But of what sort of Jews and of what sort of people of Israel? For they are not of the chaff, but perchance of the grain; (Matthew 3:12) not of the broken branches, but perchance of those that are strengthened. "For not all that are of Israel are Israelites." (Romans 9:6)...There are therefore certain Israelites, of whom was he concerning whom was said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom guile is not." (John 1:47) I do not say in the same manner as we are Israelites, for we also are the seed of Abraham. For to the Gentiles the Apostle was speaking, when he said, "Therefore the seed of Abraham ye are, heirs according to promise." (Galatians 3:29) According to this therefore all we are Israelites, that follow the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham. But let us understand here the voice of the Israelites in the same manner as the Apostle saith, "For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." (Romans 11:1) Here therefore let us understand that whereof the Prophets have spoken, "a remnant shall be saved." (Romans 9:27) Of the remnant therefore saved let us hear in this place the voice; in order that there may speak that Synagogue which had received the Old Testament, and was intent upon carnal promises; and by this means it came to pass that their feet were shaken. For in another Psalm, where too the title hath Asaph, there is said what? "How good is the God of Israel to men right in heart. But my feet were almost moved." (Psalm 73:1-2) And as if we were saying, whence were thy feet moved? "Well nigh," he saith, "my steps were overthrown, because I was jealous in the case of sinners, looking on the peace of sinners." (Psalm 73:2) For while according to the promises of God belonging to the Old Testament he was looking for earthly felicity, he observed it to abound with ungodly men; that they who worshipped not God were enriched with those things which he was looking for from God: and as though without cause he had served God, his feet tottered....But opportunely it hath chanced not by our own but by God's dispensation, that just now we heard out of the Gospel, that "the Law was given by Moses, Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1:17) For if we distinguish between the two Testaments, Old and New, there are not the same Sacraments nor the same promises; nevertheless, the same commandments for the most part....When examined they are either all found to be the same, or there are scarce any in the Gospel which have not been spoken by the Prophets. The Commandments are the same, the Sacraments are not the same, the Promises are not the same. Let us see wherefore the commandments are the same; because according to these we ought to serve God. **The Sacraments are not the same, for some Sacraments there are giving Salvation, others promising a Saviour. The Sacraments of the New Testament give Salvation, the Sacraments of the Old Testament did promise a Saviour. When therefore thou hast now the things promised, why dost thou seek the things promising, having now the Saviour?...God through the New Testament hath taken out of the hands of His sons those things which are like the playthings of boys, in order that He might give something more useful to them growing up, on that account must He be supposed not to have given those former things Himself. He gave both Himself. But the Law itself through Moses was given, Grace and Truth came through Jesus Christ: (John 1:17) Grace because there is fulfilled through love that which by the letter was being enjoined, Truth because there is being rendered that which was promised.** This thing therefore this Asaph hath understood. In a word, all things which to the Jews had been promised have been taken away. Where is their kingdom? Where the Temple? Where the Anointing? Where is Priest? Where are now the Prophets among them? From what time there came He that by the Prophets was

foretold, in that nation there is now nothing of these things; now she hath lost things earthly, and not yet doth seek things Heavenly.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he refers to Psalm 74, and says, “This Psalm’s Title is, “Of the Understanding of Asaph.” Asaph in Latin is translated congregation, in Greek Synagogue. Let us see what this Synagogue hath understood. But let us understand firstly Synagogue: from thence we shall understand what the Synagogue hath understood. Every congregation is spoken of under the general name of Synagogue: one both of beasts and of men may be called a congregation; but here there is no congregation of beasts when we heard “understanding.”...for this the Psalm’s Title doth prescribe, saying, “Of the understanding of Asaph.” It is therefore a certain understanding congregation whereof we are about to hear the voice. But since properly Synagogue is said of the congregation of the people of Israel, so that wheresoever we may have heard Synagogue, we are no longer wont to understand any but the people of the Jews; let us see whether perchance the voice in this Psalm be not of that same people. But of what sort of Jews and of what sort of people of Israel? For they are not of the chaff, but perchance of the grain; (Matthew 3:12) not of the broken branches, but perchance of those that are strengthened. “For not all that are of Israel are Israelites.” (Romans 9:6)...

He refers to **Matthew 3 (KJV):12** Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

And to **Romans 9 (KJV):6** Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

He continues, “There are therefore certain Israelites, of whom was he concerning whom was said, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom guile is not.” (John 1:47)”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):47** Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

He continues, “I do not say in the same manner as we are Israelites, for we also are the seed of Abraham. For to the Gentiles the Apostle was speaking, when he said, “Therefore the seed of Abraham ye are, heirs according to promise.” (Galatians 3:29)”

He refers to **Galatians 3 (KJV):29** And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

He continues, “According to this therefore all we are Israelites, that follow the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham. But let us understand here the voice of the Israelites in the same manner as the Apostle saith, “For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.” (Romans 11:1)”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):1** I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

He continues, “Here therefore let us understand that whereof the Prophets have spoken, “a remnant shall be saved.” (Romans 9:27)”

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):27** Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

He continues, “Of the remnant therefore saved let us hear in this place the voice; in order that there may speak that Synagogue which had received the Old Testament, and was intent upon carnal promises; and by this means it came to pass that their feet were shaken. For in



another Psalm, where too the title hath Asaph, there is said what? “How good is the God of Israel to men right in heart. But my feet were almost moved.” (Psalm 73:1-2)”

He refers to **Psalm 73 (KJV):1** Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. 2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.

He continues, “And as if we were saying, whence were thy feet moved? “Well nigh,” he saith, “my steps were overthrown, because I was jealous in the case of sinners, looking on the peace of sinners.” (Psalm 73:2-3)

He refers to **Psalm 72 (Douay Rheims):2** But my feet were almost moved; my steps had well nigh slipped. 3 Because I had a zeal on occasion of the wicked, seeing the prosperity of sinners.

And to **Psalm 73 (KJV):2** But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. 3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

He continues, “For while according to the promises of God belonging to the Old Testament he was looking for earthly felicity, he observed it to abound with ungodly men; that they who worshipped not God were enriched with those things which he was looking for from God: and as though without cause he had served God, his feet tottered....But opportunely it hath chanced not by our own but by God’s dispensation, that just now we heard out of the Gospel, that “the Law was given by Moses, Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17)”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):17** For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

He continues, “For if we distinguish between the two Testaments, Old and New, there are not the same Sacraments nor the same promises; nevertheless, the same commandments for the most part....When examined they are either all found to be the same, or there are scarce any in the Gospel which have not been spoken by the Prophets. The Commandments are the same, the Sacraments are not the same, the Promises are not the same. Let us see wherefore the commandments are the same; because according to these we ought to serve God. **The Sacraments are not the same, for some Sacraments there are giving Salvation, others promising a Saviour. The Sacraments of the New Testament give Salvation, the Sacraments of the Old Testament did promise a Saviour.**”

Augustine was blinded by the tradition that had been passed down by the early Church. The word “sacrament” is not found in the Scriptures. It is a word used to describe rituals, such as Baptism and Communion in the New Testament, for example, and Circumcision in the Old Testament. But Circumcision in the Old Testament was only a token, and it did not save anyone. In the same way, Baptism is only a token in the New Testament. It does not save anyone. In both the Old and the New Testaments, it is faith that saves, as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):13** For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. 16 Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

Augustine continues, **“When therefore thou hast now the things promised, why dost thou seek the things promising, having now the Saviour?...God through the New Testament hath taken out of the hands of His sons those things which are like the playthings of boys, in order**

that He might give something more useful to them growing up, on that account must He be supposed not to have given those former things Himself. He gave both Himself. But the Law itself through Moses was given, Grace and Truth came through Jesus Christ: (John 1:17)”

He refers again to **John 1 (KJV):17** For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

He continues, “Grace because there is fulfilled through love that which by the letter was being enjoined, Truth because there is being rendered that which was promised.”

Jesus came to fulfill the law as we read in **Matthew 5 (KJV):17** Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Many of the promises in the Old Testament have been fulfilled by Jesus, such as in **Matthew 1 (KJV):20** But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

But there are many more prophecies yet to be fulfilled. But as to what Jesus has fulfilled, because of His sacrifice, we are no longer under the law. The ten commandment law is still the standard of God’s righteousness, but but we no longer are under the condemnation of the law, having believed in Jesus. All of the rituals in the Old Testament, such as the sacrifice of bulls and goats, circumcision, the keeping of certain feasts, are not required in the New Testament. We are not under law, but under grace as we read in **Romans 6 (KJV):14** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

Because we have been made free from sin, we are to be servants of righteousness.

Augustine continues, “This thing therefore this Asaph hath understood. In a word, all things which to the Jews had been promised have been taken away. Where is their kingdom? Where the Temple? Where the Anointing? Where is Priest? Where are now the Prophets among them? From what time there came He that by the Prophets was foretold, in that nation there is now nothing of these things; now she hath lost things earthly, and not yet doth seek things Heavenly.”

Israel had lost everything when they rejected Jesus Christ, but God is not done with Israel. There are still unfulfilled promises to Israel as we read in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):27** Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. 28 And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord. 29 In those days

they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. 30 But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge. 31 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. 35 Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

There is still a promise to be fulfilled for Israel.

## Wood, Hay, Stubble

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine  
On the Psalms, Psalm LXXXI, paragraph 20, page 394-395**

20. Explain to us, then, saith one, how those that build wood, hay, stubble, on the foundation, do not perish, but “are saved, yet so as by fire”? An obscure question indeed that, but as I am able I tell you briefly. Brethren, there are men altogether despisers of this world, to whom nothing is pleasant that flows in the course of time, they cling not by love to any earthly works, holy, chaste, continent, just, perchance even selling all their goods and distributing to the poor, or “possessing as though they possessed not, and using this world as though not using it.” (1 Corinthians 7:30-31) But there are others who cling to things allowed to infirmity with a degree of affection. He robs not another of his estate, but so loves his own, that if he loses it he will be disturbed. He does not covet another’s wife, but so clings to his own, so cohabits with his own, as not therein to keep the measure prescribed in the laws, for the sake of begetting children. He does not take away other men’s things, but reclaims his own, and has a law-suit with his brother. For to such it is said, “Now indeed there is altogether a fault among you, because ye have law-suits with each other.” (1 Corinthians 6:7) But these very suits he orders to be tried in the Church, not to be dragged into court, yet he says they are faults. For a Christian contends for earthly things more than becomes one to whom the kingdom of Heaven is promised. Not the whole of his heart doth he raise upward, but some part of it he draggeth on the earth.... Therefore if thou lovest thy possession, yet dost not for its sake commit violence, dost not for its sake bear false witness, dost not for its sake commit manslaughter, dost not for its sake swear falsely, dost not for its sake deny Christ: in that thou wilt not for its sake do these things, thou hast Christ for a foundation. But yet because thou lovest it, and art saddened if thou

loosest it, upon the foundation thou hast placed, not gold, or silver, or precious stones, but wood, hay, stubble. Saved therefore thou wilt be, when that begins to burn which thou hast built, yet so as by fire. For let no one on this foundation building adulteries, blasphemies, sacrileges, idolatries, perjuries, think he shall be “saved through fire,” as though they were the “wood, hay, stubble:” but he that buildeth the love of earthly things on the foundation of the kingdom of Heaven, that is upon Christ, his love of temporal things shall be burned, and himself shall be saved through the right foundation.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Explain to us, then, saith one, how those that build wood, hay, stubble, on the foundation, do not perish, but “are saved, yet so as by fire”?”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):** 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

He continues, “An obscure question indeed that, but as I am able I tell you briefly. Brethren, there are men altogether despisers of this world, to whom nothing is pleasant that flows in the course of time, they cling not by love to any earthly works, holy, chaste, continent, just, perchance even selling all their goods and distributing to the poor, or “possessing as though they possessed not, and using this world as though not using it.” (1 Corinthians 7:30-31)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):** 29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; 30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; 31 And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

He continues, “But there are others who cling to things allowed to infirmity with a degree of affection. He robs not another of his estate, but so loves his own, that if he loses it he will be disturbed. He does not covet another’s wife, but so clings to his own, so cohabits with his own, as not therein to keep the measure prescribed in the laws, for the sake of begetting children. He does not take away other men’s things, but reclaims his own, and has a law-suit with his brother. For to such it is said, “Now indeed there is altogether a fault among you, because ye have law-suits with each other.” (1 Corinthians 6:7)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):** 7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

He continues, “But these very suits he orders to be tried in the Church, not to be dragged into court, yet he says they are faults. For a Christian contends for earthly things more than becomes one to whom the kingdom of Heaven is promised. Not the whole of his heart doth he raise upward, but some part of it he draggeth on the earth.... **Therefore if thou lovest thy possession, yet dost not for its sake commit violence, dost not for its sake bear false witness, dost not for its sake commit manslaughter, dost not for its sake swear falsely, dost not for its**

sake deny Christ: in that thou wilt not for its sake do these things, thou hast Christ for a foundation. But yet because thou lovest it, and art saddened if thou lovest it, upon the foundation thou hast placed, not gold, or silver, or precious stones, but wood, hay, stubble. Saved therefore thou wilt be, when that begins to burn which thou hast built, yet so as by fire.”

Augustine then concludes, “For let no one on this foundation building adulteries, blasphemies, sacrileges, idolatries, perjuries, think he shall be “saved through fire,” as though they were the “wood, hay, stubble.” but he that buildeth the love of earthly things on the foundation of the kingdom of Heaven, that is upon Christ, his love of temporal things shall be burned, and himself shall be saved through the right foundation.”

So Augustine is saying that deadly or mortal sins, which in his mind are such as “adulteries, blasphemies, sacrileges, idolatries, perjuries” and the like, will not allow one to be saved by fire. But the apostle John says that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

The remedy for sin is confession as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

But Augustine upheld the tradition of the Catholic Church in his time, which made a difference between light sins, or venial sins, and damnable, or mortal sins. The Lord does warn believers of the sin unto death, which we will look at in a later chapter. For now, we just read as in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):27** Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

So the discipline of the Lord included weakness, sickness, and sleep, that is, physical death. But when the Lord chastens, it is so “that we should not be condemned with the world”, as in verse 32 above. If one has truly believed in Jesus Christ, and confessed Him as Lord, he has been born again. He now has eternal life in his spirit. There may be much in his soul, that is, his mind, will, heart, emotions, and conscience, that needs cleansing. If he or she yields to this progressive sanctification which the Lord does in the life of the believer, they will be rewarded for the works that God has ordained for them to do which are mentioned in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

If he or she does not yield to this progressive sanctification which the Lord does in the life of the believer, they will not be rewarded for their works because they will only be wood, hay, or stubble which will be burned up in the fire which tests their works. They will still be saved, yet as by the fire of their bad choices in this life.

## Already Sons of God



5. “For we have been much filled with contempt” (ver. 3). All that will live piously according to Christ, must needs suffer reproof, (2 Timothy 3:12) must needs be despised by those who do not choose to live piously, all whose happiness is earthly. They are derided who call that happiness which they cannot see with their eyes, and it is said to them, What believest thou, madman? Dost thou see what thou believest? Hath any one returned from the world below, and reported to thee what is going on there? Behold I see and enjoy what I love. Thou art scorned, because thou dost hope for what thou seest not; and he who seemeth to hold what he seeth, scorneth thee. Consider well if he doth really hold it...I have my house, he hath boasted himself. Thou askest, what house of his own? That which my father left me. And whence did he derive this house? My grandfather left it him. Go back even to his great grandfather, then to his great grandfather’s father, and he can no longer tell their names. Art thou not rather terrified by this thought, that thou seest many have passed through this house, and that none of them hath carried it away with him to his everlasting home? Thy father left it: he passed through it: thus thou also wilt pass by. If therefore thou hast a mere passing stay in thy house, it is an inn for passing guests, not an habitation for permanent abode. **Yet since we hope for those things which are to come, and sigh for future happiness, and since it hath not yet appeared what we shall be, although we are already “sons of God;” (1 John 3:2) for “our life is hidden with Christ in God:” (Colossians 3:3) “we are utterly despised,” by those who seek or enjoy happiness in this world.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““For we have been much filled with contempt” (ver. 3).”

He refers in context to **Psalm 123 (KJV):1** Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. 2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us. 3 Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.

He continues, “All that will live piously according to Christ, must needs suffer reproof, (2 Timothy 3:12) must needs be despised by those who do not choose to live piously, all whose happiness is earthly.”

He refers to **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):12** Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

He continues, “They are derided who call that happiness which they cannot see with their eyes, and it is said to them, What believest thou, madman? Dost thou see what thou believest? Hath any one returned from the world below, and reported to thee what is going on there? Behold I see and enjoy what I love. Thou art scorned, because thou dost hope for what thou seest not; and he who seemeth to hold what he seeth, scorneth thee. Consider well if he doth really hold it...I have my house, he hath boasted himself. Thou askest, what house of his own? That which my father left me. And whence did he derive this house? My grandfather left it him. Go back even to his great grandfather, then to his great grandfather’s father, and he can no longer tell their names. Art thou not rather terrified by this thought, that thou seest many have passed through this house, and that none of them hath carried it away with him to his

everlasting home? Thy father left it: he passed through it: thus thou also wilt pass by. If therefore thou hast a mere passing stay in thy house, it is an inn for passing guests, not an habitation for permanent abode. Yet since we hope for those things which are to come, and sigh for future happiness, and since it hath not yet appeared what we shall be, although we are already “sons of God;” (1 John 3:2) for “our life is hidden with Christ in God:” (Colossians 3:3) “we are utterly despised,” by those who seek or enjoy happiness in this world.”

He refers to **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

And to **Colossians 3 (KJV):3** For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Though Augustine did not understand completely the born again experience of the believer, he understood this much, that those who have believed in Jesus Christ are “already “sons of God;””

## Summary

Augustine believed that “all who are baptized with the baptism that is consecrated in the words of the gospel have the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost in the sacrament alone; but that in heart and in life neither do those have them who live an abandoned and accursed life within.” He did not advocate rebaptism as long as they who had been “consecrated in the words of the gospel have the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost”.

He also says, “life eternal is the supreme good, death eternal the supreme evil, and that to obtain the one and escape the other we must live rightly. And thus it is written, “The just lives by faith,” (Habakkuk 2:4)”

But it is not a matter of living rightly. Once we have been born of the Spirit of God, we have eternal life. We are not condemned, and we have a standing of righteousness because God has justified us. If after we have been born again, we believe not, He abides faithful as we read in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):13** If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

But if we don’t live rightly after we have been born again, we will still be saved, yet as by fire. God will judge us so that we should not be condemned with the world.

Augustine did not feel safe, as he says, “For the soul is so much the less subjected to God as it is less occupied with the thought of God; and the flesh is so much the less subjected to the spirit as it lusts more vehemently against the spirit. So long, therefore, as we are beset by this weakness, this plague, this disease, how shall we dare to say that we are safe?”

But he recognized that we are saved by hope, as he says that the “Apostle Paul, speaking not of men without prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice, but of those whose lives were regulated by true piety, and whose virtues were therefore true, says, “For we are saved by hope: now hope which is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” (Romans 8:24-25) As, therefore, we are saved, so we are made happy by hope.”

But “we ought patiently to endure”, he says.

Now Augustine thought that our flesh had “this weakness, this plague, this disease” whereby “the flesh is so much the less subjected to the spirit as it lusts more vehemently against

the spirit". He did not fully understand that the flesh, being mortal, and being a descendent of Adam, has a sin nature, or "law of sin" in it members.

But Augustine testifies, "Because even the Flesh of Christ he knew not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, who, not by touching in curiosity, but in believing assured, acknowledgeth the power of His Resurrection; not saying in his heart, "Who hath ascended into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down; or, Who hath descended into the deep? that is, to bring back Christ from the dead." "But," saith he, "the word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, that Jesus is the Lord; and if thou shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:6-10)"

And he affirms, "These, Brethren, are the words of the Apostle, pouring them forth with the holy inebriation of the Holy Ghost Himself."

Again, there is no clearer message of salvation than this Scripture in Romans. The Lord is all about relationship. If we shall confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in our heart that God has raised him from the dead, we will be saved.

Concerning **Predestination**, he says, "For we have learned that the Lord of glory Himself was predestinated in so far as the man was made the Son of God." He then refers to Romans 1:1-4, as he summarizes, "Therefore Jesus was predestinated, so that He who was to be the Son of David according to the flesh should yet be in power the Son of God, according to the Spirit of sanctification, because He was born of the Holy Spirit and of the Virgin Mary."

While Augustine follows the **Latin Vulgate** which mistranslates the word "declared" to be "predestinated" in Romans 1:4, the predestination of the Son of God is implied in other Scriptures as in **Acts 2 (KJV):23** Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

He then affirms, "As, therefore, that one man was predestinated to be our Head, so we being many are predestinated to be His members. Here let human merits which have perished through Adam keep silence, and let that grace of God reign which reigns through Jesus Christ our Lord, the only Son of God, the one Lord."

And he says, that just as "God certainly foreknew that He would do these things", so therefore, "that same predestination of the saints which most especially shone forth in the Saint of saints", speaking of Christ, took place. So just as He was predestinated, so we also have been predestinated.

Augustine then explains as he says, "For we have learned that the Lord of glory Himself was predestinated in so far as the man was made the Son of God."

Augustine then says, "Such a transporting of human nature was predestinated, so great, so lofty, and so sublime that there was no exalting it more highly,—just as on our behalf that divinity had no possibility of more humbly putting itself off, than by the assumption of man's nature with the weakness of the flesh, even to the death of the cross."

This was God's plan, as he says, "because He made us to believe in Christ, who made for us a Christ on whom we believe. He makes in men the beginning and the completion of the faith in Jesus who made the man Jesus the beginner and finisher of faith; (Hebrews 12:2) for thus, as you know, He is called in the epistle which is addressed to the Hebrews."

Augustine says, "Let us, then, understand the calling whereby they become elected,—not those who are elected because they have believed, but who are elected that they may believe.

For the Lord Himself also sufficiently explains this calling when He says, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” (John 15:16)”, and as “the apostle says, “As He hath chosen us in Himself before the foundation of the world”? (Ephesians 1:4)”

And he is clear, as he concludes, “By choosing them, therefore; He makes them rich in faith, as He makes them heirs of the kingdom; because He is rightly said to choose that in them, in order to make which in them He chose them. I ask, who can hear the Lord saying, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,” and can dare to say that men believe in order to be elected, when they are rather elected to believe; lest against the judgment of truth they be found to have first chosen Christ to whom Christ says, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you”? (John 15:16)”

Here we see the true greatness of Augustine. And what is the greatness that we see, but that he rightly divides the word of truth in regards to our predestination. Now he was definitely influenced by the dogmas of the Church in his time. But here he defines our predestination without flaw according to the word of God.

And he adds, “Therefore God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, predestinating us to the adoption of children, not because we were going to be of ourselves holy and immaculate, but He chose and predestinated us that we might be so.”

In his defense of our predestination, Augustine says that God’s grace is “given freely to whom it is given, because it is neither of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy”, as he refers to Romans 9:16.

Concerning **Faith, God’s Gift**, he says, “for His gift is also the beginning of faith”. And he says, “God, therefore, worketh in the hearts of men with that calling according to His purpose, of which we have spoken a great deal, that they should not hear the gospel in vain, but when they heard it, should be converted and believe, receiving it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God.”

And he affirms, “Moreover, we are admonished that the beginning of men’s faith is God’s gift”, about which he adds, “This gift of heavenly grace had descended to that seller of purple (Acts 16:14) for whom, as Scripture says in the Acts of the Apostles, “The Lord opened her heart, and she gave heed unto the things which were said by Paul;” for she was so called that she might believe.

And he says, “Let them hear, “As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” (Acts 13:48)” He concludes, “Wherefore I determined, as far as I could, to set forth that this very beginning also is God’s gift.”

Concerning **Justification by Faith**, he says, “For a man worketh not righteousness save he be justified: but by “believing on Him that justifieth the ungodly,” (Romans 4:5) he beginneth with faith; that good may not by preceding show what he hath deserved, but by following what he hath received....”

That is, we don’t do righteous things unless He has first justified us.

Concerning **Perseverance**, Augustine says, speaking of the Church, “It prays that believers may persevere; therefore God gives perseverance to the end. God foreknew that He would do this. This is the very predestination of the saints, “whom He has chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and unspotted before Him in love; predestinating them unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, in which He hath shown them

favour in His beloved Son, in whom they have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace...Against a trumpet of truth so clear as this, what man of sober and watchful faith can receive any human arguments?"

To Augustine, if one did not persevere, they were not predestinated. If they were predestinated, they would have persevered, and continued with them.

And he adds, "But if grace precedes faith because it precedes will, certainly it precedes all obedience; it also precedes love, by which alone God is truly and pleasantly obeyed. And all these things grace works in him to whom it is given, and in whom it precedes all these things. [XVII.] Among these benefits there remains perseverance unto the end, which is daily asked for in vain from the Lord, if the Lord by His grace does not effect it in him whose prayers He hears. See now how foreign it is from the truth to deny that perseverance even to the end of this life is the gift of God; since He Himself puts an end to this life when He wills, and if He puts an end before a fall that is threatening, He makes the man to persevere even unto the end."

We who have believed "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time". And so, "Among these benefits there remains perseverance unto the end". Those who are predestined by God will persevere unto the end.

And he says, "These gifts, therefore, of God, which are given to the elect who are called according to God's purpose, among which gifts is both the beginning of belief and perseverance in the faith to the termination of this life, as I have proved by such a concurrent testimony of reasons and authorities,—these gifts of God, I say, if there is no such predestination as I am maintaining, are not foreknown by God. But they are foreknown. This, therefore, is the predestination which I maintain. [XVIII.] Consequently sometimes the same predestination is signified also under the name of foreknowledge; as says the apostle, "God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew." (Romans 11:2)"

And he adds, "Therefore, in the election, and in this remnant which were made so by the election of grace, he wished to be understood the people which God did not reject, because He foreknew them. This is that election by which He elected those, whom He willed, in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without spot in His sight, in love, predestinating them unto the adoption of sons."

And he concludes, "Yet, in whatever manner the word of God is spoken to man, beyond a doubt for man to hear it in such a way as to obey it, is God's gift."

Concerning **The Sacraments**, he says, "For the mere syllables of Christ's name, and the Christian sacraments, are of no profit, where faith in Christ is itself resisted. For faith in Christ is to believe in Him that justifieth the ungodly; (Romans 4:5) to believe in the Mediator, without whose interposition we cannot be reconciled unto God; to believe in the Saviour, who came to seek and to save that which was lost; (Luke 19:10) to believe in Him who said, "Without me ye can do nothing.""

And he says, "A suggestive word was made use of by the evangelist, in not saying pierced, or wounded His side, or anything else, but "opened;" that thereby, in a sense, the gate of life might be thrown open, from whence have flowed forth the sacraments of the Church, without which there is no entrance to the life which is the true life. That blood was shed for the remission of sins; that water it is that makes up the healthgiving cup, and supplies at once the laver of baptism and water for drinking." We see his emphasis on ritual here. But ritual does not save us. Faith saves us, which is God's gift, as he himself maintained.



Concerning **Wood, Hay, Stubble**, Augustine then concludes, “For let no one on this foundation building adulteries, blasphemies, sacrileges, idolatries, perjuries, think he shall be “saved through fire,” as though they were the “wood, hay, stubble:” but he that buildeth the love of earthly things on the foundation of the kingdom of Heaven, that is upon Christ, his love of temporal things shall be burned, and himself shall be saved through the right foundation.”

So Augustine is saying that deadly or mortal sins, which in his mind are such as “adulteries, blasphemies, sacrileges, idolatries, perjuries” and the like, will not allow one to be saved by fire. But the apostle John says that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

The remedy for sin, big or small, is confession as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Augustine upheld the tradition of the Catholic Church in his time. But the discipline of the Lord includes weakness, sickness, and sleep, that is, physical death. And when the Lord chastens, it is so “that we should not be condemned with the world”, as in 1 Corinthians 11:32. If one has truly believed in Jesus Christ, and confessed Him as Lord, he has been born again. He now has eternal life in his spirit. There may be much in his soul, that is, his mind, will, heart, emotions, and conscience, that needs cleansing. If he or she yields to this progressive sanctification which the Lord does in the life of the believer, they will be rewarded for the works that God has ordained for them. If he or she does not yield to this progressive sanctification, they will not be rewarded for their works because their works will only be wood, hay, or stubble. These will be burned up in the fire which tests their works. They will still be saved, yet as by the fire of their bad choices in this life.

Concerning **Already Sons of God**, he says, “Yet since we hope for those things which are to come, and sigh for future happiness, and since it hath not yet appeared what we shall be, although we are already “sons of God;” (1 John 3:2) for “our life is hidden with Christ in God:” (Colossians 3:3) “we are utterly despised,” by those who seek or enjoy happiness in this world.”

And because of our regeneration, our justification, and our adoption, we are “already “sons of God””.

# The Resurrection

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermon LXXVII. [CXXVII. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel, John v. 25, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the son of God; and they that hear shall live,” etc.; and on the words of the apostle, “things which eye saw not,” etc., 1 Cor. ii. 9 , Paragraphs 7-8, page 488-489**

7. Behold what thy Lord saith to thee: “The hour shall come,” saith He, “and now is.” “The hour shall come,” yea, that very hour, “now is, when”—what? “when the dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and they that shall hear shall live.” They then that shall not hear, shall not live. What is, “They that shall hear”? They that shall obey. What is, “They that shall hear”? They that shall believe and obey, they shall live. So then before they believed and obeyed, they lay dead; they walked, and were dead. What availed it to them, that they walked, being dead? And yet if any among them were to die a bodily death, they would run, get ready the grave, wrap him up, carry him out, bury him, the dead, the dead; of whom it is said, “Let the dead bury their dead.” (Matthew 8:22) Such dead as these are in such wise raised by the Word of God, as to live in faith. They who were dead in unbelief, are aroused by the Word. Of this hour said the Lord, “The hour shall come, and now is.” For with His Own Word did He raise them that were dead in unbelief; of whom the Apostle says, “Arise thou that sleepest, and rise up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” (Ephesians 5:14) This is the resurrection of hearts, this is the resurrection of the inner man, this is the resurrection of the soul.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Behold what thy Lord saith to thee: “The hour shall come,” saith He, “and now is.” “The hour shall come,” yea, that very hour, “now is, when”—what? “when the dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and they that shall hear shall live.””

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):25** Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

He continues, “They then that shall not hear, shall not live. What is, “They that shall hear”? They that shall obey. What is, “They that shall hear”? They that shall believe and obey, they shall live. So then before they believed and obeyed, they lay dead; they walked, and were dead.” What availed it to them, that they walked, being dead? And yet if any among them were to die a bodily death, they would run, get ready the grave, wrap him up, carry him out, bury him, the dead, the dead; of whom it is said, “Let the dead bury their dead.” (Matthew 8:22)”

He refers to **Matthew 8 (KJV):22** But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

He continues, “Such dead as these are in such wise raised by the Word of God, as to live in faith. They who were dead in unbelief, are aroused by the Word. Of this hour said the Lord, “The hour shall come, and now is.””

Let us now read in context in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that

hear shall live. 26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. 28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Jesus speaks of the resurrection in our spirit in verse 24, and the bodily resurrection in verses 28-29.

Augustine continues, “For with His Own Word did He raise them that were dead in unbelief; of whom the Apostle says, “Arise thou that sleepest, and rise up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” (Ephesians 5:14)”

He refers to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):14** Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

He concludes, “This is the resurrection of hearts, this is the resurrection of the inner man, this is the resurrection of the soul.”

And we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Augustine thought that the soul was composed of spirit, and so “the resurrection of hearts”, “the resurrection of the inner man”, “the resurrection of the soul” happens when we are born again, in his thinking. But the soul is composed of our mind, our will, our heart, which is the center of our emotions, and our conscience. It is in our soul where all of our old ways of thinking must be cleansed by the word of God, and our minds renewed. It is in our soul where the hurt feelings of our past reside. As we process these feelings, and surrender them to the Lord, we are healed and cleansed. This is the process of a progressive sanctification in the lives of believers.

It is in our spirit that we are born again as Jesus reveals in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Our soul is where we connect with people on earth. Our spirit is where we connect with God. When we were dead in trespasses and sins, we had no connection with God. But when we were born again in our spirit, we are now able to connect with Him. We now have an awareness of the spiritual that we never had before.

He continues in the next paragraph.

8. But this is not the only resurrection, there remains a resurrection of the body also. Whoso riseth again in soul, riseth again in body to his blessedness. For in soul all do not rise again; in body all are to rise again. In soul, I say, all do not rise again; but they that believe and, obey; for, “They that shall hear shall live.” But as the Apostle says, “All men have not faith.” (2

Thessalonians 3:2) If then all men have not faith, all men do not rise again in soul. When thy hour of the resurrection of the body shall come, all shall rise again; be they good or bad, all shall rise again. But whoso first riseth again in soul, to his blessedness riseth again in body; whoso doth not first rise again in soul, riseth again in body to his curse. Whoso riseth again in soul, riseth again in body unto life; whoso riseth not again in soul, riseth again in body unto punishment. Seeing then that the Lord hath impressed upon us this resurrection of souls, unto which we ought all to hasten, and to labour that we may live therein, and living persevere even unto the end, it remained for Him to impress upon us the resurrection of bodies also, which is to be at the end of the world. Now hear how He hath impressed this too.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “But this is not the only resurrection, there remains a resurrection of the body also. Whoso riseth again in soul, riseth again in body to his blessedness. For in soul all do not rise again; in body all are to rise again. In soul, I say, all do not rise again; but they that believe and, obey; for, “They that shall hear shall live.” But as the Apostle says, “All men have not faith.” (2 Thessalonians 3:2)”

He refers to **2 Thessalonians 3 (KJV):2** And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.

He continues, “If then all men have not faith, all men do not rise again in soul. When thy hour of the resurrection of the body shall come, all shall rise again; be they good or bad, all shall rise again. But whoso first riseth again in soul, to his blessedness riseth again in body; whoso doth not first rise again in soul, riseth again in body to his curse. Whoso riseth again in soul, riseth again in body unto life; whoso riseth not again in soul, riseth again in body unto punishment.”

Augustine speaks of the spiritual resurrection that happens when we believe. This is spoken of in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):4** But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

That is, when we accepted Christ, He quickened us, or made us alive in our spirit. So we were born again of the Spirit of God. This resurrection is also spoken of in **Colossians 3 (KJV):1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Christ is now the life of our spirits that have been born again. There is also a resurrection of the body as Jesus taught in **Matthew 22 (KJV):29** Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. 31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the

dead, but of the living.

Augustine thought that one rose in soul when they were born again. The soul will have an awareness of the spiritual when one is born again by the Spirit of God. But the new life of the Spirit is in our spirit when we are born of the Spirit of God.

Augustine concludes, “Seeing then that the Lord hath impressed upon us this resurrection of souls, unto which we ought all to hasten, and to labour that we may live therein, and living persevere even unto the end, it remained for Him to impress upon us the resurrection of bodies also, which is to be at the end of the world. Now hear how He hath impressed this too.”

Augustine speaks in his writing as if there were only one judgment “at the end of the world”. But Jesus spoke of the resurrection of the just in **Luke 14 (KJV):14** And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

This is the first resurrection as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

And after the thousand years Satan will be loosed as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):7** And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

After this will be the judgment of the wicked dead, who are judged according to their works, as we continue to read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3**

#### **On the Creed: A Sermon to the Catechumens, Chapter 15, paragraph 17, page 375**

17. We believe also “the resurrection of the flesh,” which went before in Christ: that the body too may have hope of that which went before in its Head. The Head of the Church, Christ:



the Church, the body of Christ. Our Head is risen, ascended into heaven: where the Head, there also the members. In what way the resurrection of the flesh? Lest any should chance to think it like as Lazarus's resurrection, that thou mayest know it to be not so, it is added, "Into life everlasting." God regenerate you! God preserve and keep you! God bring you safe unto Himself, Who is the Life Everlasting. Amen.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "We believe also "the resurrection of the flesh," which went before in Christ: that the body too may have hope of that which went before in its Head. The Head of the Church, Christ: the Church, the body of Christ. Our Head is risen, ascended into heaven: where the Head, there also the members."

He refers to **Colossians 1 (KJV):18** And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

And to **Colossians 1 (KJV):24** Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

And to **Acts 1 (KJV):9** And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

And to **Colossians 3 (KJV):1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

He continues, "In what way the resurrection of the flesh? Lest any should chance to think it like as Lazarus's resurrection, that thou mayest know it to be not so, it is added, "Into life everlasting." God regenerate you! God preserve and keep you! God bring you safe unto Himself, Who is the Life Everlasting. Amen."

And this is according to **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

When we see Him, we will be like Him as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

And at the resurrection our body will be like the body of Jesus as we read in **Philippians 3 (KJV):21** Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

## Augustine's Two Resurrections

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine

Tractate XIX. Chapter V. 19–30, paragraphs 7-10, page 124-126

7. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whoso heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but is passed," not is passing now, but is already passed, "from death into life." And mark this, "Whoso heareth my word, and"—He

says not, believeth me, but—"believeth Him that sent me." Let him hear the word of the Son, that he may believe the Father. Why heareth Thy word, and yet believeth another? When we hear any one's word, is it not him that utters the word we believe? Is it not to him who speaks we lend our faith? What, then, did He mean, saying, "Whoso heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me," if it be not this, because "His word is in me"? And what is "heareth my word," but "heareth me"? So, too, "believeth Him that sent me," because, believing Him, he believeth His word; but again, believing His word, he believeth me, because I am the Word of the Father. There is therefore peace in the Scriptures, and all things duly disposed, and in no way clashing. Cast away, then, contention from thy heart; understand the harmony of the Scriptures. Dost thou think that the Truth should speak things contrary to itself?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whoso heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but is passed,' not is passing now, but is already passed, 'from death into life.'"

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

He continues, "And mark this, 'Whoso heareth my word, and'—He says not, believeth me, but—"believeth Him that sent me." Let him hear the word of the Son, that he may believe the Father. Why heareth Thy word, and yet believeth another? When we hear any one's word, is it not him that utters the word we believe? Is it not to him who speaks we lend our faith? What, then, did He mean, saying, "Whoso heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me," if it be not this, because "His word is in me"? And what is "heareth my word," but "heareth me"? So, too, "believeth Him that sent me," because, believing Him, he believeth His word; but again, believing His word, he believeth me, because I am the Word of the Father. There is therefore peace in the Scriptures, and all things duly disposed, and in no way clashing. Cast away, then, contention from thy heart; understand the harmony of the Scriptures. Dost thou think that the Truth should speak things contrary to itself?"

He continues in the next paragraph.

8. "Whoso heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but is passed from death unto life." You remember what we laid down above, that "as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, so also the Son quickeneth whom He will." He is beginning already to reveal Himself; and behold, even now, the dead are rising. For "whoso heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and will not come into judgment." Prove that he has risen again. "But is passed," saith He "from death unto life." He that is passed from death unto life, has surely without any doubt risen again. For he could not pass from death to life, unless he were first in death and not in life; but when he will have passed, he will be in life, and not in death. He was therefore dead, and is alive again; he was lost, but is found. (Luke 15:32) Hence a resurrection does take place now, and men pass from a death to a life; from the death of infidelity to the life of faith; from the death of falsehood to the life of truth; from the death of iniquity to the life of righteousness. There is, therefore, that which is a resurrection of the dead.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, ““Whoso heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but is passed from death unto life.””

He refers again to **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

He continues, “You remember what we laid down above, that “as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, so also the Son quickeneth whom He will.””

He refers in context to **John 5 (KJV):21** For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. 22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23 That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

He continues, “He is beginning already to reveal Himself; and behold, even now, the dead are rising. For “whoso heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and will not come into judgment.” Prove that he has risen again. “But is passed,” saith He “from death unto life.” He that is passed from death unto life, has surely without any doubt risen again. For he could not pass from death to life, unless he were first in death and not in life; but when he will have passed, he will be in life, and not in death. He was therefore dead, and is alive again; he was lost, but is found. (Luke 15:32)”

He refers, speaking of the prodigal son, to **Luke 15 (KJV):32** It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

He concludes, “Hence a resurrection does take place now, and men pass from a death to a life; from the death of infidelity to the life of faith; from the death of falsehood to the life of truth; from the death of iniquity to the life of righteousness. There is, therefore, that which is a resurrection of the dead.”

And this agrees with the Scriptures as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

And in **Colossians 2 (NASB):13** When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions...

He continues in the next paragraph.

9. May He open the same more fully, and dawn upon us as He begins to do! “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is.” We did look for a resurrection of the dead in the end, for so we have believed; yea, not we looked, but are manifestly bound to look for it: for it is not a false thing we believe, when we believe that the dead will rise in the end. When the Lord Jesus, then, was willing to make known to us a resurrection of the dead before the resurrection of the dead, it is not as that of Lazarus, (John 11:43) or of the widow’s son,

(Luke 7:14) or of the ruler of the synagogue's daughter, (Matthew 5:41) who were raised to die again (for in their case there was a resurrection of the dead before the resurrection of the dead); but, as He says here, "hath," says He, "eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but is passed from death into life." To what life? To life eternal. Not, then, as the body of Lazarus: for he indeed passed from the death of the tomb to the life of men, but not to life eternal, seeing he was to die again; whereas the dead, that are to rise again at the end of the world, will pass to eternal life. When our Lord Jesus Christ, then, our heavenly Master, the Word of the Father, and the Truth, was willing to represent to us a resurrection of the dead to eternal life before the resurrection of the dead to eternal life, "The hour cometh," saith He. Doubtless thou, imbued with a faith of the resurrection of the flesh, didst look for the hour of the end of the world, which, that thou shouldst not look for here, He added, "and now is." Therefore He saith not this, "The hour cometh," of that last hour, when "at the command and the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet Christ in the air: and so shall we be ever with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4:15-16) That hour will come, but is not now. But consider what this hour is: "The hour cometh, and now is." What happens in that hour? What, but a resurrection of the dead? And what kind of resurrection? Such that they who rise live for ever. This will be also in the last hour.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, "May He open the same more fully, and dawn upon us as He begins to do! "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is." We did look for a resurrection of the dead in the end, for so we have believed; yea, not we looked, but are manifestly bound to look for it: for it is not a false thing we believe, when we believe that the dead will rise in the end. When the Lord Jesus, then, was willing to make known to us a resurrection of the dead before the resurrection of the dead, it is not as that of Lazarus, (John 11:43) or of the widow's son, (Luke 7:14) or of the ruler of the synagogue's daughter, (Matthew 5:41) who were raised to die again (for in their case there was a resurrection of the dead before the resurrection of the dead);"

He refers to **John 11 (KJV):43** And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

And in context to **Luke 7 (KJV):11** And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. 12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. 13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. 14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. 15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

And in context to **Matthew 5 (KJV):22** And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, 23 And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live. 24 And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

And in **Matthew 5 (KJV):35** While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? 36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. 37 And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. 38 And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. 39 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. 40 And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. 41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. 42 And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

Augustine continues, “but, as He says here, “hath,” says He, “eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but is passed from death into life.” To what life? To life eternal. Not, then, as the body of Lazarus: for he indeed passed from the death of the tomb to the life of men, but not to life eternal, seeing he was to die again; whereas the dead, that are to rise again at the end of the world, will pass to eternal life.”

The life that we receive when we are born again, and pass from death to life, is from the Spirit of God, and is eternal life. This is what we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

It is in our spirit where we are born again, being born of the Spirit, for whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

And the law of the Spirit of life has set us free from the law of sin and death in our flesh as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Augustine continues, “When our Lord Jesus Christ, then, our heavenly Master, the Word of the Father, and the Truth, was willing to represent to us a resurrection of the dead to eternal life before the resurrection of the dead to eternal life, “The hour cometh,” saith He. Doubtless thou, imbued with a faith of the resurrection of the flesh, didst look for the hour of the end of the world, which, that thou shouldst not look for here, He added, “and now is.” Therefore He saith not this, “The hour cometh,” of that last hour, when “at the command and the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet Christ in the air: and so shall we be ever with the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 4:15-16)”

He refers in context to **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):15** For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.



He continues, “That hour will come, but is not now. But consider what this hour is: “The hour cometh, and now is.” What happens in that hour? What, but a resurrection of the dead? And what kind of resurrection? Such that they who rise live for ever. This will be also in the last hour.”

He continues in the next paragraph.

10. What then? How do we understand these two resurrections? Do we, it may be, understand that they who rise now will not rise then; that the resurrection of some is now, of some others then? It is not so. For we have risen in this resurrection, if we have rightly believed; and we ourselves, who have already risen, are looking for another resurrection in the end. Moreover, both now are we risen to eternal life, if we perseveringly continue in the same faith; and then, too, we shall rise to eternal life, when we shall be made equal with the angels. (Luke 20:36) But let Himself distinguish and open up what we have made bold to speak; how there happens to be a resurrection before a resurrection, not of different but of the same persons; nor like that of Lazarus, but into eternal life. He will open it clearly. Hear ye the Master, while dawning upon us, and as our Sun gliding in upon our hearts; not such as the eyes of flesh desire to look upon, but on whom the eyes of the heart fervently long to be opened. To Him, then, let us give ear: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead”—you see that a resurrection is asserted—“shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.” Why hath He added, “they that hear shall live”? Why, could they hear unless they lived? It would have been enough, then, to say, “The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.” We should immediately understand them to be living, since they could not hear unless they lived. No, saith He, not because they live they hear; but by hearing they come to life again: “Shall hear, and they that hear shall live.” What, then, is “shall hear,” but “shall obey”? For, as to the hearing of the ear, not all who hear shall live. Many, indeed, hear and do not believe; by hearing and not believing, they obey not; by not obeying, they live not. And so here, they that “shall hear” are they that “shall obey.” They that obey, then, shall live: let them be sure and certain of it, shall live. Christ, the Word of God, is preached to us; the Son of God, by whom all things were made, who, for the dispensation’s sake, surely took flesh, was born of a virgin, was an infant in the flesh, a young man in the flesh, suffering in the flesh, dying in the flesh, rising again in the flesh, ascending in the flesh, promising a resurrection to the flesh, promising a resurrection to the mind—to the mind before the flesh, to the flesh after the mind. Whoso heareth and obeyeth, shall live; whoso heareth and obeyeth not, that is, heareth and despiseth, heareth and believeth not, shall not live. Why shall not live? Because he heareth not. What is “heareth not”? Obeyeth not. Thus, then, “they that hear shall live.”

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “What then? How do we understand these two resurrections? Do we, it may be, understand that they who rise now will not rise then; that the resurrection of some is now, of some others then? It is not so. For we have risen in this resurrection, if we have rightly believed; and we ourselves, who have already risen, are looking for another resurrection in the end. Moreover, both now are we risen to eternal life, if we perseveringly continue in the same faith; and then, too, we shall rise to eternal life, when we shall be made equal with the angels. (Luke 20:36)”

He refers to **Luke 20 (KJV):36** Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

And to **Matthew 10 (KJV):22** And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

So Augustine says that “**now are we risen to eternal life, if we perseveringly continue in the same faith**”, and “**then, too, we shall rise to eternal life, when we shall be made equal with the angels.**” That is, then, at the resurrection of our bodies. These are the two resurrections he is speaking of. And this is according to scripture, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):5** even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...

And in **Colossians 2 (KJV):12** having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

This was a spiritual resurrection. When we believed in Jesus Christ, our spirit passed from death to life, being made alive to God by being born of the Spirit of God.

But Augustine makes it sound as if we must persevere and keep faith, or else we could lose the life we have been given when we are born again.

Augustine continues, “But let Himself distinguish and open up what we have made bold to speak; how there happens to be a resurrection before a resurrection, not of different but of the same persons; nor like that of Lazarus, but into eternal life. He will open it clearly. Hear ye the Master, while dawning upon us, and as our Sun gliding in upon our hearts; not such as the eyes of flesh desire to look upon, but on whom the eyes of the heart fervently long to be opened. To Him, then, let us give ear: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead”—you see that a resurrection is asserted—“shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.””

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):25** Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

He continues, as he explains, “Why hath He added, “they that hear shall live”? Why, could they hear unless they lived? It would have been enough, then, to say, “The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.” We should immediately understand them to be living, since they could not hear unless they lived. No, saith He, not because they live they hear; but by hearing they come to life again: “Shall hear, and they that hear shall live.” What, then, is “shall hear,” but “shall obey”? For, as to the hearing of the ear, not all who hear shall live. Many, indeed, hear and do not believe; by hearing and not believing, they obey not; by not obeying, they live not. And so here, they that “shall hear” are they that “shall obey.” They that obey, then, shall live: let them be sure and certain of it, shall live.”

Augustine uses the word “obey” to explain how those who hear come to life again. This seems to be consistent with what he said before above, “**now are we risen to eternal life, if we perseveringly continue in the same faith**”. He implies that we will keep eternal life if we obey, that is, perseveringly continue in the same faith. If we do not obey, or perseveringly continue in the same faith, we will lose eternal life. He did not understand that the birth of Spirit of God takes place in our spirit, and not in our soul, which is changeable.

He continues, “Christ, the Word of God, is preached to us; the Son of God, by whom all

things were made, who, for the dispensation's sake, surely took flesh, was born of a virgin, was an infant in the flesh, a young man in the flesh, suffering in the flesh, dying in the flesh, rising again in the flesh, ascending in the flesh, promising a resurrection to the flesh, promising a resurrection to the mind—to the mind before the flesh, to the flesh after the mind. Whoso heareth and obeyeth, shall live; whoso heareth and obeyeth not, that is, heareth and despiseth, heareth and believeth not, shall not live. Why shall not live? Because he heareth not. What is “heareth not”? Obeyeth not. Thus, then, “they that hear shall live.””

But a better word than obey would be receive. We could then say, those who hear and receive, have eternal life. This is what we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Once we have been born of God, we have eternal life. Once we have been born again, we are not to live frivolously. We must obey the Lord, and walk in the light of the word of God. In doing so, we will prove what the will of God is as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We must examine ourselves as Paul warns in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

In doing so we will assure ourselves that we have eternal life as the apostle John reveals in **1 John 5 (KJV):11** And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

So Augustine's two resurrections are a resurrection to the mind, and a resurrection to the flesh. The resurrection to the mind is a resurrection to the soul in his thinking. He did not understand the difference between soul and spirit. We will discuss his thinking about the soul more in the chapter on **The Soul**.

## Judgment Seat of Christ

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XXII. Chapter V. 24–30, paragraphs 5-7, page 146-147**

5. The Lord our God then reveals it, and by His Scriptures puts us in mind how it may be understood when judgment is spoken of. I exhort you, therefore, to give attention. Sometimes judgment means punishment, sometimes it means discrimination. According to that mode of speech in which judgment means discrimination, “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that” a man “may there receive what things he has done in the body, whether it be good or ill.” For this same is a discrimination, to distribute good things to the good, evil things

to the evil. For if judgment were always to be taken in a bad sense, the psalm would not say, "Judge me, O God." Perhaps some one is surprised when he hears one say, "Judge me, O God." For man is wont to say, "Forgive me, O God;" "Spare me, O God." Who is it that says, "Judge me, O God"? Sometimes in the psalm this very verse even is placed in the pause, to be given out by the reader and responded by the people. Does it not perhaps strike some man's heart so much that he is afraid to sing and to say to God, "Judge me, O God"? And yet the people sing it with confidence, and do not imagine that they wish an evil thing in that which they have learned from the divine word; even if they do not well understand it, they believe that what they sing is something good. And yet even the psalm itself has not left a man without an insight into the meaning of it. For, going on, it shows in the words that follow what kind of judgment it spoke of; that it is not one of condemnation, but of discrimination. For saith it, "Judge me, O God." What means "Judge me, O God, and discern my cause from an unholy nation"? According to this judgment of discerning, then, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." But again, according to the judgment of condemnation, "Whoso heareth my words," saith He, "and believeth Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and shall not come into judgment, but makes a passage from death to life." What is "shall not come into judgment?" Shall not come into condemnation. Let us prove from the Scriptures that judgment is put where punishment is understood; although also in this very passage, a little further on, you will hear the same term judgment put for nothing else than for condemnation and punishment. Yet the apostle says in a certain place, writing to those who abused the body, what the faithful among you know; and because they abused it, they were chastised by the scourge of the Lord. For he says to them, "Many among you are weak and sickly, and deeply sleep." For many therefore even died. And he went on: "For if we judged ourselves, we should not be judged by the Lord;" that is, if we reprov'd ourselves, we should not be reprov'd by the Lord. "But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." (1 Corinthians 11:30-32) There are therefore those who are judged here according to punishment, that they may be spared there; there are those who are spared here, that they may be the more abundantly tormented there; and there are those to whom the very punishments are meted out without the scourge of punishment, if they be not corrected by the scourge of God; that, since here they have despised the Father that scourgeth, they may there feel the Judge that punisheth. Therefore there is a judgment into which God, that is, the Son of God, will in the end send the devil and his angels, and all the unbelieving and ungodly with him. To this judgment, he who, now believing, passes from death unto life, shall not come.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "The Lord our God then reveals it, and by His Scriptures puts us in mind how it may be understood when judgment is spoken of. I exhort you, therefore, to give attention. Sometimes judgment means punishment, sometimes it means discrimination. According to that mode of speech in which judgment means discrimination, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that" a man "may there receive what things he has done in the body, whether it be good or ill.""

He refers in context to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):8** We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. **9** Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. **10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to

that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. 11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

He continues, “**For this same is a discrimination, to distribute good things to the good, evil things to the evil.** For if judgment were always to be taken in a bad sense, the psalm would not say, “Judge me, O God.” Perhaps some one is surprised when he hears one say, “Judge me, O God.” For man is wont to say, “Forgive me, O God;” “Spare me, O God.” Who is it that says, “Judge me, O God?””

He refers to **Psalm 35 (KJV):24** Judge me, O Lord my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me.

And to **Psalm 43 (KJV):1** Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.

And to **Psalm 54 (KJV):1** Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.

Augustine is pointing out that judgment does not always mean condemnation. It also can mean “discrimination”. That is, rewards will go to the righteous for good things done in the body, but not condemnation.

He continues, “Sometimes in the Psalm this very verse even is placed in the pause, to be given out by the reader and responded by the people. Does it not perhaps strike some man’s heart so much that he is afraid to sing and to say to God, “Judge me, O God”? And yet the people sing it with confidence, and do not imagine that they wish an evil thing in that which they have learned from the divine word; even if they do not well understand it, they believe that what they sing is something good. And yet even the Psalm itself has not left a man without an insight into the meaning of it. For, going on, it shows in the words that follow what kind of judgment it spoke of; that it is not one of condemnation, but of discrimination. For saith it, “Judge me, O God.” What means “Judge me, O God, and discern my cause from an unholy nation”? According to this judgment of discerning, then, “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.””

He refers again to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):8** We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. 9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

The judgment seat of Christ is for believers. Every believer will receive rewards for the things done in his or her body. This is what is referred to in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):13** Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

If we have done good, we will receive a reward. If we have not done good, we will receive no reward, but we will still be saved, and be with the Lord in heaven.

He continues, “But again, according to the judgment of condemnation, “Whoso heareth my words,” saith He, “and believeth Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and shall not come into judgment, but makes a passage from death to life.” What is “shall not come into judgment?” Shall not come into condemnation. Let us prove from the Scriptures that judgment is put where



punishment is understood; although also in this very passage, a little further on, you will hear the same term judgment put for nothing else than for condemnation and punishment. Yet the apostle says in a certain place, writing to those who abused the body, what the faithful among you know; and because they abused it, they were chastised by the scourge of the Lord. For he says to them, “Many among you are weak and sickly, and deeply sleep.” For many therefore even died. And he went on: “For if we judged ourselves, we should not be judged by the Lord;” that is, if we reprov’d ourselves, we should not be reprov’d by the Lord. “But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.” (1 Corinthians 11:30-32)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):30** For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

This refers to the discipline of the Lord which can include physical death. But it does not include the loss of one’s salvation, for we read in verse 32 above, “we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world”.

He continues, “There are therefore those who are judged here according to punishment, that they may be spared there; there are those who are spared here, that they may be the more abundantly tormented there; and there are those to whom the very punishments are meted out without the scourge of punishment, if they be not corrected by the scourge of God; that, since here they have despised the Father that scourgeth, they may there feel the Judge that punisheth. Therefore there is a judgment into which God, that is, the Son of God, will in the end send the devil and his angels, and all the unbelieving and ungodly with him. To this judgment, he who, now believing, passes from death unto life, shall not come.”

And Augustine rightly explains here that the believing one “passes from death unto life” and “shall not come” into judgment with the wicked. But Augustine qualifies his statement in the next paragraph, when he will say, “**Christ having enlightened thee, now believing, immediately thou makest a passage from death to life: abide in that to which thou hast passed, and thou shalt not come into judgment.**”

Let us continue to read his next paragraph.

6. For, lest thou shouldest think that by believing thou art not to die according to the flesh, or lest, understanding it carnally, thou shouldest say to thyself, “My Lord has said to me, Whoso heareth my words, and believeth Him that sent me, is passed from death to life: I then have believed, I am not to die;” be assured that thou shalt pay that penalty, death, which thou owest by the punishment of Adam. For he, in whom we all then were, received this sentence, “Thou shalt surely die;” (Genesis 2:17) nor can the divine sentence be made void. But after thou hast paid the death of the old man, thou shalt be received into the eternal life of the new man, and shalt pass from death to life. Meanwhile, make the transition of life now. What is thy life? Faith: “The just doth live by faith.” (Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17) The unbelievers, what of them? They are dead. Among such dead was he, in the body, of whom the Lord says, “Let the dead bury their dead.” (Matthew 8:22) So, then, even in this life there are dead, and there are living; all live in a sense. Who are dead? They who have not believed. Who are living? They who have believed. What is said to the dead by the apostle? “Arise, thou that sleepest.” But,

quoth an objector, he said sleep, not death. Hear what follows: “Arise, thou that sleepest, and come forth from the dead.” And as if the sleeper said, Whither shall I go? “And Christ shall give thee light.” (Ephesians 5:14) **Christ having enlightened thee, now believing, immediately thou makest a passage from death to life: abide in that to which thou hast passed, and thou shalt not come into judgment.**

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “For, lest thou shouldest think that by believing thou art not to die according to the flesh, or lest, understanding it carnally, thou shouldest say to thyself, “My Lord has said to me, Whoso heareth my words, and believeth Him that sent me, is passed from death to life: I then have believed, I am not to die;” be assured that thou shalt pay that penalty, death, which thou owest by the punishment of Adam. For he, in whom we all then were, received this sentence, “Thou shalt surely die;” (Genesis 2:17) nor can the divine sentence be made void.”

He refers to **Genesis 2 (KJV):17** But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

And to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

He continues, “But after thou hast paid the death of the old man, thou shalt be received into the eternal life of the new man, and shalt pass from death to life. Mean while, make the transition of life now. What is thy life? Faith: “The just doth live by faith.” (Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17)”

He refers to **Habakkuk 2 (KJV):4** Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

And to **Romans 1 (KJV):17** For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

And to **Galatians 3 (KJV):11** But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

And to **Hebrews 10 (KJV):38** Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

But faith is not life. Christ is our life by the faith of the Son of God as in **Galatians 2 (KJV):20** I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

He continues, “The unbelievers, what of them? They are dead. Among such dead was he, in the body, of whom the Lord says, “Let the dead bury their dead.” (Matthew 8:22)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 8 (KJV):21** And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. **22** But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

He continues, “So, then, even in this life there are dead, and there are living; all live in a sense. Who are dead? They who have not believed.”

Yes, they are spiritually dead as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, **2** in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. **3** Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh,

indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

He continues, “Who are living? They who have believed.”

This is according to Scripture as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

He continues, “What is said to the dead by the apostle? “Arise, thou that sleepest.””

He refers to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):14** Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

He concludes “But, quoth an objector, he said sleep, not death. Hear what follows: “Arise, thou that sleepest, and come forth from the dead.” And as if the sleeper said, Whither shall I go? “And Christ shall give thee light.” (Ephesians 5:14) **Christ having enlightened thee, now believing, immediately thou makest a passage from death to life: abide in that to which thou hast passed, and thou shalt not come into judgment.”**

7. Himself explains that already, and goes on, “Verily, verily, I say unto you.” In case, because He said “is passed from death to life,” we should understand this of the future resurrection, and willing to show that he who believes is passed, and that to pass from death to life is to pass from unbelief to faith, from injustice to justice, from pride to humility, from hatred to charity, He saith now, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is.” What more evident? “And now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” We have already spoken of these dead. What think we, my brethren? Are there no dead in this crowd that hear me? They who believe and act according to the true faith do live, and are not dead. But they who either do not believe, or believe as the devils believe, trembling. (James 2:19) and living wickedly, confessing the Son of God, and without charity, must rather be esteemed dead. This hour, however, is still passing. For the hour of which the Lord spoke will not be an hour of the twelve hours of a day. From the time when He spoke even to the present, and even to the end of the world, the same one hour is passing; of which hour John saith in his epistle, “Little children, it is the last hour.” (1 John 2:18) Therefore, is now. Whoso is alive, let him live; whoso was dead, let him live; let him hear the voice of the Son of God, who lay dead; let him arise and live. The Lord cried out at the sepulchre of Lazarus, and he that was four days dead arose. He who stank in the grave came forth into the air. He was buried, a stone was laid over him: the voice of the Saviour burst asunder the hardness of the stone; and thy heart is so hard, that Divine Voice does not yet break it! Rise in thy heart; go forth from thy tomb. For thou wast lying dead in thy heart as in a tomb, and pressed down by the weight of evil habit as by a stone. Rise, and go forth. What is Rise, and go forth? Believe and confess. For he that has believed has risen; he that confesses is gone forth. Why said we that he who confesses is gone forth? Because he was hid before confessing; but when he does confess, he goes forth from darkness to light. And after he has confessed, what is said to the servants? What was said beside the corpse of Lazarus? “Loose him, and let him go.” How? As it was said to His servants the apostles, “What things ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 18:18)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he then says, “Himself explains that already, and

goes on, “Verily, verily, I say unto you.” In case, because He said “is passed from death to life,” we should understand this of the future resurrection, and willing to show that he who believes is passed, and that to pass from death to life is to pass from unbelief to faith, from injustice to justice, from pride to humility, from hatred to charity, He saith now, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is.””

He refers in context to **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. 26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; 27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. 28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

The context in verses 28-29 refers to the resurrection of life, and the resurrection of damnation. That is, they refer to the bodily resurrection of the dead. It is also true that in verse 24, speaking of the voice of the Son of God, that “they that hear shall live”, and be spiritually resurrected. This resurrection is also spoken of in **Colossians 2 (KJV):13** When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions...

And Jesus also spoke as in **John 4 (KJV):23** But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

When we are born again, we are made alive to God in our spirit, as Jesus explains in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

After this new birth, we are then able to worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

Augustine continues, “What more evident? “And now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.” We have already spoken of these dead. What think we, my brethren? Are there no dead in this crowd that hear me? They who believe and act according to the true faith do live, and are not dead. But they who either do not believe, or believe as the devils believe, trembling. (James 2:19) and living wickedly, confessing the Son of God, and without charity, must rather be esteemed dead.”

He is speaking of those who are spiritually dead to God, as he refers in context to **James 2 (KJV):19** Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. 24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

Abraham offered Isaac in **Genesis 22 (KJV):1** And it came to pass after these things, that

God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. 2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

But Abraham was justified by faith, before he offered Isaac, as we read in **Genesis 15 (KJV)**: 3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. 4 And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. 5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6 And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Yet Abraham's faith was "tested" or proven when he obeyed the Lord, as we read in **Genesis 22 (KJV)**: 6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. 7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? 8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. 9 And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. 11 And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. 12 And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. 13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.

Jehovahjireh is Hebrew, meaning "the Lord provides".

So the works follow true faith as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV)**: 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Abraham was not saved by his works, but he proved he was righteous by his works.

Augustine continues, "This hour, however, is still passing. For the hour of which the Lord spoke will not be an hour of the twelve hours of a day. From the time when He spoke even to the present, and even to the end of the world, the same one hour is passing; of which hour John saith in his epistle, "Little children, it is the last hour." (1 John 2:18)"

He refers to **1 John 2 (KJV)**: 18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

The word "time" in the Greek is **ῥῶπα** (pronounced hō'-rā), apparently a primary word; an "hour" (literally or figuratively):—day, hour, instant, season, × short, (even-)tide, (high) time. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5610.**

And so we read in **1 John 2 (NASB)**: 18 Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard



that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.

He concludes, “Therefore, is now. Whoso is alive, let him live; whoso was dead, let him live; let him hear the voice of the Son of God, who lay dead; let him arise and live. The Lord cried out at the sepulchre of Lazarus, and he that was four days dead arose. He who stank in the grave came forth into the air. He was buried, a stone was laid over him: the voice of the Saviour burst asunder the hardness of the stone; and thy heart is so hard, that Divine Voice does not yet break it! Rise in thy heart; go forth from thy tomb. For thou wast lying dead in thy heart as in a tomb, and pressed down by the weight of evil habit as by a stone. Rise, and go forth. What is Rise, and go forth? Believe and confess. For he that has believed has risen; he that confesses is gone forth. Why said we that he who confesses is gone forth? Because he was hid before confessing; but when he does confess, he goes forth from darkness to light. And after he has confessed, what is said to the servants? What was said beside the corpse of Lazarus? “Loose him, and let him go.” How? As it was said to His servants the apostles, “What things ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 18:18)”

He refers to **Matthew 18 (KJV):18** Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

And to **John 11 (KJV):39** Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. 40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? 41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. 43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

We hear the Gospel clearly here through Augustine. But let us also be clear. The Judgment Seat of Christ, which we must all appear before, refers to the righteous only. It is a judgment of discrimination, and not of condemnation. All believers will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to receive for the works they have done in their body, whether good or bad. If we have done good, we will receive a reward. If we have done bad, we will not receive any rewards but we will still be saved.

## The Great Tribulation

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine  
On the Psalms, Psalm LXXVIII, paragraph 11, page 371**

11. For He that “did burst asunder the sea and made them go through, did confine the waters as it were in bottles” (ver. 13), in order that the water might stand up first as if it were shut in, is able by His grace to restrain the flowing and ebbing tides of carnal desires, when we

renounce this world, so that all sins having been thoroughly washed away, as if they were enemies, the people of the faithful may be made to pass through by means of the Sacrament of Baptism. He that “led them home in the cloud of the day, and in the whole of the night in the illumination of fire” (ver. 14), is able also spiritually to direct goings if faith crieth to Him, “Direct Thou my goings after Thy word.” (Psalm 119:133) Of Whom in another place (Proverbs 4:27, Septuagint) is said, “For Himself shall make thy courses right, and shall prolong thy goings in peace” through Jesus Christ our Lord, whose Sacrament in this world, as it were in the day, is manifest in the flesh, as if in a cloud; but in the Judgment it will be manifest like as in a terror by night; for then there will be a great tribulation of the world like as it were fire, and it shall shine for the just and shall burn for the unjust. “He that burst asunder the rock in the desert, and gave them water as in a great deep” (ver. 15); “and brought out water from the rock, and brought down waters like rivers” (ver. 16), is surely able upon thirsty faith to pour the gift of the Holy Spirit (the which gift the performance of that thing did spiritually signify), to pour, I say, from the Spiritual Rock that followed, which is Christ: who did stand and cry, “If any is athirst, let him come to Me:” (John 7:37) and, “he that shall have drunk of the water which I shall give, rivers of living water shall flow out of his bosom.” (John 4:14) For this He spake, as is read in the Gospel, (John 7:39) to the Spirit, which they were to receive that believed in Him, unto whom like the rod drew near the wood of the Passion, in order that there might flow forth grace for believers.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “For He that “did burst asunder the sea and made them go through, did confine the waters as it were in bottles” (ver. 13), in order that the water might stand up first as if it were shut in, is able by His grace to restrain the flowing and ebbing tides of carnal desires, when we renounce this world, so that all sins having been thoroughly washed away, as if they were enemies, the people of the faithful may be made to pass through by means of the Sacrament of Baptism.”

He refers to **Psalm 78 (Septuagint):13** He clave the sea, and led them through: he made the waters to stand as in a bottle. 14 And he guided them with a cloud by day, and all the night with a light of fire.

And to **Psalm 78 (KJV):13** He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap. 14 In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.

We have victory over the “carnal desires” of our flesh when we receive Jesus by faith. It is not by our performing any ritual that we are born again. It is by simple faith in Jesus that the Spirit of God gives birth to our spirit. It is then that we have victory over our flesh as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

He continues, “He that “led them home in the cloud of the day, and in the whole of the night in the illumination of fire” (ver. 14), is able also spiritually to direct goings if faith crieth to Him, “Direct Thou my goings after Thy word.” (Psalm 119:133)”

He refers to **Psalm 119 (KJV):133** Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

He continues, “Of Whom in another place (Proverbs 4:27, Septuagint) is said, “For Himself shall make thy courses right, and shall prolong thy goings in peace” through Jesus

Christ our Lord, whose Sacrament in this world, as it were in the day, is manifest in the flesh, as if in a cloud; but in the Judgment it will be manifest like as in a terror by night;”

He refers to **Proverbs 4 (Septuagint):27** Turn not aside to the right hand nor to the left, but turn away thy foot from an evil way: [for God knows the ways on the right hand, but those on the left are crooked:] and he will make thy ways straight, and will guide thy steps in peace.

And to **Proverbs 4 (KJV):27** Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.

He continues, “for then there will be a great tribulation of the world like as it were fire, and it shall shine for the just and shall burn for the unjust.”

He refers to **Matthew 24 (KJV):21** For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

He continues, ““He that burst asunder the rock in the desert, and gave them water as in a great deep” (ver. 15); “and brought out water from the rock, and brought down waters like rivers” (ver. 16), is surely able upon thirsty faith to pour the gift of the Holy Spirit (the which gift the performance of that thing did spiritually signify), to pour, I say, from the Spiritual Rock that followed, which is Christ: who did stand and cry, “If any is athirst, let him come to Me:” (John 7:37) and, “he that shall have drunk of the water which I shall give, rivers of living water shall flow out of his bosom.” (John 4:14)”

He refers to **Psalms 78 (KJV):15** He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. 16 He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.

And to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):4** And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

And to **John 7 (KJV):37** In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

And to **John 4 (KJV):14** But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

He continues, “For this He spake, as is read in the Gospel, (John 7:39) to the Spirit, which they were to receive that believed in Him, unto whom like the rod drew near the wood of the Passion, in order that there might flow forth grace for believers.”

He refers in context to **John 7 (KJV):38** He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Augustine believed in the great tribulation, though his understanding of the timing of this event is very limited.

## The Last Judgment

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine  
On the Psalms, Psalm XXV, paragraph 8, page 62

8. “Gracious and upright is the Lord” (ver. 8). The Lord is gracious, since even sinners and the ungodly He so pitied, as to forgive all that is past; but the Lord is upright too, who after the mercy of vocation and pardon, which is of grace without merit, will require merits meet for the last judgment. “Wherefore He will establish a law for them that fail in the way.” For He hath first bestowed mercy to bring them into the way.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Gracious and upright is the Lord” (ver. 8).

He refers in context to **Psalm 24 (Douay Rheims):8** The Lord is sweet and righteous: therefore he will give a law to sinners in the way. 9 He will guide the mild in judgment: he will teach the meek his ways.

And to **Psalm 25 (Septuagint):8** Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he instruct sinners in the way. 9 The meek will he guide in judgment: the meek will he teach his ways.

And to **Psalm 25 (KJV):8** Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. 9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

He continues, “The Lord is gracious, since even sinners and the ungodly He so pitied, as to forgive all that is past; but the Lord is upright too, who after the mercy of vocation and pardon, which is of grace without merit, will require merits meet for the last judgment. “Wherefore He will establish a law for them that fail in the way.” For He hath first bestowed mercy to bring them into the way.”

Augustine believed that all sin was forgiven at baptism, “which is of grace without merit”. But after baptism, he believed that the Lord “will require merits meet for the last judgment”.

Augustine seems to follow the **Latin Vulgate** translation. Augustine’s thinking about the two resurrections hindered his understanding of the judgments. He did understand that there is a spiritual resurrection that takes place in the one who believes in Jesus Christ. He believed this resurrection happened at baptism. He also believed in the resurrection of our bodies which he believed would be at the last judgment.

Augustine mixed up the judgment seat of Christ, and the judgment of the nations, with the last judgment, that is, the White Throne judgment. Believers in Jesus Christ will all be judged at the judgment seat of Christ, which Paul mentions in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

In the judgment of the nations, the Son of man shall come in his glory, and before Him will be gathered all nations on earth. This will a judgment to decide which nations shall go into the kingdom, just before the thousand year reign of Christ. It is a judgment based on how the nations treated Christ’s brethren during the tribulation period. Jesus spoke to those on His right hand, the sheep nations, who were to inherit the kingdom, as in **Matthew 25 (KJV):34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Those on His left, the goat nations, were to depart into everlasting fire as we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

However, the last judgment, that is, the White Throne Judgment, is after the thousand year reign as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):7** And when the thousand years are expired,

Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

The first resurrection occurs before the thousand year reign of Christ as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):**4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

This is the resurrection of the righteous. The last judgment, or final judgment, will be the White Throne Judgment, which is only for the wicked, or unrighteous dead who will be judged according to their works.

Augustine did not understand the timing of the judgments, and lumped them all into one final judgment.

When Augustine says above, “**but the Lord is upright too, who after the mercy of vocation and pardon, which is of grace without merit, will require merits meet for the last judgment**”, he is mixing up law with grace. The Lord forgives all that is past, present, and future for the one who believes, and He puts His righteousness down to our account when He justifies us. There will be a judgment of the righteous for rewards, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, but this judgment is not for salvation. The law was only our tutor to bring us to Christ as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):**24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

The law does this by giving us knowledge of sin as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):**20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

When we have knowledge of our sin, we realize our need for a Savior. This is what leads us to accept Christ. That no flesh is saved by keeping the law includes those who were under the law in the Old Testament. Therefore, they were saved by faith just as we are. They believed in the one who was to come. We believe in the one who came, Jesus Christ.

After we believe and we are born again, we do not come under the law again. We are under grace as we read in **Romans 6 (KJV):**14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye



are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

Augustine and the Catholic Church in his time believed we could lose our salvation if we did not abide in the unity of the Church, or if we sinned willfully.

However, if we sin, or “fail in the way”, as Augustine says, we do not lose the grace that saved us. He has “first bestowed mercy to bring them into the way”, but His mercy will also keep us from falling as we read in **Jude 1 (KJV)**:24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, 25 To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

So at the last judgment, what are the “merits meet for the last judgment”? The merits for the righteous are only for rewards at the judgment seat of Christ, and not for salvation. The righteous will not be present at the last judgment, which will be the White Throne Judgment. Only the wicked dead will be at this last judgment. Salvation is ours when we believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord by faith, as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV)**:8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

The one who believes is not condemned as we read in **John 3 (KJV)**:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

## Summary

We first noted that Augustine spoke of the spiritual resurrection when one is born again of the Spirit of God. He refers to **John 5 (KJV)**:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

In speaking of this he says, “Such dead as these are in such wise raised by the Word of God, as to live in faith. They who were dead in unbelief, are aroused by the Word. Of this hour said the Lord, “The hour shall come, and now is.””

Now Jesus speaks of the resurrection in our spirit in **John 5 (KJV)**:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

And Augustine notes, “For with His Own Word did He raise them that were dead in unbelief; of whom the Apostle says, “Arise thou that sleepest, and rise up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” (Ephesians 5:14)”

And he concludes, “This is the resurrection of hearts, this is the resurrection of the inner man, this is the resurrection of the soul.” However, It is in our spirit that we are born again as Jesus reveals in **John 3 (KJV)**:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

We now have an awareness of the spiritual realm that we never had before. Our spirit is

now made new. Our soul must be renewed.

As we continue to read Augustine, he says, “But this is not the only resurrection, there remains a resurrection of the body also.” He says that the Lord also spoke of the “resurrection of bodies also, which is to be at the end of the world.” Augustine placed this resurrection at the end of the world, and since he considered himself and the Church in his time to be living in the thousand year reign of Christ, the end of the world to him was the White Throne Judgment that we read of in **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Of the spiritual resurrection, Augustine is correct, as he says, “Hence a resurrection does take place now, and men pass from a death to a life; from the death of infidelity to the life of faith; from the death of falsehood to the life of truth; from the death of iniquity to the life of righteousness. There is, therefore, that which is a resurrection of the dead.”

But he adds, “**now are we risen to eternal life, if we perseveringly continue in the same faith**”. He implies that we will keep eternal life if we obey, that is, “**perseveringly continue in the same faith**”.

And he says, that Jesus ascended, “promising a resurrection to the flesh, promising a resurrection to the mind—to the mind before the flesh, to the flesh after the mind.

Augustine’s two resurrections are a resurrection to the mind, and a resurrection to the flesh. The resurrection to the mind is a resurrection to the soul in his thinking. He did not understand the difference between soul and spirit, but he thought that the soul was composed of spirit.

Now concerning the **Judgment Seat of Christ**, about judgment, Augustine says, “**The Lord our God then reveals it, and by His Scriptures puts us in mind how it may be understood when judgment is spoken of. I exhort you, therefore, to give attention. Sometimes judgment means punishment, sometimes it means discrimination. According to that mode of speech in which judgment means discrimination, “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that” a man “may there receive what things he has done in the body, whether it be good or ill.”**”

And he says, “**For this same is a discrimination, to distribute good things to the good, evil things to the evil.**”

Augustine also rightly asks and answers, “So, then, even in this life there are dead, and there are living; all live in a sense. Who are dead? They who have not believed. Who are living? They who have believed.”

Concerning the **Great Tribulation**, again, Augustine believed in the great tribulation, though his understanding of the timing of this event is very limited. The Great Tribulation will last seven years, and is the last week of years of the seventy weeks in Daniel 9:24-27 that God will deal with Israel. It is also called Jacob’s trouble in Jeremiah 30:4-7, out of which all Israel shall be saved.

In regards to the **Last Judgment**, Augustine mixed up the judgment of the nations with the White Throne judgment. In the judgment of the nations, the Son of man shall come in his glory, and before Him will be gathered all nations on earth. This is just before the thousand year reign of Christ, and is a judgment based on how the nations treated Christ's brethren during the tribulation period. Jesus spoke to those on His right hand, the sheep nations, that they were to inherit the kingdom, as in **Matthew 25 (KJV):34** Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Those on His left, the goat nations, were to depart into everlasting fire as we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

However, the Last Judgment, that is, the White Throne Judgment, is after the thousand year reign as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):7** And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

The first resurrection occurs before the thousand year reign of Christ as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

This is the resurrection of the righteous. The Last Judgment, or final judgment, will be the White Throne Judgment, which is only for the wicked, or unrighteous dead who will be judged according to their works.

Augustine did not understand the timing of the judgments, and lumped them all into one final judgment.

## Miracles In Augustine's Time

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions Book IX, Chapter VII, paragraphs 15-16, page 134-135

Chapter VII.—Of the Church Hymns Instituted at Milan; Of the Ambrosian Persecution Raised by Justina; And of the Discovery of the Bodies of Two Martyrs.

15. Not long had the Church of Milan begun to employ this kind of consolation and exhortation, the brethren singing together with great earnestness of voice and heart. For it was about a year, or not much more, since Justina, the mother of the boy-Emperor Valentinian, persecuted Thy servant Ambrose in the interest of her heresy, to which she had been seduced by the Arians. The pious people kept guard in the church, prepared to die with their bishop, Thy servant. There my mother, Thy handmaid, bearing a chief part of those cares and watchings, lived in prayer. We, still unmelted by the heat of Thy Spirit, were yet moved by the astonished and disturbed city. At this time it was instituted that, after the manner of the Eastern Church, hymns and psalms should be sung, lest the people should pine away in the tediousness of sorrow; which custom, retained from then till now, is imitated by many, yea, by almost all of Thy congregations throughout the rest of the world.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine describes the persecution of Ambrose, “the bishop of Milan at the time”, by “Justina, the mother of the boy-Emperor Valentinian”. And Augustine confesses, “We, still unmelted by the heat of Thy Spirit, were yet moved by the astonished and disturbed city.”

16. Then didst Thou by a vision make known to Thy renowned bishop the spot where lay the bodies of Gervasius and Protasius, the martyrs (whom Thou hadst in Thy secret storehouse preserved uncorrupted for so many years), whence Thou mightest at the fitting time produce them to repress the feminine but royal fury. For when they were revealed and dug up and with due honour transferred to the Ambrosian Basilica, not only they who were troubled with unclean spirits (the devils confessing themselves) were healed, but a certain man also, who had been blind many years, a well-known citizen of that city, having asked and been told the reason of the people's tumultuous joy, rushed forth, asking his guide to lead him thither. Arrived there, he begged to be permitted to touch with his handkerchief the bier of Thy saints, whose death is precious in Thy sight. (Psalm 116:15) When he had done this, and put it to his eyes, they were forthwith opened. Thence did the fame spread; thence did Thy praises burn,—shine; thence was the mind of that enemy, though not yet enlarged to the wholeness of believing, restrained from the fury of persecuting. Thanks be to Thee, O my God. Whence and whither hast Thou thus led my remembrance, that I should confess these things also unto Thee,—great, though I, forgetful, had passed them over? And yet then, when the “savour” of Thy “ointments” was so fragrant, did we not “run after Thee.” (Canticles 1:3-4) And so I did the more abundantly weep at the singing of Thy hymns, formerly panting for Thee, and at last breathing in Thee, as far as the air can play in this house of grass.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Then didst Thou by a vision make known to Thy renowned bishop the spot where lay the bodies of Gervasius and Protasius, the martyrs (whom Thou hadst in Thy secret storehouse preserved uncorrupted for so many years), whence Thou mightest at the fitting time produce them to repress the feminine but royal fury.”

The “renowned bishop” he refers to is Ambrose. He continues, “For when they were revealed and dug up and with due honour transferred to the Ambrosian Basilica, not only they who were troubled with unclean spirits (the devils confessing themselves) were healed, but a certain man also, who had been blind many years, a well known citizen of that city, having asked and been told the reason of the people’s tumultuous joy, rushed forth, asking his guide to lead him thither. Arrived there, he begged to be permitted to touch with his handkerchief the bier of Thy saints, whose death is precious in Thy sight. (Psalm 116:15)”

He refers to **Psalm 116 (KJV):15** Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

He continues, “When he had done this, and put it to his eyes, they were forthwith opened. Thence did the fame spread; thence did Thy praises burn,—shine; thence was the mind of that enemy, though not yet enlarged to the wholeness of believing, restrained from the fury of persecuting. Thanks be to Thee, O my God. Whence and whither hast Thou thus led my remembrance, that I should confess these things also unto Thee,—great, though I, forgetful, had passed them over? And yet then, when the “savour” of Thy “ointments” was so fragrant, did we not “run after Thee.” (Canticles 1:3-4)”

He refers to **Song of Solomon 1 (KJV):3** Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee. 4 Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.

He continues, “And so I did the more abundantly weep at the singing of Thy hymns, formerly panting for Thee, and at last breathing in Thee, as far as the air can play in this house of grass.”

So the healings and deliverances occurred when the bodies of the martyrs, Gervasius and Protasius, were “dug up and with due honour transferred to the Ambrosian Basilica”. This profoundly affected Augustine.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XXII, Chapters 7-9, page 484-491**

Chapter 7.—That the World’s Belief in Christ is the Result of Divine Power, Not of Human Persuasion.

But it is thoroughly ridiculous to make mention of the false divinity of Romulus as any way comparable to that of Christ. Nevertheless, if Romulus lived about six hundred years before Cicero, in an age which already was so enlightened that it rejected all impossibilities, how much more, in an age which certainly was more enlightened, being six hundred years later, the age of Cicero himself, and of the emperors Augustus and Tiberius,



would the human mind have refused to listen to or believe in the resurrection of Christ's body and its ascension into heaven, and have scouted it as an impossibility, had not the divinity of the truth itself, or the truth of the divinity, and corroborating miraculous signs, proved that it could happen and had happened? **Through virtue of these testimonies, and not withstanding the opposition and terror of so many cruel persecutions, the resurrection and immortality of the flesh, first in Christ, and subsequently in all in the new world, was believed, was intrepidly proclaimed, and was sown over the whole world, to be fertilized richly with the blood of the martyrs. For the predictions of the prophets that had preceded the events were read, they were corroborated by powerful signs, and the truth was seen to be not contradictory to reason, but only different from customary ideas, so that at length the world embraced the faith it had furiously persecuted.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he argues, "But it is thoroughly ridiculous to make mention of the false divinity of Romulus as any way comparable to that of Christ.

Wikipedia says, that Romulus "was the legendary founder and first king of Rome. Various traditions attribute the establishment of many of Rome's oldest legal, political, religious, and social institutions to Romulus and his contemporaries. Although many of these traditions incorporate elements of folklore, and it is not clear to what extent a historical figure underlies the mythical Romulus, the events and institutions ascribed to him were central to the myths surrounding Rome's origins and cultural traditions...Plutarch reports the calculation of Varro's friend Tarutius that 771 BC was the birth year of Romulus and his twin."

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romulus>

Augustine continues, "Nevertheless, if Romulus lived about six hundred years before Cicero,"

Wikipedia says that, "Cicero lived between 106 BC – 7 December 43 BC) was a Roman statesman, orator, lawyer and philosopher, who served as consul in the year 63 BC. He came from a wealthy municipal family of the Roman equestrian order, and is considered one of Rome's greatest orators and prose stylists. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cicero>

Augustine continues, "in an age which already was so enlightened that it rejected all impossibilities, how much more, in an age which certainly was more enlightened, being six hundred years later, the age of Cicero himself, and of the emperors Augustus and Tiberius, would the human mind have refused to listen to or believe in the resurrection of Christ's body and its ascension into heaven, and have scouted it as an impossibility, had not the divinity of the truth itself, or the truth of the divinity, and corroborating miraculous signs, proved that it could happen and had happened?"

Augustine testifies of his faith in miraculous signs that occurred when Jesus Christ walked this earth. He continues, **"Through virtue of these testimonies, and not withstanding the opposition and terror of so many cruel persecutions, the resurrection and immortality of the flesh, first in Christ, and subsequently in all in the new world, was believed, was intrepidly proclaimed, and was sown over the whole world, to be fertilized richly with the blood of the martyrs. For the predictions of the prophets that had preceded the events were read, they were corroborated by powerful signs, and the truth was seen to be not**

contradictory to reason, but only different from customary ideas, so that at length the world embraced the faith it had furiously persecuted.”

Augustine believed that “the world embraced the faith it had furiously persecuted.” This is understandable because of the persecutions of the Roman Empire on the Christian Church before his time. The Christian Church was then embraced by the emperor Constantine in 313 A.D., and by the succession of Roman emperors up until the time of Augustine.

In the next section Augustine testifies of miracles that occurred at “the font of regeneration”, that is, baptism, and that the “whole world” believed in his time.

#### Chapter 8.—Of Miracles Which Were Wrought that the World Might Believe in Christ, and Which Have Not Ceased Since the World Believed.

Why, they say, are those miracles, which you affirm were wrought formerly, wrought no longer? I might, indeed, reply that miracles were necessary before the world believed, in order that it might believe. And whoever now-a-days demands to see prodigies that he may believe, is himself a great prodigy, because he does not believe, though the whole world does. But they make these objections for the sole purpose of insinuating that even those former miracles were never wrought. How, then, is it that everywhere Christ is celebrated with such firm belief in His resurrection and ascension? How is it that in enlightened times, in which every impossibility is rejected, the world has, without any miracles, believed things marvelously incredible? Or will they say that these things were credible, and therefore were credited? Why then do they themselves not believe? Our argument, therefore, is a summary one—either incredible things which were not witnessed have caused the world to believe other incredible things which both occurred and were witnessed, or this matter was so credible that it needed no miracles in proof of it, and therefore convicts these unbelievers of unpardonable scepticism. This I might say for the sake of refuting these most frivolous objectors. But we cannot deny that many miracles were wrought to confirm that one grand and health-giving miracle of Christ’s ascension to heaven with the flesh in which He rose. For these most trustworthy books of ours contain in one narrative both the miracles that were wrought and the creed which they were wrought to confirm. The miracles were published that they might produce faith, and the faith which they produced brought them into greater prominence. For they are read in congregations that they may be believed, and yet they would not be so read unless they were believed. For even now miracles are wrought in the name of Christ, whether by His sacraments or by the prayers or relics of His saints; but they are not so brilliant and conspicuous as to cause them to be published with such glory as accompanied the former miracles. For the canon of the sacred writings, which behooved to be closed, causes those to be everywhere recited, and to sink into the memory of all the congregations; but these modern miracles are scarcely known even to the whole population in the midst of which they are wrought, and at the best are confined to one spot. For frequently they are known only to a very few persons, while all the rest are ignorant of them, especially if the state is a large one; and when they are reported to other persons in other localities, there is no sufficient authority to give them prompt and unwavering credence, although they are reported to the faithful by the faithful.

The miracle which was wrought at Milan when I was there, and by which a blind man

was restored to sight, could come to the knowledge of many; for not only is the city a large one, but also the emperor was there at the time, and the occurrence was witnessed by an immense concourse of people that had gathered to the bodies of the martyrs Protasius and Gervasius, which had long lain concealed and unknown, but were now made known to the bishop Ambrose in a dream, and discovered by him. By virtue of these remains the darkness of that blind man was scattered, and he saw the light of day.

But who but a very small number are aware of the cure which was wrought upon Innocentius, ex-advocate of the deputy prefecture, a cure wrought at Carthage, in my presence, and under my own eyes? For when I and my brother Alypius, who were not yet clergymen, though already servants of God, came from abroad, this man received us, and made us live with him, for he and all his household were devotedly pious. He was being treated by medical men for fistulæ, of which he had a large number intricately seated in the rectum. He had already undergone an operation, and the surgeons were using every means at their command for his relief. In that operation he had suffered long continued and acute pain; yet, among the many folds of the gut, one had escaped the operators so entirely, that, though they ought to have laid it open with the knife, they never touched it. And thus, though all those that had been opened were cured, this one remained as it was, and frustrated all their labor. The patient, having his suspicions awakened by the delay thus occasioned, and fearing greatly a second operation, which another medical man—one of his own domestics—had told him he must undergo, though this man had not even been allowed to witness the first operation, and had been banished from the house, and with difficulty allowed to come back to his enraged master's presence,—the patient, I say, broke out to the surgeons, saying, "Are you going to cut me again? Are you, after all, to fulfill the prediction of that man whom you would not allow even to be present?" The surgeons laughed at the unskillful doctor, and soothed their patient's fears with fair words and promises. So several days passed, and yet nothing they tried did him good. Still they persisted in promising that they would cure that fistula by drugs, without the knife. They called in also another old practitioner of great repute in that department, Ammonius (for he was still alive at that time); and he, after examining the part, promised the same result as themselves from their care and skill. On this great authority, the patient became confident, and, as if already well, vented his good spirits in facetious remarks at the expense of his domestic physician, who had predicted a second operation. To make a long story short, after a number of days had thus uselessly elapsed, the surgeons, wearied and confused, had at last to confess that he could only be cured by the knife. Agitated with excessive fear, he was terrified, and grew pale with dread; and when he collected himself and was able to speak, he ordered them to go away and never to return. Worn out with weeping, and driven by necessity, it occurred to him to call in an Alexandrian, who was at that time esteemed a wonderfully skillful operator, that he might perform the operation his rage would not suffer them to do. But when he had come, and examined with a professional eye the traces of their careful work, he acted the part of a good man, and persuaded his patient to allow those same hands the satisfaction of finishing his cure which had begun it with a skill that excited his admiration, adding that there was no doubt his only hope of a cure was by an operation, but that it was thoroughly inconsistent with his nature to win the credit of the cure by doing the little that remained to be done, and rob of their reward men whose consummate skill, care, and diligence he could not but admire when he saw the traces of their work. They were therefore again received to favor; and it was agreed that, in the

presence of the Alexandrian, they should operate on the fistula, which, by the consent of all, could now only be cured by the knife. The operation was deferred till the following day. But when they had left, there arose in the house such a wailing, in sympathy with the excessive despondency of the master, that it seemed to us like the mourning at a funeral, and we could scarcely repress it. Holy men were in the habit of visiting him daily; Saturninus of blessed memory, at that time bishop of Uzali, and the presbyter Gelosus, and the deacons of the church of Carthage; and among these was the bishop Aurelius, who alone of them all survives,—a man to be named by us with due reverence,—and with him I have often spoken of this affair, as we conversed together about the wonderful works of God, and I have found that he distinctly remembers what I am now relating. When these persons visited him that evening according to their custom, he besought them, with pitiable tears, that they would do him the honor of being present next day at what he judged his funeral rather than his suffering. For such was the terror his former pains had produced, that he made no doubt he would die in the hands of the surgeons. They comforted him, and exhorted him to put his trust in God, and nerve his will like a man. Then we went to prayer; but while we, in the usual way, were kneeling and bending to the ground, he cast himself down, as if some one were hurling him violently to the earth, and began to pray; but in what a manner, with what earnestness and emotion, with what a flood of tears, with what groans and sobs, that shook his whole body, and almost prevented him speaking, who can describe! Whether the others prayed, and had not their attention wholly diverted by this conduct, I do not know. For myself, I could not pray at all. This only I briefly said in my heart: “O Lord, what prayers of Thy people dost Thou hear if Thou hearest not these?” For it seemed to me that nothing could be added to this prayer, unless he expired in praying. We rose from our knees, and, receiving the blessing of the bishop, departed, the patient beseeching his visitors to be present next morning, they exhorting him to keep up his heart. The dreaded day dawned. The servants of God were present, as they had promised to be; the surgeons arrived; all that the circumstances required was ready; the frightful instruments are produced; all look on in wonder and suspense. While those who have most influence with the patient are cheering his fainting spirit, his limbs are arranged on the couch so as to suit the hand of the operator; the knots of the bandages are untied; the part is bared; the surgeon examines it, and, with knife in hand, eagerly looks for the sinus that is to be cut. He searches for it with his eyes; he feels for it with his finger; he applies every kind of scrutiny: he finds a perfectly firm cicatrix! No words of mine can describe the joy, and praise, and thanksgiving to the merciful and almighty God which was poured from the lips of all, with tears of gladness. Let the scene be imagined rather than described!

In the same city of Carthage lived Innocentia, a very devout woman of the highest rank in the state. She had cancer in one of her breasts, a disease which, as physicians say, is incurable. Ordinarily, therefore, they either amputate, and so separate from the body the member on which the disease has seized, or, that the patient’s life may be prolonged a little, though death is inevitable even if somewhat delayed, they abandon all remedies, following, as they say, the advice of Hippocrates. This the lady we speak of had been advised to by a skillful physician, who was intimate with her family; and she betook herself to God alone by prayer. On the approach of Easter, she was instructed in a dream to wait for the first woman that came out from the baptistery after being baptized, and to ask her to make the sign of Christ upon her sore. She did so, and was immediately cured. The physician who had advised her to apply no remedy

if she wished to live a little longer, when he had examined her after this, and found that she who, on his former examination, was afflicted with that disease was now perfectly cured, eagerly asked her what remedy she had used, anxious, as we may well believe, to discover the drug which should defeat the decision of Hippocrates. But when she told him what had happened, he is said to have replied, with religious politeness, though with a contemptuous tone, and an expression which made her fear he would utter some blasphemy against Christ, “I thought you would make some great discovery to me.” She, shuddering at his indifference, quickly replied, “What great thing was it for Christ to heal a cancer, who raised one who had been four days dead?” When, therefore, I had heard this, I was extremely indignant that so great a miracle wrought in that well known city, and on a person who was certainly not obscure, should not be divulged, and I considered that she should be spoken to, if not reprimanded on this score. And when she replied to me that she had not kept silence on the subject, I asked the women with whom she was best acquainted whether they had ever heard of this before. They told me they knew nothing of it. “See,” I said, “what your not keeping silence amounts to, since not even those who are so familiar with you know of it.” And as I had only briefly heard the story, I made her tell how the whole thing happened, from beginning to end, while the other women listened in great astonishment, and glorified God.

A gouty doctor of the same city, when he had given in his name for baptism, and had been prohibited the day before his baptism from being baptized that year, by black woolly haired boys who appeared to him in his dreams, and whom he understood to be devils, and when, though they trod on his feet, and inflicted the acutest pain he had ever yet experienced, he refused to obey them, but overcame them, and would not defer being washed in the laver of regeneration, was relieved in the very act of baptism, not only of the extraordinary pain he was tortured with, but also of the disease itself, so that, though he lived a long time afterwards, he never suffered from gout; and yet who knows of this miracle? We, however, do know it, and so, too, do the small number of brethren who were in the neighborhood, and to whose ears it might come.

An old comedian of Curubis was cured at baptism not only of paralysis, but also of hernia, and, being delivered from both afflictions, came up out of the font of regeneration as if he had had nothing wrong with his body. Who outside of Curubis knows of this, or who but a very few who might hear it elsewhere? But we, when we heard of it, made the man come to Carthage, by order of the holy bishop Aurelius, although we had already ascertained the fact on the information of persons whose word we could not doubt.

Hesperius, of a tribunitian family, and a neighbor of our own, has a farm called Zubedi in the Fussalian district; and, finding that his family, his cattle, and his servants were suffering from the malice of evil spirits, he asked our presbyters, during my absence, that one of them would go with him and banish the spirits by his prayers. One went, offered there the sacrifice of the body of Christ, praying with all his might that that vexation might cease. It did cease forthwith, through God’s mercy. Now he had received from a friend of his own some holy earth brought from Jerusalem, where Christ, having been buried, rose again the third day. This earth he had hung up in his bedroom to preserve himself from harm. But when his house was purged of that demoniacal invasion, he began to consider what should be done with the earth; for his reverence for it made him unwilling to have it any longer in his bedroom. It so happened that I and Maximinus bishop of Synita, and then my colleague, were in the neighborhood. Hesperius



asked us to visit him, and we did so. When he had related all the circumstances, he begged that the earth might be buried somewhere, and that the spot should be made a place of prayer where Christians might assemble for the worship of God. We made no objection: it was done as he desired. There was in that neighborhood a young countryman who was paralytic, who, when he heard of this, begged his parents to take him without delay to that holy place. When he had been brought there, he prayed, and forthwith went away on his own feet perfectly cured.

There is a country seat called Victoriana, less than thirty miles from Hippo-regius. At it there is a monument to the Milanese martyrs, Protasius and Gervasius. Thither a young man was carried, who, when he was watering his horse one summer day at noon in a pool of a river, had been taken possession of by a devil. As he lay at the monument, near death, or even quite like a dead person, the lady of the manor, with her maids and religious attendants, entered the place for evening prayer and praise, as her custom was, and they began to sing hymns. At this sound the young man, as if electrified, was thoroughly aroused, and with frightful screaming seized the altar, and held it as if he did not dare or were not able to let it go, and as if he were fixed or tied to it; and the devil in him, with loud lamentation, besought that he might be spared, and confessed where and when and how he took possession of the youth. At last, declaring that he would go out of him, he named one by one the parts of his body which he threatened to mutilate as he went out and with these words he departed from the man. But his eye, falling out on his cheek, hung by a slender vein as by a root, and the whole of the pupil which had been black became white. When this was witnessed by those present (others too had now gathered to his cries, and had all joined in prayer for him), although they were delighted that he had recovered his sanity of mind, yet, on the other hand, they were grieved about his eye, and said he should seek medical advice. But his sister's husband, who had brought him there, said, "God, who has banished the devil, is able to restore his eye at the prayers of His saints." Therewith he replaced the eye that was fallen out and hanging, and bound it in its place with his handkerchief as well as he could, and advised him not to loose the bandage for seven days. When he did so, he found it quite healthy. Others also were cured there, but of them it were tedious to speak.

I know that a young woman of Hippo was immediately dispossessed of a devil, on anointing herself with oil, mixed with the tears of the presbyter who had been praying for her. I know also that a bishop once prayed for a demoniac young man whom he never saw, and that he was cured on the spot.

There was a fellow townsman of ours at Hippo, Florentius, an old man, religious and poor, who supported himself as a tailor. Having lost his coat, and not having means to buy another, he prayed to the Twenty Martyrs, who have a very celebrated memorial shrine in our town, begging in a distinct voice that he might be clothed. Some scoffing young men, who happened to be present, heard him, and followed him with their sarcasm as he went away, as if he had asked the martyrs for fifty pence to buy a coat. But he, walking on in silence, saw on the shore a great fish, gasping as if just cast up, and having secured it with the good natured assistance of the youths, he sold it for curing to a cook of the name of Catosus, a good Christian man, telling him how he had come by it, and receiving for it three hundred pence, which he laid out in wool, that his wife might exercise her skill upon, and make into a coat for him. But, on cutting up the fish, the cook found a gold ring in its belly; and forthwith, moved with compassion, and influenced, too, by religious fear, gave it up to the man, saying, "See how the Twenty Martyrs have clothed you."

When the bishop Projectus was bringing the relics of the most glorious martyr Stephen to the waters of Tibilis, a great concourse of people came to meet him at the shrine. There a blind woman entreated that she might be led to the bishop who was carrying the relics. He gave her the flowers he was carrying. She took them, applied them to her eyes, and forthwith saw. Those who were present were astounded, while she, with every expression of joy, preceded them, pursuing her way without further need of a guide.

Lucillus bishop of Sinita, in the neighborhood of the colonial town of Hippon, was carrying in procession some relics of the same martyr, which had been deposited in the castle of Sinita. A fistula under which he had long labored, and which his private physician was watching an opportunity to cut, was suddenly cured by the mere carrying of that sacred fardel,—at least, afterwards there was no trace of it in his body.

Eucharius, a Spanish priest, residing at Calama, was for a long time a sufferer from stone. By the relics of the same martyr, which the bishop Possidius brought him, he was cured. Afterwards the same priest, sinking under another disease, was lying dead, and already they were binding his hands. By the succor of the same martyr he was raised to life, the priest's cloak having been brought from the oratory and laid upon the corpse.

There was there an old nobleman named Martial, who had a great aversion to the Christian religion, but whose daughter was a Christian, while her husband had been baptized that same year. When he was ill, they besought him with tears and prayers to become a Christian, but he positively refused, and dismissed them from his presence in a storm of indignation. It occurred to the son-in-law to go to the oratory of St. Stephen, and there pray for him with all earnestness that God might give him a right mind, so that he should not delay believing in Christ. This he did with great groaning and tears, and the burning fervor of sincere piety; then, as he left the place, he took some of the flowers that were lying there, and, as it was already night, laid them by his father's head, who so slept. And lo! before dawn, he cries out for some one to run for the bishop; but he happened at that time to be with me at Hippon. So when he had heard that he was from home, he asked the presbyters to come. They came. To the joy and amazement of all, he declared that he believed, and he was baptized. As long as he remained in life, these words were ever on his lips: "Christ, receive my spirit," though he was not aware that these were the last words of the most blessed Stephen when he was stoned by the Jews. They were his last words also, for not long after he himself also gave up the ghost.

There, too, by the same martyr, two men, one a citizen, the other a stranger, were cured of gout; but while the citizen was absolutely cured, the stranger was only informed what he should apply when the pain returned; and when he followed this advice, the pain was at once relieved.

Audurus is the name of an estate, where there is a church that contains a memorial shrine of the martyr Stephen. It happened that, as a little boy was playing in the court, the oxen drawing a wagon went out of the track and crushed him with the wheel, so that immediately he seemed at his last gasp. His mother snatched him up, and laid him at the shrine, and not only did he revive, but also appeared uninjured.

A religious female, who lived at Caspalium, a neighboring estate, when she was so ill as to be despaired of, had her dress brought to this shrine, but before it was brought back she was gone. However, her parents wrapped her corpse in the dress, and, her breath returning, she became quite well.

At Hippo a Syrian called Bassus was praying at the relics of the same martyr for his daughter, who was dangerously ill. He too had brought her dress with him to the shrine. But as he prayed, behold, his servants ran from the house to tell him she was dead. His friends, however, intercepted them, and forbade them to tell him, lest he should bewail her in public. And when he had returned to his house, which was already ringing with the lamentations of his family, and had thrown on his daughter's body the dress he was carrying, she was restored to life.

There, too, the son of a man, Irenæus, one of our tax-gatherers, took ill and died. And while his body was lying lifeless, and the last rites were being prepared, amidst the weeping and mourning of all, one of the friends who were consoling the father suggested that the body should be anointed with the oil of the same martyr. It was done, and he revived.

Likewise Eleusinus, a man of tribunitian rank among us, laid his infant son, who had died, on the shrine of the martyr, which is in the suburb where he lived, and, after prayer, which he poured out there with many tears, he took up his child alive.

What am I to do? I am so pressed by the promise of finishing this work, that I cannot record all the miracles I know; and doubtless several of our adherents, when they read what I have narrated, will regret that I have omitted so many which they, as well as I, certainly know. Even now I beg these persons to excuse me, and to consider how long it would take me to relate all those miracles, which the necessity of finishing the work I have undertaken forces me to omit. For were I to be silent of all others, and to record exclusively the miracles of healing which were wrought in the district of Calama and of Hippo by means of this martyr—I mean the most glorious Stephen—they would fill many volumes; and yet all even of these could not be collected, but only those of which narratives have been written for public recital. For when I saw, in our own times, frequent signs of the presence of divine powers similar to those which had been given of old, I desired that narratives might be written, judging that the multitude should not remain ignorant of these things. It is not yet two years since these relics were first brought to Hippo-regius, and though many of the miracles which have been wrought by it have not, as I have the most certain means of knowing, been recorded, those which have been published amount to almost seventy at the hour at which I write. But at Calama, where these relics have been for a longer time, and where more of the miracles were narrated for public information, there are incomparably more.

At Uzali, too, a colony near Utica, many signal miracles were, to my knowledge, wrought by the same martyr, whose relics had found a place there by direction of the bishop Evodius, long before we had them at Hippo. But there the custom of publishing narratives does not obtain, or, I should say, did not obtain, for possibly it may now have been begun. For, when I was there recently, a woman of rank, Petronia, had been miraculously cured of a serious illness of long standing, in which all medical appliances had failed, and, with the consent of the above named bishop of the place, I exhorted her to publish an account of it that might be read to the people. She most promptly obeyed, and inserted in her narrative a circumstance which I cannot omit to mention, though I am compelled to hasten on to the subjects which this work requires me to treat. She said that she had been persuaded by a Jew to wear next her skin, under all her clothes, a hair girdle, and on this girdle a ring, which, instead of a gem, had a stone which had been found in the kidneys of an ox. Girt with this charm, she was making her way to the threshold of the holy martyr. But, after leaving Carthage, and when she had been lodging in her

own demesne on the river Bagra, and was now rising to continue her journey, she saw her ring lying before her feet. In great surprise she examined the hair girdle, and when she found it bound, as it had been, quite firmly with knots, she conjectured that the ring had been worn through and dropped off; but when she found that the ring was itself also perfectly whole, she presumed that by this great miracle she had received somehow a pledge of her cure, whereupon she untied the girdle, and cast it into the river, and the ring along with it. This is not credited by those who do not believe either that the Lord Jesus Christ came forth from His mother's womb without destroying her virginity, and entered among His disciples when the doors were shut; but let them make strict inquiry into this miracle, and if they find it true, let them believe those others. The lady is of distinction, nobly born, married to a nobleman. She resides at Carthage. The city is distinguished, the person is distinguished, so that they who make inquiries cannot fail to find satisfaction. **Certainly the martyr himself, by whose prayers she was healed, believed on the Son of her who remained a virgin; on Him who came in among the disciples when the doors were shut; in fine,—and to this tends all that we have been retailing,—on Him who ascended into heaven with the flesh in which He had risen; and it is because he laid down his life for this faith that such miracles were done by his means.**

Even now, therefore, many miracles are wrought, the same God who wrought those we read of still performing them, by whom He will and as He will; but they are not as well known, nor are they beaten into the memory, like gravel, by frequent reading, so that they cannot fall out of mind. For even where, as is now done among ourselves, care is taken that the pamphlets of those who receive benefit be read publicly, yet those who are present hear the narrative but once, and many are absent; and so it comes to pass that even those who are present forget in a few days what they heard, and scarcely one of them can be found who will tell what he heard to one who he knows was not present.

One miracle was wrought among ourselves, which, though no greater than those I have mentioned, was yet so signal and conspicuous, that I suppose there is no inhabitant of Hippo who did not either see or hear of it, none who could possibly forget it. **There were seven brothers and three sisters of a noble family of the Cappadocian Cæsarea, who were cursed by their mother, a new-made widow, on account of some wrong they had done her, and which she bitterly resented, and who were visited with so severe a punishment from Heaven, that all of them were seized with a hideous shaking in all their limbs. Unable, while presenting this loathsome appearance, to endure the eyes of their fellow citizens, they wandered over almost the whole Roman world, each following his own direction. Two of them came to Hippo, a brother and a sister, Paulus and Palladia, already known in many other places by the fame of their wretched lot. Now it was about fifteen days before Easter when they came, and they came daily to church, and specially to the relics of the most glorious Stephen, praying that God might now be appeased, and restore their former health. There, and wherever they went, they attracted the attention of every one. Some who had seen them elsewhere, and knew the cause of their trembling, told others as occasion offered. Easter arrived, and on the Lord's day, in the morning, when there was now a large crowd present, and the young man was holding the bars of the holy place where the relics were, and praying, suddenly he fell down, and lay precisely as if asleep, but not trembling as he was wont to do even in sleep. All present were astonished. Some were alarmed, some were moved with pity; and while some were for lifting him up, others prevented them, and said they should rather wait and see what would result. And behold!**

he rose up, and trembled no more, for he was healed, and stood quite well, scanning those who were scanning him. Who then refrained himself from praising God? The whole church was filled with the voices of those who were shouting and congratulating him. Then they came running to me, where I was sitting ready to come into the church. One after another they throng in, the last comer telling me as news what the first had told me already; and while I rejoiced and inwardly gave God thanks, the young man himself also enters, with a number of others, falls at my knees, is raised up to receive my kiss. We go in to the congregation: the church was full, and ringing with the shouts of joy, "Thanks to God! Praised be God!" every one joining and shouting on all sides, "I have healed the people," and then with still louder voice shouting again. Silence being at last obtained, the customary lessons of the divine Scriptures were read. And when I came to my sermon, I made a few remarks suitable to the occasion and the happy and joyful feeling, not desiring them to listen to me, but rather to consider the eloquence of God in this divine work. The man dined with us, and gave us a careful account of his own, his mother's, and his family's calamity. Accordingly, on the following day, after delivering my sermon, I promised that next day I would read his narrative to the people. And when I did so, the third day after Easter Sunday, I made the brother and sister both stand on the steps of the raised place from which I used to speak; and while they stood there their pamphlet was read. The whole congregation, men and women alike, saw the one standing without any unnatural movement, the other trembling in all her limbs; so that those who had not before seen the man himself saw in his sister what the divine compassion had removed from him. In him they saw matter of congratulation, in her subject for prayer. Meanwhile, their pamphlet being finished, I instructed them to withdraw from the gaze of the people; and I had begun to discuss the whole matter somewhat more carefully, when lo! as I was proceeding, other voices are heard from the tomb of the martyr, shouting new congratulations. My audience turned round, and began to run to the tomb. The young woman, when she had come down from the steps where she had been standing, went to pray at the holy relics, and no sooner had she touched the bars than she, in the same way as her brother, collapsed, as if falling asleep, and rose up cured. While, then, we were asking what had happened, and what occasioned this noise of joy, they came into the basilica where we were, leading her from the martyr's tomb in perfect health. Then, indeed, such a shout of wonder rose from men and women together, that the exclamations and the tears seemed like never to come to an end. She was led to the place where she had a little before stood trembling. They now rejoiced that she was like her brother, as before they had mourned that she remained unlike him; and as they had not yet uttered their prayers in her behalf, they perceived that their intention of doing so had been speedily heard. They shouted God's praises without words, but with such a noise that our ears could scarcely bear it. What was there in the hearts of these exultant people but the faith of Christ, for which Stephen had shed his blood?

**Commentary:** In Chapter 8, Augustine begins as we read, "Why, they say, are those miracles, which you affirm were wrought formerly, wrought no longer? I might, indeed, reply that miracles were necessary before the world believed, in order that it might believe. And whoever now-a-days demands to see prodigies that he may believe, is himself a great prodigy, because he does not believe, though the whole world does. But they make these objections for the sole purpose of insinuating that even those former miracles were never wrought. How, then, is it that everywhere Christ is celebrated with such firm belief in His resurrection and



ascension?”

Augustine then argues, “How is it that in enlightened times, in which every impossibility is rejected, the world has, without any miracles, believed things marvelously incredible? Or will they say that these things were credible, and therefore were credited? Why then do they themselves not believe? Our argument, therefore, is a summary one—either incredible things which were not witnessed have caused the world to believe other incredible things which both occurred and were witnessed, or this matter was so credible that it needed no miracles in proof of it, and therefore convicts these unbelievers of unpardonable scepticism. This I might say for the sake of refuting these most frivolous objectors. But we cannot deny that many miracles were wrought to confirm that one grand and health-giving miracle of Christ’s ascension to heaven with the flesh in which He rose. For these most trustworthy books of ours contain in one narrative both the miracles that were wrought and the creed which they were wrought to confirm.”

He continues, “The miracles were published that they might produce faith, and the faith which they produced brought them into greater prominence. For they are read in congregations that they may be believed, and yet they would not be so read unless they were believed. For even now miracles are wrought in the name of Christ, whether by His sacraments or by the prayers or relics of His saints; but they are not so brilliant and conspicuous as to cause them to be published with such glory as accompanied the former miracles.”

So Augustine confirms that miracles were still happening, “but they are not so brilliant and conspicuous” as “the former miracles”.

The miracles in Augustine’s time were “wrought in the name of Christ, whether by His sacraments or by the prayers or relics of His saints”.

He continues, “For the canon of the sacred writings, which behooved to be closed, causes those to be everywhere recited, and to sink into the memory of all the congregations; but these modern miracles are scarcely known even to the whole population in the midst of which they are wrought, and at the best are confined to one spot. For frequently they are known only to a very few persons, while all the rest are ignorant of them, especially if the state is a large one; and when they are reported to other persons in other localities, there is no sufficient authority to give them prompt and unwavering credence, although they are reported to the faithful by the faithful.”

He then testifies, “The miracle which was wrought at Milan when I was there, and by which a blind man was restored to sight, could come to the knowledge of many; for not only is the city a large one, but also the emperor was there at the time, and the occurrence was witnessed by an immense concourse of people that had gathered to the bodies of the martyrs Protasius and Gervasius, which had long lain concealed and unknown, but were now made known to the bishop Ambrose in a dream, and discovered by him. By virtue of these remains the darkness of that blind man was scattered, and he saw the light of day.”

Augustine attributes the miracle of healing of the blind man to be “wrought in the name of Christ” by the remains of “the bodies of the martyrs Protasius and Gervasius”, as he says, “The miracle which was wrought at Milan when I was there, and by which a blind man was restored to sight...”

There is some Scriptural basis for this in **2 Kings 13 (KJV):20** And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year.

21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

But Augustine does not mention this Scripture here.

Augustine records a second miracle, as he continues, “But who but a very small number are aware of the cure which was wrought upon Innocentius, ex-advocate of the deputy prefecture, a cure wrought at Carthage, in my presence, and under my own eyes? For when I and my brother Alypius, who were not yet clergymen, though already servants of God, came from abroad, this man received us, and made us live with him, for he and all his household were devotedly pious. He was being treated by medical men for fistulæ, of which he had a large number intricately seated in the rectum. He had already undergone an operation, and the surgeons were using every means at their command for his relief. In that operation he had suffered long continued and acute pain; yet, among the many folds of the gut, one had escaped the operators so entirely, that, though they ought to have laid it open with the knife, they never touched it. And thus, though all those that had been opened were cured, this one remained as it was, and frustrated all their labor.”

He continues his narrative, “The patient, having his suspicions awakened by the delay thus occasioned, and fearing greatly a second operation, which another medical man—one of his own domestics—had told him he must undergo, though this man had not even been allowed to witness the first operation, and had been banished from the house, and with difficulty allowed to come back to his enraged master’s presence,—the patient, I say, broke out to the surgeons, saying, “Are you going to cut me again? Are you, after all, to fulfill the prediction of that man whom you would not allow even to be present?” The surgeons laughed at the unskillful doctor, and soothed their patient’s fears with fair words and promises. So several days passed, and yet nothing they tried did him good. Still they persisted in promising that they would cure that fistula by drugs, without the knife. They called in also another old practitioner of great repute in that department, Ammonius (for he was still alive at that time); and he, after examining the part, promised the same result as themselves from their care and skill. On this great authority, the patient became confident, and, as if already well, vented his good spirits in facetious remarks at the expense of his domestic physician, who had predicted a second operation. To make a long story short, after a number of days had thus uselessly elapsed, the surgeons, wearied and confused, had at last to confess that he could only be cured by the knife. Agitated with excessive fear, he was terrified, and grew pale with dread; and when he collected himself and was able to speak, he ordered them to go away and never to return. Worn out with weeping, and driven by necessity, it occurred to him to call in an Alexandrian, who was at that time esteemed a wonderfully skillful operator, that he might perform the operation his rage would not suffer them to do. But when he had come, and examined with a professional eye the traces of their careful work, he acted the part of a good man, and persuaded his patient to allow those same hands the satisfaction of finishing his cure which had begun it with a skill that excited his admiration, adding that there was no doubt his only hope of a cure was by an operation, but that it was thoroughly inconsistent with his nature to win the credit of the cure by doing the little that remained to be done, and rob of their reward men whose consummate skill, care, and diligence he could not but admire when he saw the traces of their work. They were therefore again received to favor; and it was agreed that, in the presence of the Alexandrian,

they should operate on the fistula, which, by the consent of all, could now only be cured by the knife. The operation was deferred till the following day. But when they had left, there arose in the house such a wailing, in sympathy with the excessive despondency of the master, that it seemed to us like the mourning at a funeral, and we could scarcely repress it.”

Augustine then notes that, “Holy men were in the habit of visiting him daily; Saturninus of blessed memory, at that time bishop of Uzali, and the presbyter Gelosus, and the deacons of the church of Carthage; and among these was the bishop Aurelius, who alone of them all survives,—a man to be named by us with due reverence,—and with him I have often spoken of this affair, as we conversed together about the wonderful works of God, and I have found that he distinctly remembers what I am now relating. When these persons visited him that evening according to their custom, he besought them, with pitiable tears, that they would do him the honor of being present next day at what he judged his funeral rather than his suffering. For such was the terror his former pains had produced, that he made no doubt he would die in the hands of the surgeons. They comforted him, and exhorted him to put his trust in God, and nerve his will like a man.”

Augustine continues, “Then we went to prayer; but while we, in the usual way, were kneeling and bending to the ground, he cast himself down, as if some one were hurling him violently to the earth, and began to pray; but in what a manner, with what earnestness and emotion, with what a flood of tears, with what groans and sobs, that shook his whole body, and almost prevented him speaking, who can describe! Whether the others prayed, and had not their attention wholly diverted by this conduct, I do not know. For myself, I could not pray at all. This only I briefly said in my heart: “O Lord, what prayers of Thy people dost Thou hear if Thou hearest not these?” For it seemed to me that nothing could be added to this prayer, unless he expired in praying. We rose from our knees, and, receiving the blessing of the bishop, departed, the patient beseeching his visitors to be present next morning, they exhorting him to keep up his heart.”

The next day when the surgeons arrived, they could not find any sign of the fistulae as Augustine then records, “The dreaded day dawned. The servants of God were present, as they had promised to be; the surgeons arrived; all that the circumstances required was ready; the frightful instruments are produced; all look on in wonder and suspense. While those who have most influence with the patient are cheering his fainting spirit, his limbs are arranged on the couch so as to suit the hand of the operator; the knots of the bandages are untied; the part is bared; the surgeon examines it, and, with knife in hand, eagerly looks for the sinus that is to be cut. He searches for it with his eyes; he feels for it with his finger; he applies every kind of scrutiny: he finds a perfectly firm cicatrix! No words of mine can describe the joy, and praise, and thanksgiving to the merciful and almighty God which was poured from the lips of all, with tears of gladness. Let the scene be imagined rather than described!”

This healing was an answer to prayer, though in the company of “Holy men”, one “Saturninus”, the “bishop of Uzali”, and “the presbyter Gelosus”, and “the deacons of the church of Carthage”, and their “bishop Aurelius”.

Augustine then describes another healing. He records, “In the same city of Carthage lived Innocentia, a very devout woman of the highest rank in the state. She had cancer in one of her breasts, a disease which, as physicians say, is incurable.”

He then says, “Ordinarily, therefore, they either amputate, and so separate from the body

the member on which the disease has seized, or, that the patient's life may be prolonged a little, though death is inevitable even if somewhat delayed, they abandon all remedies, following, as they say, the advice of Hippocrates. This the lady we speak of had been advised to by a skillful physician, who was intimate with her family; and she betook herself to God alone by prayer. On the approach of Easter, she was instructed in a dream to wait for the first woman that came out from the baptistery after being baptized, and to ask her to make the sign of Christ upon her sore. She did so, and was immediately cured."

There is no scriptural basis for making the "sign of Christ", that is, the sign of the cross, to heal anyone, though we read in **Acts 5 (KJV):14** And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

The faith of Peter stirred faith in others, as did the faith of Paul as we read in **Acts 19 (KJV):11** And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

Augustine then continues his narrative, "The physician who had advised her to apply no remedy if she wished to live a little longer, when he had examined her after this, and found that she who, on his former examination, was afflicted with that disease was now perfectly cured, eagerly asked her what remedy she had used, anxious, as we may well believe, to discover the drug which should defeat the decision of Hippocrates. But when she told him what had happened, he is said to have replied, with religious politeness, though with a contemptuous tone, and an expression which made her fear he would utter some blasphemy against Christ, "I thought you would make some great discovery to me." She, shuddering at his indifference, quickly replied, "What great thing was it for Christ to heal a cancer, who raised one who had been four days dead?" When, therefore, I had heard this, I was extremely indignant that so great a miracle wrought in that well known city, and on a person who was certainly not obscure, should not be divulged, and I considered that she should be spoken to, if not reprimanded on this score. And when she replied to me that she had not kept silence on the subject, I asked the women with whom she was best acquainted whether they had ever heard of this before. They told me they knew nothing of it. "See," I said, "what your not keeping silence amounts to, since not even those who are so familiar with you know of it." And as I had only briefly heard the story, I made her tell how the whole thing happened, from beginning to end, while the other women listened in great astonishment, and glorified God."

Augustine then records, "A gouty doctor of the same city, when he had given in his name for baptism, and had been prohibited the day before his baptism from being baptized that year, by black woolly haired boys who appeared to him in his dreams, and whom he understood to be devils, and when, though they trod on his feet, and inflicted the acutest pain he had ever yet experienced, he refused to obey them, but overcame them, and would not defer being washed in the laver of regeneration, was relieved in the very act of baptism, not only of the extraordinary pain he was tortured with, but also of the disease itself, so that, though he lived a long time afterwards, he never suffered from gout; and yet who knows of this miracle? We, however, do



know it, and so, too, do the small number of brethren who were in the neighborhood, and to whose ears it might come.”

Augustine believed in the “**laver of regeneration**”, that is, in baptismal regeneration. This is not to say that the Lord could not heal someone “**in the very act of baptism**”. Miracles happen by faith as we read in context in **Matthew 13 (KJV):54** And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? 55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? 57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house. 58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Augustine then records that, “**An old comedian of Curubis was cured at baptism not only of paralysis, but also of hernia, and, being delivered from both afflictions, came up out of the font of regeneration as if he had had nothing wrong with his body.** Who outside of Curubis knows of this, or who but a very few who might hear it elsewhere? But we, when we heard of it, made the man come to Carthage, by order of the holy bishop Aurelius, although we had already ascertained the fact on the information of persons whose word we could not doubt.”

Augustine then records, “**Hesperius, of a tribunitian family, and a neighbor of our own, has a farm called Zubedi in the Fussalian district; and, finding that his family, his cattle, and his servants were suffering from the malice of evil spirits, he asked our presbyters, during my absence, that one of them would go with him and banish the spirits by his prayers. One went, offered there the sacrifice of the body of Christ, praying with all his might that that vexation might cease. It did cease forthwith, through God's mercy.**”

We must note that in the time of Augustine, the Catholic Church held that at Communion, the bread and wine were changed into the body and blood of Christ at the invocation of the priest. This they called a sacrifice. We shall discuss this more in the chapter, **The Lord's Supper, Communion, Or the Eucharist**. But we note that “**suffering from the malice of evil spirits**” was still happening in Augustine's time, according to his testimony here.

Augustine then records, “**Now he had received from a friend of his own some holy earth brought from Jerusalem, where Christ, having been buried, rose again the third day. This earth he had hung up in his bedroom to preserve himself from harm. But when his house was purged of that demoniacal invasion, he began to consider what should be done with the earth; for his reverence for it made him unwilling to have it any longer in his bedroom. It so happened that I and Maximinus bishop of Synita, and then my colleague, were in the neighborhood. Hesperius asked us to visit him, and we did so. When he had related all the circumstances, he begged that the earth might be buried somewhere, and that the spot should be made a place of prayer where Christians might assemble for the worship of God. We made no objection: it was done as he desired. There was in that neighborhood a young countryman who was paralytic, who, when he heard of this, begged his parents to take him without delay to that holy place. When he had been brought there, he prayed, and forthwith went away on his own feet perfectly cured.**”

So the very earth, “**brought from Jerusalem, where Christ, having been buried, rose again the third day**”, Augustine describes as “**some holy earth**”. And after this, he relates how the man, one “**Hesperius**”, who had it hanging in his bedroom, had “**begged that the earth might be**



buried somewhere, and that the spot should be made a place of prayer where Christians might assemble for the worship of God.” Augustine then says, “We made no objection: it was done as he desired.” And now the earth from Jerusalem is taken from hanging “in his bedroom to preserve himself from harm”, and buried somewhere in that neighborhood, and made as it were into a shrine.

We are not to exceed what is written as we read in **1 Corinthians 4 (NASB):6** Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other. 7 For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

There is no basis in Scripture for setting up holy places. Our faith is not in men, but in Jesus Christ. The “holy earth” did nothing for Hesperius while it was in his bedroom. He was supposedly cured when one of Augustine’s presbyters went and “offered there the sacrifice of the body of Christ”. So one has to wonder why they would have thought that this “holy earth” would make a “holy place” somewhere else.

Nevertheless, Augustine then records, as we read above, “...a young countryman who was paralytic, who, when he heard of this, begged his parents to take him without delay to that holy place. When he had been brought there, he prayed, and forthwith went away on his own feet perfectly cured.”

So if there is no basis in Scripture for this, why was he cured? Let us think about this as we keep reading.

Augustine continues as he records further, “There is a country seat called Victoriana, less than thirty miles from Hippo-regius. At it there is a monument to the Milanese martyrs, Protasius and Gervasius. Thither a young man was carried, who, when he was watering his horse one summer day at noon in a pool of a river, had been taken possession of by a devil. As he lay at the monument, near death, or even quite like a dead person, the lady of the manor, with her maids and religious attendants, entered the place for evening prayer and praise, as her custom was, and they began to sing hymns. At this sound the young man, as if electrified, was thoroughly aroused, and with frightful screaming seized the altar, and held it as if he did not dare or were not able to let it go, and as if he were fixed or tied to it; and the devil in him, with loud lamentation, besought that he might be spared, and confessed where and when and how he took possession of the youth.”

So the man was carried to “a monument to the Milanese martyrs, Protasius and Gervasius”, and “lay at the monument, near death, or even quite like a dead person”. But at the sound of the prayer and praise, and singing of hymns, the young man then seized the altar, and the devil in him began “with loud lamentation” to ask “that he might be spared”.

Augustine then records, “At last, declaring that he would go out of him, he named one by one the parts of his body which he threatened to mutilate as he went out and with these words he departed from the man. But his eye, falling out on his cheek, hung by a slender vein as by a root, and the whole of the pupil which had been black became white. When this was witnessed by those present (others too had now gathered to his cries, and had all joined in prayer for him), although they were delighted that he had recovered his sanity of mind, yet, on the other hand, they were grieved about his eye, and said he should seek medical advice. But his sister’s husband, who had brought him there, said, “God, who has banished the devil, is able to restore

his eye at the prayers of His saints.” Therewith he replaced the eye that was fallen out and hanging, and bound it in its place with his handkerchief as well as he could, and advised him not to loose the bandage for seven days. When he did so, he found it quite healthy. Others also were cured there, but of them it were tedious to speak.”

So the healing actually came about by the prayer and praise and singing of hymns of the “lady of the manor, with her maids and religious attendants”, and finally by the faith of “his sister’s husband, who had brought him there”.

But Augustine concludes, as he says that, “Others also were cured there, but of them it were tedious to speak.” He seems to lay the weight of the cures on the monument to the “Milanese martyrs, Protasius and Gervasius”.

Again there is no basis in Scripture for the establishment of monuments of holy things for the purpose of healing or deliverance. This exceeds what is written in the Scriptures. Note also that there was an altar at this monument as Augustine records the possessed man “with frightful screaming seized the altar”, and was delivered. Altars were for sacrifice in the Old Testament. The ritual of the Lord’s Supper, or Communion, had developed with the belief that it was a sacrifice. But Jesus offered one sacrifice for sins as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):6** In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. 8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; 9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. 10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: 12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; 13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. 14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

There is no more need for an altar to offer sacrifice. To do so now is to deny the efficacy of the one sacrifice for sins for ever which Jesus has made for us.

Augustine then continues, as he records two deliverances, and says, “I know that a young woman of Hippo was immediately dispossessed of a devil, on anointing herself with oil, mixed with the tears of the presbyter who had been praying for her. I know also that a bishop once prayed for a demoniac young man whom he never saw, and that he was cured on the spot.

Deliverance by prayer is found in the Scriptures, as Jesus performed in **Mark 9 (KJV):25** When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. 26 And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. 27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. 28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? 29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

Augustine then records, “There was a fellow townsman of ours at Hippo, Florentius, an old man, religious and poor, who supported himself as a tailor. Having lost his coat, and not having means to buy another, he prayed to the Twenty Martyrs, who have a very celebrated memorial shrine in our town, begging in a distinct voice that he might be clothed. Some

scoffing young men, who happened to be present, heard him, and followed him with their sarcasm as he went away, as if he had asked the martyrs for fifty pence to buy a coat. But he, walking on in silence, saw on the shore a great fish, gasping as if just cast up, and having secured it with the good natured assistance of the youths, he sold it for curing to a cook of the name of Catosus, a good Christian man, telling him how he had come by it, and receiving for it three hundred pence, which he laid out in wool, that his wife might exercise her skill upon, and make into a coat for him. **But, on cutting up the fish, the cook found a gold ring in its belly; and forthwith, moved with compassion, and influenced, too, by religious fear, gave it up to the man, saying, “See how the Twenty Martyrs have clothed you.”**

Praying to anyone but God has no basis in Scripture. But we must always remember Jesus’ words in **Matthew 17 (KJV):20** And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

Now Augustine then records the following miracles made supposedly by the martyr Stephen:

- 1.) **“When the bishop Projectus was bringing the relics of the most glorious martyr Stephen to the waters of Tibilis, a great concourse of people came to meet him at the shrine. There a blind woman entreated that she might be led to the bishop who was carrying the relics. He gave her the flowers he was carrying. She took them, applied them to her eyes, and forthwith saw. Those who were present were astounded, while she, with every expression of joy, preceded them, pursuing her way without further need of a guide.**
- 2.) **Lucillus bishop of Sinita, in the neighborhood of the colonial town of Hippo, was carrying in procession some relics of the same martyr, which had been deposited in the castle of Sinita. A fistula under which he had long labored, and which his private physician was watching an opportunity to cut, was suddenly cured by the mere carrying of that sacred fardel,—at least, afterwards there was no trace of it in his body.**
- 3.) **Eucharius, a Spanish priest, residing at Calama, was for a long time a sufferer from stone. By the relics of the same martyr, which the bishop Possidius brought him, he was cured. Afterwards the same priest, sinking under another disease, was lying dead, and already they were binding his hands. By the succor of the same martyr he was raised to life, the priest’s cloak having been brought from the oratory and laid upon the corpse.**
- 4.) **There was there an old nobleman named Martial, who had a great aversion to the Christian religion, but whose daughter was a Christian, while her husband had been baptized that same year. When he was ill, they besought him with tears and prayers to become a Christian, but he positively refused, and dismissed them from his presence in a storm of indignation. It occurred to the son-in-law to go to the oratory of St. Stephen, and there pray for him with all earnestness that God might give him a right mind, so that he should not delay believing in Christ. This he did with great groaning and tears, and the burning fervor of sincere piety; then, as he left the place, he took some of the flowers that were lying there, and, as it was already night, laid them by**

his father's head, who so slept. And lo! before dawn, he cries out for some one to run for the bishop; but he happened at that time to be with me at Hippo. So when he had heard that he was from home, he asked the presbyters to come. They came. To the joy and amazement of all, he declared that he believed, and he was baptized. As long as he remained in life, these words were ever on his lips: "Christ, receive my spirit," though he was not aware that these were the last words of the most blessed Stephen when he was stoned by the Jews. They were his last words also, for not long after he himself also gave up the ghost.

- 5.) There, too, by the same martyr, two men, one a citizen, the other a stranger, were cured of gout; but while the citizen was absolutely cured, the stranger was only informed what he should apply when the pain returned; and when he followed this advice, the pain was at once relieved.
- 6.) Audurus is the name of an estate, where there is a church that contains a memorial shrine of the martyr Stephen. It happened that, as a little boy was playing in the court, the oxen drawing a wagon went out of the track and crushed him with the wheel, so that immediately he seemed at his last gasp. His mother snatched him up, and laid him at the shrine, and not only did he revive, but also appeared uninjured.
- 7.) A religious female, who lived at Caspalium, a neighboring estate, when she was so ill as to be despaired of, had her dress brought to this shrine, but before it was brought back she was gone. However, her parents wrapped her corpse in the dress, and, her breath returning, she became quite well.
- 8.) At Hippo a Syrian called Bassus was praying at the relics of the same martyr for his daughter, who was dangerously ill. He too had brought her dress with him to the shrine. But as he prayed, behold, his servants ran from the house to tell him she was dead. His friends, however, intercepted them, and forbade them to tell him, lest he should bewail her in public. And when he had returned to his house, which was already ringing with the lamentations of his family, and had thrown on his daughter's body the dress he was carrying, she was restored to life.
- 9.) There, too, the son of a man, Irenæus, one of our tax-gatherers, took ill and died. And while his body was lying lifeless, and the last rites were being prepared, amidst the weeping and mourning of all, one of the friends who were consoling the father suggested that the body should be anointed with the oil of the same martyr. It was done, and he revived."
- 10.) Likewise Eleusinus, a man of tribunitian rank among us, laid his infant son, who had died, on the shrine of the martyr, which is in the suburb where he lived, and, after prayer, which he poured out there with many tears, he took up his child alive."

In each of these healings, we must ask ourselves, where do they lead to? The answer is that they lead us to praying to the saint. There is no basis for this in the Scriptures. But if we have faith, all things are possible with God.

Augustine then continues, "What am I to do? I am so pressed by the promise of finishing this work, that I cannot record all the miracles I know; and doubtless several of our adherents, when they read what I have narrated, will regret that I have omitted so many which they, as well as I, certainly know. Even now I beg these persons to excuse me, and to consider how long it

would take me to relate all those miracles, which the necessity of finishing the work I have undertaken forces me to omit. **For were I to be silent of all others, and to record exclusively the miracles of healing which were wrought in the district of Calama and of Hippo by means of this martyr—I mean the most glorious Stephen—they would fill many volumes; and yet all even of these could not be collected, but only those of which narratives have been written for public recital.** For when I saw, in our own times, frequent signs of the presence of divine powers similar to those which had been given of old, I desired that narratives might be written, judging that the multitude should not remain ignorant of these things. **It is not yet two years since these relics were first brought to Hippo-regius, and though many of the miracles which have been wrought by it have not, as I have the most certain means of knowing, been recorded, those which have been published amount to almost seventy at the hour at which I write.** But at Calama, where these relics have been for a longer time, and where more of the miracles were narrated for public information, there are incomparably more.”

Augustine states that these miracles were wrought **“by means of this martyr—I mean the most glorious Stephen”**. But we read in **John 14 (KJV):**13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

And in **John 15 (KJV):**16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

And in **John 16 (KJV):**23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. 24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

Augustine continues his testimony, “At Uzali, too, a colony near Utica, many signal miracles were, to my knowledge, wrought by the same martyr, whose relics had found a place there by direction of the bishop Evodius, long before we had them at Hippo. But there the custom of publishing narratives does not obtain, or, I should say, did not obtain, for possibly it may now have been begun. For, when I was there recently, a woman of rank, Petronia, had been miraculously cured of a serious illness of long standing, in which all medical appliances had failed, and, with the consent of the above named bishop of the place, I exhorted her to publish an account of it that might be read to the people. She most promptly obeyed, and inserted in her narrative a circumstance which I cannot omit to mention, though I am compelled to hasten on to the subjects which this work requires me to treat. She said that she had been persuaded by a Jew to wear next her skin, under all her clothes, a hair girdle, and on this girdle a ring, which, instead of a gem, had a stone which had been found in the kidneys of an ox. Girt with this charm, she was making her way to the threshold of the holy martyr. But, after leaving Carthage, and when she had been lodging in her own demesne on the river Bagrada, and was now rising to continue her journey, she saw her ring lying before her feet. In great surprise she examined the hair girdle, and when she found it bound, as it had been, quite firmly with knots, she conjectured that the ring had been worn through and dropped off; but when she found that the ring was itself also perfectly whole, she presumed that by this great miracle she had received somehow a pledge of her cure, whereupon she untied the girdle, and cast it into the river, and the ring along with it. This is not credited by those who do not believe either that the Lord Jesus Christ came forth from His mother’s womb without destroying her virginity, and entered among



His disciples when the doors were shut; but let them make strict inquiry into this miracle, and if they find it true, let them believe those others. The lady is of distinction, nobly born, married to a nobleman. She resides at Carthage. The city is distinguished, the person is distinguished, so that they who make inquiries cannot fail to find satisfaction. **Certainly the martyr himself, by whose prayers she was healed, believed on the Son of her who remained a virgin; on Him who came in among the disciples when the doors were shut; in fine,—and to this tends all that we have been retailing,—on Him who ascended into heaven with the flesh in which He had risen; and it is because he laid down his life for this faith that such miracles were done by his means.”**

It is the prayer of those who have faith in Jesus, and ask the Father in His name, that the Father hears, and answers. Let us be careful how we hear.

Augustine continues his testimony, **“Even now, therefore, many miracles are wrought, the same God who wrought those we read of still performing them, by whom He will and as He will; but they are not as well known, nor are they beaten into the memory, like gravel, by frequent reading, so that they cannot fall out of mind.** For even where, as is now done among ourselves, care is taken that the pamphlets of those who receive benefit be read publicly, yet those who are present hear the narrative but once, and many are absent; and so it comes to pass that even those who are present forget in a few days what they heard, and scarcely one of them can be found who will tell what he heard to one who he knows was not present.”

And he concludes, **“One miracle was wrought among ourselves, which, though no greater than those I have mentioned, was yet so signal and conspicuous, that I suppose there is no inhabitant of Hippo who did not either see or hear of it, none who could possibly forget it. There were seven brothers and three sisters of a noble family of the Cappadocian Cæsarea, who were cursed by their mother, a new-made widow, on account of some wrong they had done her, and which she bitterly resented, and who were visited with so severe a punishment from Heaven, that all of them were seized with a hideous shaking in all their limbs. Unable, while presenting this loathsome appearance, to endure the eyes of their fellow citizens, they wandered over almost the whole Roman world, each following his own direction. Two of them came to Hippo, a brother and a sister, Paulus and Palladia, already known in many other places by the fame of their wretched lot. Now it was about fifteen days before Easter when they came, and they came daily to church, and specially to the relics of the most glorious Stephen, praying that God might now be appeased, and restore their former health. There, and wherever they went, they attracted the attention of every one. Some who had seen them elsewhere, and knew the cause of their trembling, told others as occasion offered. Easter arrived, and on the Lord’s day, in the morning, when there was now a large crowd present, and the young man was holding the bars of the holy place where the relics were, and praying, suddenly he fell down, and lay precisely as if asleep, but not trembling as he was wont to do even in sleep. All present were astonished. Some were alarmed, some were moved with pity; and while some were for lifting him up, others prevented them, and said they should rather wait and see what would result. And behold! He rose up, and trembled no more, for he was healed, and stood quite well, scanning those who were scanning him. Who then refrained himself from praising God? The whole church was filled with the voices of those who were shouting and congratulating him. Then they came running to me, where I was sitting ready to come into the church. One after another they throng in, the last comer telling me as news what the first had told me already; and while I rejoiced and inwardly gave God thanks, the young man himself also enters, with a number of**

others, falls at my knees, is raised up to receive my kiss. We go in to the congregation: the church was full, and ringing with the shouts of joy, "Thanks to God! Praised be God!" Every one joining and shouting on all sides, "I have healed the people," and then with still louder voice shouting again. Silence being at last obtained, the customary lessons of the divine Scriptures were read. And when I came to my sermon, I made a few remarks suitable to the occasion and the happy and joyful feeling, not desiring them to listen to me, but rather to consider the eloquence of God in this divine work. The man dined with us, and gave us a careful account of his own, his mother's, and his family's calamity. Accordingly, on the following day, after delivering my sermon, I promised that next day I would read his narrative to the people. And when I did so, the third day after Easter Sunday, I made the brother and sister both stand on the steps of the raised place from which I used to speak; and while they stood there their pamphlet was read. The whole congregation, men and women alike, saw the one standing without any unnatural movement, the other trembling in all her limbs; so that those who had not before seen the man himself saw in his sister what the divine compassion had removed from him. In him they saw matter of congratulation, in her subject for prayer. Meanwhile, their pamphlet being finished, I instructed them to withdraw from the gaze of the people; and I had begun to discuss the whole matter somewhat more carefully, when lo! as I was proceeding, other voices are heard from the tomb of the martyr, shouting new congratulations. My audience turned round, and began to run to the tomb. **The young woman, when she had come down from the steps where she had been standing, went to pray at the holy relics, and no sooner had she touched the bars than she, in the same way as her brother, collapsed, as if falling asleep, and rose up cured.** While, then, we were asking what had happened, and what occasioned this noise of joy, they came into the basilica where we were, leading her from the martyr's tomb in perfect health. Then, indeed, such a shout of wonder rose from men and women together, that the exclamations and the tears seemed like never to come to an end. She was led to the place where she had a little before stood trembling. They now rejoiced that she was like her brother, as before they had mourned that she remained unlike him; and as they had not yet uttered their prayers in her behalf, they perceived that their intention of doing so had been speedily heard. **They shouted God's praises without words, but with such a noise that our ears could scarcely bear it. What was there in the hearts of these exultant people but the faith of Christ, for which Stephen had shed his blood?"**

If anyone has faith in Jesus, miracles can happen. But there is no record of anyone praying to Elisha after a man was cast into his sepulcher and revived in **2 Kings 13 (KJV):20** And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year. 21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

And Mary did not remain a virgin as Augustine states, for we read in **Mark 6 (KJV):3** Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

And in **Matthew 13 (KJV):55** Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

And in **Galatians 1 (KJV):18** Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter,

and abode with him fifteen days. 19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

But this is a tradition that has remained in the Roman Catholic Church to this day.

While there is no doubt that there was “the faith of Christ” in those praying, we see that the doctrine of the Church was slipping. In the time of Moses, there were magicians who did miracles as we read in **Exodus 7 (KJV)**:8 And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 9 When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent. 10 And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. 11 Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. 12 For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

And in **Exodus 7 (KJV)**:19 And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and that there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood, and in vessels of stone. 20 And Moses and Aaron did so, as the Lord commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. 21 And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. 22 And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the Lord had said. 23 And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also. 24 And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river. 25 And seven days were fulfilled, after that the Lord had smitten the river.

And in **Exodus 8 (KJV)**:5 And the Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt. 6 And Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt. 7 And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.

And in **Exodus 8 (KJV)**:16 And the Lord said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt. 17 And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. 18 And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. 19 Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.

We must be discerning in how we attest to miracles. The devil has power, as we read in **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV)**:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

But we have the authority in Jesus name over all the power of the enemy as we read in **Luke 10 (KJV):**17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. 18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

We are to fix our eyes on Jesus as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):**1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The word “Looking” in verse 2 in the Greek is ἀπορᾶω (pronounced ä-fo-rä'-ō), and means “to look away from one thing so as to see another” (apo, “from,” and No. 7 (eidon “to see”), “to concentrate the gaze upon,” occurs in Phl 2:23, “I shall see;” Hbr 12:2, “looking.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 13-14.**

When we start praying to anyone other than to the Father in Jesus’ name, we take our eyes off of Jesus. But we really must read the next section to better understand Augustine’s thinking about miracles.

Chapter 9.—That All the Miracles Which are Done by Means of the Martyrs in the Name of Christ Testify to that Faith Which the Martyrs Had in Christ.

To what do these miracles witness, but to this faith which preaches Christ risen in the flesh, and ascended with the same into heaven? For the martyrs themselves were martyrs, that is to say, witnesses of this faith, drawing upon themselves by their testimony the hatred of the world, and conquering the world not by resisting it, but by dying. For this faith they died, and can now ask these benefits from the Lord in whose name they were slain. For this faith their marvelous constancy was exercised, so that in these miracles great power was manifested as the result. For if the resurrection of the flesh to eternal life had not taken place in Christ, and were not to be accomplished in His people, as predicted by Christ, or by the prophets who foretold that Christ was to come, why do the martyrs who were slain for this faith which proclaims the resurrection possess such power? For whether God Himself wrought these miracles by that wonderful manner of working by which, though Himself eternal, He produces effects in time; or whether He wrought them by servants, and if so, whether He made use of the spirits of martyrs as He uses men who are still in the body, or effects all these marvels by means of angels, over whom He exerts an invisible, immutable, incorporeal sway, so that what is said to be done by the martyrs is done not by their operation, but only by their prayer and request; or whether, finally, some things are done in one way, others in another, and so that man cannot at all comprehend them,—nevertheless these miracles attest this faith which preaches the resurrection of the flesh to eternal life.

**Commentary:** Augustine shows us his faith as he begins by testifying, “To what do these miracles witness, but to this faith which preaches Christ risen in the flesh, and ascended with the same into heaven? For the martyrs themselves were martyrs, that is to say, witnesses of this faith, drawing upon themselves by their testimony the hatred of the world, and conquering the world not by resisting it, but by dying.”

But he then asserts, “For this faith they died, and can now ask these benefits from the Lord in whose name they were slain.”

Nowhere in Scripture does it say that the saints pray or intercede for those on earth. There is only one who is said to intercede for us, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):26** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

And in **Romans 8 (KJV):34** Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Jesus is our advocate as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

And He is our mediator as we read in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

He is also our great High Priest as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):14** Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

And He is our High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek as we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):21** (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) 22 By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. 23 And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: 24 But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 28 For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

There is no need for any other intercessor, or mediator for us who have believed in Jesus Christ. We are to intercede through prayer, but we understand that we are to pray to God in Jesus name, as we read in **John 14 (KJV):13** And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

And in **John 15 (KJV):16** Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever



ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

And in **John 16 (KJV):23** And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. 24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. 25 These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. 26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: 27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

The only instruction for prayer given in the whole Bible is to pray in Jesus' name to the Father. We are never to pray to anyone else, or in the name of anyone else.

And Paul encourages prayer in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):1** I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

But Augustine continues as he asserts, “For this faith their marvelous constancy was exercised, so that in these miracles great power was manifested as the result. For if the resurrection of the flesh to eternal life had not taken place in Christ, and were not to be accomplished in His people, as predicted by Christ, or by the prophets who foretold that Christ was to come, why do the martyrs who were slain for this faith which proclaims the resurrection possess such power?”

In his question, Augustine is asserting that these martyrs “possess such power”. However, in conclusion, Augustine believes that it is God who works miracles through different means as we continue to read, “For whether God Himself wrought these miracles by that wonderful manner of working by which, though Himself eternal, He produces effects in time; or whether He wrought them by servants, and if so, whether He made use of the spirits of martyrs as He uses men who are still in the body, or effects all these marvels by means of angels, over whom He exerts an invisible, immutable, incorporeal sway, so that what is said to be done by the martyrs is done not by their operation, but only by their prayer and request; or whether, finally, some things are done in one way, others in another, and so that man cannot at all comprehend them,—nevertheless these miracles attest this faith which preaches the resurrection of the flesh to eternal life.”

Augustine's faith is not in doubt here. But he is definitely influenced by the doctrine of the Catholic Church in his time.

Now Augustine does not deny that miracles occurred in the form of healings and deliverances from demons in his time.

However, nowhere is prayer by dead people, or spirits of dead people, spoken of in Scripture. The martyrs do not pray for us. Their relics do not heal. But the Holy Spirit heals, and sets captives free. This is not to say that people were not really healed as Augustine has testified, but they were not healed by praying before relics, or to the martyrs. They were deceived into believing that the miracles were done in this way. And this led to more unscriptural practices that have no basis in Scripture.

Why should we pray to martyrs when we can go directly to God in prayer? This practice makes God distant. We have to go through someone else to get to Him.

Part of the problem in Augustine's time was the priesthood, the sacerdotal order. This sacerdotal order was recognized by Irenaeus, as we looked at previously under **Martyrdom**. But it was stronger in the time of Augustine. The priest began to be a mediator between the

people and God. This began to make a distance between God and the common believer. I believe that this sacerdotal order is what preceded the belief in the prayer to martyrs. Once someone else is a mediator between us and God, it opens the door for other things that make God distant.

There is only one mediator between God and men, as we read again in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

We must heed John's warning in **1 John 2 (KJV):26** These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. 28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

## Summary

Augustine mentions the bodies of Gervasius and Protasius, the martyrs whom Ambrose “dug up and with due honour transferred to the Ambrosian Basilica”. Afterwards, “not only they who were troubled with unclean spirits (the devils confessing themselves) were healed, but a certain man also, who had been blind many years, a well known citizen of that city”, after touching “with his handkerchief the bier of Thy saints,” and “put it to his eyes, they were forthwith opened”.

So the belief was that the healings and deliverances occurred because the bodies of the martyrs, Gervasius and Protasius, were “dug up and with due honour transferred to the Ambrosian Basilica”. This profoundly affected Augustine.

Augustine believed that “**the world embraced the faith it had furiously persecuted.**” This is understandable because of the persecutions of the Roman Empire on the Christian Church before his time. The Christian Church was then embraced by the emperor Constantine in 313 A.D., and the succession of Roman emperors up until the time of Augustine and beyond.

Augustine testifies that, “**The miracles were published that they might produce faith, and the faith which they produced brought them into greater prominence. For they are read in congregations that they may be believed, and yet they would not be so read unless they were believed. For even now miracles are wrought in the name of Christ, whether by His sacraments or by the prayers or relics of His saints; but they are not so brilliant and conspicuous as to cause them to be published with such glory as accompanied the former miracles.**”

So it is Augustine's testimony that miracles were wrought even in his time. Augustine then records healings, in answer to prayer, of a “**perfectly firm cicatrix**”, of “**a very devout woman**” who “**had cancer in one of her breasts**” that at the time “**physicians say, is incurable.**” And he records of “**A gouty doctor**” who “**was relieved in the very act of baptism, not only of the extraordinary pain he was tortured with, but also of the disease itself, so that, though he lived a long time afterwards, he never suffered from gout;**”

He also records that, “**An old comedian of Curubis was cured at baptism not only of paralysis, but also of hernia, and, being delivered from both afflictions, came up out of the font of regeneration as if he had had nothing wrong with his body.**”

Spirits were banished by offering “the sacrifice of the body of Christ”, and prayer. And, “holy earth brought from Jerusalem, where Christ, having been buried, rose again the third day”, was brought to a spot that was “made a place of prayer where Christians might assemble for the worship of God”. Then, “a young countryman who was paralytic”, who was brought “to that holy place”, and after praying, “forthwith went away on his own feet perfectly cured”.

But how reliable was it that the earth was really where Christ had been buried? This is a reliance on tradition. And even if it was earth from where Christ had been buried, it is faith in Him alone that heals, and He is our healer as we read in **Exodus 15 (KJV):26** And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.

And Augustine says, “When the bishop Projectus was bringing the relics of the most glorious martyr Stephen to the waters of Tibilis, a great concourse of people came to meet him at the shrine. There a blind woman entreated that she might be led to the bishop who was carrying the relics. He gave her the flowers he was carrying. She took them, applied them to her eyes, and forthwith saw.”

Augustine also testifies, “Even now, therefore, many miracles are wrought, the same God who wrought those we read of still performing them, by whom He will and as He will; but they are not as well known, nor are they beaten into the memory, like gravel, by frequent reading, so that they cannot fall out of mind”.

Augustine records that a young man “had been taken possession of by a devil”, and, “As he lay at the monument, near death, or even quite like a dead person, the lady of the manor, with her maids and religious attendants, entered the place for evening prayer and praise, as her custom was, and they began to sing hymns”. When the devil was leaving the man, one of his eyes popped out, “But his sister’s husband, who had brought him there, said, “God, who has banished the devil, is able to restore his eye at the prayers of His saints.” Therewith he replaced the eye that was fallen out and hanging, and bound it in its place with his handkerchief as well as he could, and advised him not to loose the bandage for seven days. When he did so, he found it quite healthy. Others also were cured there, but of them it were tedious to speak.”

So this healing actually came about by the prayer and praise and singing of hymns of the “lady of the manor, with her maids and religious attendants”, and finally by the faith of “his sister’s husband, who had brought him there”.

Again there is no basis in Scripture for the establishment of monuments of holy things for the purpose of healing or deliverance. This exceeds what is written in the Scriptures. Note also that there was an altar at this monument as Augustine records that the possessed man “with frightful screaming seized the altar”, and was delivered. Altars were for sacrifice in the Old Testament. But in the early Church, the ritual of the Lord’s Supper, or Communion, had developed with the belief that it was a sacrifice.

There is no more need for an altar to offer sacrifice. To do so now is to deny the efficacy of the one sacrifice for sins for ever which Jesus has made for us.

But this is a tradition that has remained in the Roman Catholic Church to this day. While there is no doubt that there was “the faith of Christ” in those praying, we see that the

understanding of Biblical truth in the Church was slipping.

Augustine reasons, “To what do these miracles witness, but to this faith which preaches Christ risen in the flesh, and ascended with the same into heaven? For the martyrs themselves were martyrs, that is to say, witnesses of this faith, drawing upon themselves by their testimony the hatred of the world, and conquering the world not by resisting it, but by dying. For this faith they died, and can now ask these benefits from the Lord in whose name they were slain.”

Nowhere in the Scriptures is it said that the martyrs are praying and asking for benefits for us in heaven. This is a tradition that began to develop very early on in the Church.

Jesus did say that the one who believes in Him would do His works as we read in **John 14 (KJV):**12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

It's not that we will do greater miracles than Jesus did, but works of a greater extent, reaching the whole world for Christ, that all who believe might be saved.

But we must surrender to His will, and do the works that He has ordained for us to do. Without Him we can do nothing.

# Spiritual Gifts

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions Book XIII. Chapter VII, paragraph 8, page 192

Chapter VII.—That the Holy Spirit Brings Us to God.

8. Hence let him that is able now follow Thy apostle with his understanding where he thus speaks, because Thy love “is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us;” (Romans 5:5) and where, “concerning spiritual gifts,” he teacheth and showeth unto us a more excellent way of charity; (1 Corinthians 12:31) and where he bows his knees unto Thee for us, that we may know the super-eminent knowledge of the love of Christ. (Ephesians 3:14-19) And, therefore, from the beginning was He super-eminently “borne above the waters.” To whom shall I tell this? How speak of the weight of lustful desires, pressing downwards to the steep abyss? And how charity raises us up again, through Thy Spirit which was “borne over the waters?” To whom shall I tell it? How tell it? For neither are there places in which we are merged and emerge. What can be more like, and yet more unlike? They be affections, they be loves; the filthiness of our spirit flowing away downwards with the love of cares, and the sanctity of Thine raising us upwards by the love of freedom from care; that we may lift our hearts unto Thee where Thy Spirit is “borne over the waters;” and that we may come to that preeminent rest, when our soul shall have passed through the waters which have no substance.

**Commentary:** The Confessions of Augustine was written between 397 and 400 AD. And this is the first reference to spiritual gifts in that work.

Augustine begins as he says, “Hence let him that is able now follow Thy apostle with his understanding where he thus speaks, because Thy love “is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us;” (Romans 5:5). . . .”

He refers to several Scriptures here. First we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):5** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

By “Thy apostle” he is referring to Paul who wrote Romans.

He continues as he then says, “and where, “concerning spiritual gifts,” he teacheth and showeth unto us a more excellent way of charity; (1 Corinthians 12:31). . . .”

He refers here in part to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):1** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

And in part to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):31** But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

And in **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):1** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

And he continues as he then says, “and where he bows his knees unto Thee for us, that



we may know the super-eminent knowledge of the love of Christ. (Ephesians 3:14-19).”

He refers to “**Thy apostle**”, that is Paul, who “**bows his knees unto Thee for us**”, as in **Ephesians 3 (KJV)**:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

Augustine continues as he says, “And, therefore, from the beginning was He supereminently “borne above the waters.” To whom shall I tell this? How speak of the weight of lustful desires, pressing downwards to the steep abyss? And how charity raises us up again, through Thy Spirit which was “borne over the waters?””

Now as to what he is referring to when he speaks of the Spirit of God being “borne above the waters”, he most probably refers to **Genesis 1 (KJV)**:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Augustine continues as he says, “To whom shall I tell it? How tell it? For neither are there places in which we are merged and emerge. What can be more like, and yet more unlike? They be affections, they be loves; the filthiness of our spirit flowing away downwards with the love of cares, and the sanctity of Thine raising us upwards by the love of freedom from care; that we may lift our hearts unto Thee where Thy Spirit is “borne over the waters;” and that we may come to that preeminent rest, when our soul shall have passed through the waters which have no substance.”

Now in Psalm 18, which refers to King David in the last verse of this Psalm, we read of a time of distress, and the Lord drawing him out of many waters in **Psalm 18 (KJV)**:1 I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. 2 The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. 3 I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies. 4 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. 5 The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me. 6 In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.

And in **Psalm 18 (KJV)**:16 He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.

Now Augustine will refer to Genesis again, as we continue to read the next section. But we must be patient as we continue, and read paragraph 22 below for context, and then wait for his reference to spiritual gifts in the next section, paragraph 23.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions** **Book XIII, Chapter XVIII, paragraphs 22-24, Chapter XIX, page 197-198**

Chapter XVIII.—Of the Lights and Stars of Heaven—Of Day and Night, Ver. 14.

22. Thus, O Lord, thus, I beseech Thee, let there arise, as Thou makest, as Thou givest joy and ability,—let “truth spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven,” (Psalm 85:11) and let there be “lights in the firmament.” (Genesis 1:14) Let us break our bread to the hungry, and let us bring the houseless poor to our house. Let us clothe the naked, and despise not those of our own flesh. (Isaiah 58:7) The which fruits having sprung forth from the earth, behold, because it is good; (Genesis 1:12) and let our temporary light burst forth; (Isaiah 58:8) and let us, from this inferior fruit of action, possessing the delights of contemplation and of the Word of Life above, let us appear as lights in the world, (Philippians 2:15) clinging to the firmament of Thy Scripture. **For therein Thou makest it plain unto us, that we may distinguish between things intelligible and things of sense, as if between the day and the night; or between souls, given, some to things intellectual, others to things of sense; so that now not Thou only in the secret of Thy judgment, as before the firmament was made, dividest between the light and the darkness, but Thy spiritual children also, placed and ranked in the same firmament (Thy grace being manifest throughout the world), may give light upon the earth, and divide between the day and night, and be for signs of times; because “old things have passed away,” and “behold all things are become new;” (2 Corinthians 5:17) and “because our salvation is nearer than when we believed;” (Romans 13:11) and because “the night is far spent, the day is at hand;” (Romans 13:12) and because Thou wilt crown Thy year with blessing, (Psalm 65:11) sending the labourers of Thy goodness into Thy harvest, (Matthew 9:38) in the sowing of which others have laboured, sending also into another field, whose harvest shall be in the end. (Matthew 13:39) Thus Thou grantest the prayers of him that asketh, and blessest the years of the just; (Proverbs 10:6) but Thou art the same, and in Thy years which fail not (Psalm 102:27) Thou preparest a garner for our passing years. For by an eternal counsel Thou dost in their proper seasons bestow upon the earth heavenly blessings.**

**Commentary:** It is helpful to look at the Scriptures Augustine is looking at so that we can understand more of where he is coming from.

Augustine first says, “Thus, O Lord, thus, I beseech Thee, let there arise, as Thou makest, as Thou givest joy and ability,—let “truth spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven,” referring to **Psalm 85 (KJV):11** Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

And then he continues, and says, “and let there be “lights in the firmament,”” referring to **Genesis 1 (KJV):14** And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

He then says, “Let us break our bread to the hungry, and let us bring the houseless poor to our house. Let us clothe the naked, and despise not those of our own flesh”, in reference to **Isaiah 58 (KJV):6** Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? 7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

And he continues as he says, “The which fruits having sprung forth from the earth, behold, because it is good”, referring to **Genesis 1 (KJV):12** And the earth brought forth grass,

and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

And then he makes an interesting statement as he says, “and let our temporary light burst forth”, referring to **Isaiah 58 (KJV):8** Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.

He then explains as he says, “and let us, from this inferior fruit of action, possessing the delights of contemplation and of the Word of Life above, let us appear as lights in the world”, referring to **Philippians 2 (KJV):15** That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; 16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

And he concludes his statement as he says, “clinging to the firmament of Thy Scripture”. So in his analogy he relates the Scripture to the firmament, which he says we are to cling to.

Let us now read in Genesis the description of the firmament in **Genesis 1 (KJV):6** And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. 9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. 10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

So the Scripture is as heaven, or the firmament, in his analogy, and so that we understand, let us read again what he said before, “let us, from this inferior fruit of action, possessing the delights of contemplation and of the Word of Life above, let us appear as lights in the world”.

So again, in his analogy, he relates the Scripture to the firmament, which he says we are to cling to, and in which we are to “appear as lights in the world”.

Now he continues as he says, “**For therein**”, speaking of the firmament of Scripture, “**Thou makest it plain unto us, that we may distinguish between things intelligible and things of sense, as if between the day and the night; or between souls, given, some to things intellectual, others to things of sense**”. He is referring to the gifts of the Spirit here as we shall see in the next paragraph.

Let us continue as he says, “**so that now not Thou only in the secret of Thy judgment, as before the firmament was made, dividest between the light and the darkness, but Thy spiritual children also, placed and ranked in the same firmament (Thy grace being manifest throughout the world), may give light upon the earth, and divide between the day and night, and be for signs of times**”.

I believe he is here referring to the different ministry gifts in the body of Christ, when he says above, “**but Thy spiritual children also, placed and ranked in the same firmament (Thy grace being manifest throughout the world)**”. It is God who places us in the body of Christ as He pleases as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

As to rank, we also read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):27** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily

prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

I don't know if he himself would refer to them as ministry gifts, but he does here refer to the grace of God **"being manifest throughout the world"**. This could refer to **Romans 12 (KJV):3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

In verse 6 we read that we have "gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us". Let us continue, as he says, **"because "old things have passed away," and "behold all things are become new,"** referring to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

And he then says, **"because our salvation is nearer than when we believed, and because "the night is far spent, the day is at hand""**, referring in context to **Romans 13 (KJV):11** And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

And he then continues, **"and because Thou wilt crown Thy year with blessing,"** referring to **Psalms 65 (KJV):11** Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.

And he then says, **"sending the labourers of Thy goodness into Thy harvest"**, referring to **Matthew 9 (KJV):38** Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

And then, **"in the sowing of which others have laboured, sending also into another field, whose harvest shall be in the end,"** referring first to **John 4 (KJV):38** I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

And then to **Matthew 13 (KJV):39** The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

And he then says, **"Thus Thou grantest the prayers of him that asketh, and blessest the years of the just"**, referring to **Proverbs 10 (KJV):6** Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

And he continues, **"but Thou art the same, and in Thy years which fail not"**, referring to **Psalms 102 (KJV):27** But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

And he concludes as he says, **"Thou preparest a garner for our passing years. For by an eternal counsel Thou dost in their proper seasons bestow upon the earth heavenly blessings."**

The word "garner" refers to a place of storage. Now all of the above prepares us for the next paragraph where he mentions the gifts of the Spirit. He will begin by quoting from 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, and he will add his analogy to the text.



23. For, indeed, to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, as if the greater light, on account of those who are delighted with the light of manifest truth, as in the beginning of the day; but to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, as if the lesser light; to another faith; to another the gift of healing; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another the discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues. And all these as stars. For all these worketh the one and self-same Spirit, dividing to every man his own as He willeth; and making stars appear manifestly, to profit withal. (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) But the word of knowledge, wherein are contained all sacraments, which are varied in their periods like the moon, and the other conceptions of gifts, which are successively reckoned up as stars, inasmuch as they come short of that splendour of wisdom in which the aforementioned day rejoices, are only for the beginning of the night. For they are necessary to such as he Thy most prudent servant could not speak unto as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal (1 Corinthians 3:1)—even he who speaketh wisdom among those that are perfect. (1 Corinthians 2:6) But the natural man, as a babe in Christ,—and a drinker of milk,—until he be strengthened for solid meat, (1 Corinthians 3:2, Hebrews 5:12) and his eye be enabled to look upon the Sun, let him not dwell in his own deserted night, but let him be contented with the light of the moon and the stars. Thou reasonest these things with us, our All-wise God, in Thy Book, Thy firmament, that we may discern all things in an admirable contemplation, although as yet in signs, and in times, and in days, and in years. (Genesis 1:14)

**Commentary:** Augustine now begins by saying, “For, indeed, to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, as if the greater light, on account of those who are delighted with the light of manifest truth, as in the beginning of the day”. So wisdom is the greater light, or the sun, as it were, in the firmament, in his analogy. He then says, “but to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, as if the lesser light;” Thus, knowledge is as the moon, the lesser light in the firmament.

He then continues, “to another faith; to another the gift of healing; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another the discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues. And all these as stars. For all these worketh the one and self-same Spirit, dividing to every man his own as He willeth; and making stars appear manifestly, to profit withal.”

So in his analogy, the word of wisdom is the sun, the word of knowledge is the moon, and all the gifts are as stars. We see of course that he is referring to the gifts of the Spirit in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):8** For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Curiously, Augustine did not refer directly to verse 7 above, as in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):7** But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

And nothing is said about spiritual gifts being lights in the Scriptures. He seems to think of the manifestations of the Spirit as lights in the midst of the firmament of the word of God. And wisdom is the greater or brightest light, that is, the sun, as it were, and the word of knowledge is the moon.



He then says, “But the word of knowledge, wherein are contained all sacraments, which are varied in their periods like the moon, and the other conceptions of gifts, which are successively reckoned up as stars, inasmuch as they come short of that splendour of wisdom in which the aforementioned day rejoices, are only for the beginning of the night.”

As concerning “sacraments”, Phillip Schaff says of Augustine that, “He was the first to give a clear and fixed definition of the sacrament, as a visible sign of invisible grace, resting on divine appointment; but he knows nothing of the number seven; this was a much later enactment.” **Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Series 1, Volume 1, I. Prolegomena: St. Augustin’s Life and Work By Philip Schaff, D.D.**

The word “sacrament” is not found in the Bible. So with his statement, “the word of knowledge, wherein are contained all sacraments, which are varied in their periods like the moon”, he seems to think of these gifts as a “sign of invisible grace”. But in doing so, he distances himself from what the gifts of the Spirit actually are. That is, he does not seem to understand that the gifts of the Spirit are not rituals that are performed at set periods of time, like the sacraments. The gifts of the Spirit actually have nothing to do with rituals, such as Baptism in Water or the Eucharist. The gifts of the Spirit are actually divine enablements given to believers as He wills, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry. We shall explain shortly.

Now after this statement, he says, “and the other conceptions of gifts, which are successively reckoned up as stars”, as if the gifts of the Spirit have a certain ranking of importance, and then he says, “inasmuch as they come short of that splendour of wisdom in which the aforementioned day rejoices, are only for the beginning of the night”. He seems to imply that these gifts had ceased.

He then continues, as he says, “For they are necessary to such as he Thy most prudent servant could not speak unto as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal”. That is, they were only necessary to the Corinthians who were carnal, and not to the spiritual, referring to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

The Corinthians came behind in no gift as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):6** Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: **7** So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Yet because of the way they were exercising the gifts, Paul corrected them. The whole of 1 Corinthians, chapter 14, is Paul’s correction as to the operation of the gifts of the Spirit. He wanted everything to be done decently and in order as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):39** Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. **40** Let all things be done decently and in order.

Their carnality mostly had to do with the divisions among them as he says in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):3** For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

Augustine then continues and says, “—even he who speaketh wisdom among those that are perfect”. That is, he refers to Paul who spoke wisdom among those that are perfect, referring to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):6** Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

He then says, “But the natural man, as a babe in Christ,—and a drinker of milk,—until he

be strengthened for solid meat”, referring to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):2** I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

And he continues, “and his eye be enabled to look upon the Sun, let him not dwell in his own deserted night, but let him be contented with the light of the moon and the stars”.

It is possible that Augustine is referring to the stage of the catechumen here. It is just difficult to know exactly what Augustine means by “natural man” here, although he says “as a babe in Christ”.

The natural man in the Scripture speaks of a mere man without the Spirit of God. The natural man then is not a babe in Christ, for he is not in Christ at all, since he does not have the Spirit of God. But the Corinthians had the Spirit of God, although they were not walking as spiritual, but as carnal, as if that was all that they were, just a natural man.

To understand this, we must read in context in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):6** Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

In verse 6 above, Paul spoke wisdom “among them that are perfect”. The word “perfect” in the Greek is τέλειος (pronounced te'-lā-os), from G5056; complete (in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc.); neuter (as noun, with G3588) completeness:—of full age, man, perfect. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5046.**

That is, the “perfect” are those who are “of full age”, who “by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil”, as we read in **Hebrews 5 (KJV):11** Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

The word in the Greek for “full age” is again τέλειος (pronounced te'-lā-os), the same as that which is used in 1 Corinthians 2:6 above, translated “perfect”.

He that is spiritual can judge all things because he has the Spirit of God, and because he has applied what he has learned as a doer, and not just a hearer of the word of God. The natural man, without the Spirit of God, cannot understand or receive the things of the Spirit. Now Paul

is saying that he could not speak to the Corinthians as to spiritual, but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. Paul was not saying that they did not have the Spirit of God, for he says in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

The Holy Spirit was in them, but they were not acknowledging His presence, and they were walking as mere natural men. Paul goes on to explain in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):3** For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Paul is saying that, though we have the Spirit of God as believers, we may not be acknowledging His presence in our lives. We may be living as if He were not there, that is, walking as mere natural men.

If we have been born again, we begin as babes in Christ. We must learn the first principles of the faith, as we read again in **Hebrews 5 (KJV):12** For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

The first principles of the oracles of God are enumerated in **Hebrews 6 (KJV):1** Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

And Peter describes “milk” in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):1** Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

And Peter says we are to continue to grow, as we read in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Paul describes how he first came to the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

So the Corinthians knew Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And they were operational in the gifts of the Spirit, or Spiritual gifts. And they had been taught the first principles of the oracles of God, but it seems that these principles had not sunk in yet.

Augustine concludes this paragraph as he says, “**Thou reasonest these things with us, our All-wise God, in Thy Book, Thy firmament, that we may discern all things in an admirable contemplation, although as yet in signs, and in times, and in days, and in years**”, referring to **Genesis 1 (KJV):14** And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

In comparing the Scripture, that is, “**Thy Book**”, with the firmament, it seems that

Augustine is saying that there is much that we do not understand in the contemplation of Scripture. Augustine's analogy of the word of God as the firmament, and the gifts of the Spirit as some of the lights in the firmament needs more explanation. As it stands, his analogy is not very helpful. He seems to believe that the spiritual gifts of a word of wisdom and a word of knowledge are the strong meat in the word of God. We will discuss this more as we progress. Let us proceed to his next paragraph.

## Chapter XIX.—All Men Should Become Lights in the Firmament of Heaven.

24. But first, “Wash you, make you clean;” put away iniquity from your souls, and from before mine eyes, that the dry land may appear. “Learn to do well; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow,” that the earth may bring forth the green herb for meat, and the tree bearing fruit; and come let us reason together, saith the Lord (Isaiah 1:16-18), that there may be lights in the firmament of heaven, and that they may shine upon the earth. **That rich man asked of the good Master what he should do to attain eternal life. Let the good Master, whom he thought a man, and nothing more, tell him (but He is “good” because He is God)—let Him tell him, that if he would “enter into life” he must “keep the commandments;” let him banish from himself the bitterness of malice and wickedness; let him not kill, nor commit adultery, nor steal, nor bear false witness; that the dry land may appear, and bud forth the honouring of father and mother, and the love of our neighbor. All these, saith he, have I kept. Whence, then, are there so many thorns, if the earth be fruitful? Go, root up the woody thicket of avarice; sell that thou hast, and be filled with fruit by giving to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and follow the Lord “if thou wilt be perfect,” coupled with those amongst whom He speaketh wisdom, Who knoweth what to distribute to the day and to the night, that thou also mayest know it, that for thee also there may be lights in the firmament of heaven, which will not be unless thy heart be there; which likewise also will not be unless thy treasure be there, as thou hast heard from the good Master. But the barren earth was grieved, and the thorns choked the word. (Matthew 19:16-24)**

**Commentary:** Augustine continues with his analogy, as he says, “But first, “Wash you, make you clean;” put away iniquity from your souls, and from before mine eyes, that the dry land may appear. “Learn to do well; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow,” that the earth may bring forth the green herb for meat, and the tree bearing fruit; and come let us reason together, saith the Lord (Isaiah 1:16-18), that there may be lights in the firmament of heaven, and that they may shine upon the earth.”

Let us break this down piece by piece in order to understand his analogy. He is referring first to **Isaiah 1 (Septuagint):16** Wash you, be clean; remove your iniquities from your souls before mine eyes; cease from your iniquities;

And to **Isaiah 1 (KJV):16** Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

So we see that he doesn't quote verse 16 exactly when he says, “put away iniquity from your souls, and from before mine eyes”. The verse actually reads, “put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil”. Augustine includes the word “souls”, which is not in the verse above. Augustine is relying on the Septuagint.



Then he adds, “that the dry land may appear”. This is part of his analogy. He seems to be referring to the creation narrative in Genesis 1, for after He made the firmament, He gathered the waters to one place, and the dry land appeared as we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV):**7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. 9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

Then he says, “Learn to do well; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow,” referring to the next verse in **Isaiah 1 (Septuagint):**17 learn to do well; diligently seek judgment, deliver him that is suffering wrong, plead for the orphan, and obtain justice for the widow.

And to **Isaiah 1 (KJV):**17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

And he then adds, “that the earth may bring forth the green herb for meat, and the tree bearing fruit”. This is again part of the creation narrative in **Genesis 1 (KJV):**11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. 12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. 13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

Then he continues and says, “and come let us reason together, saith the Lord” referring to the next verse in **Isaiah 1 (Septuagint):**18 And come, let us reason together, saith the Lord: and though your sins be as purple, I will make them white as snow; and though they be as scarlet, I will make them white as wool.

And to **Isaiah 1 (KJV):**18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

He then adds, “that there may be lights in the firmament of heaven, and that they may shine upon the earth”. This follows in line with the creation narrative as we continue to read in **Genesis 1 (KJV):**14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

Augustine then continues as he says, “**That rich man asked of the good Master what he should do to attain eternal life. Let the good Master, whom he thought a man, and nothing more, tell him (but He is “good” because He is God)—let Him tell him, that if he would “enter into life” he must “keep the commandments;” let him banish from himself the bitterness of malice and wickedness; let him not kill, nor commit adultery, nor steal, nor bear false witness; that the dry land may appear, and bud forth the honouring of father and mother, and the love of our neighbor.**”

He is referring to **Matthew 19 (KJV):**16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? 17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. 18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Augustine then continues as he says, “**All these, saith he, have I kept. Whence, then, are there so many thorns, if the earth be fruitful? Go, root up the woody thicket of avarice; sell that**



thou hast, and be filled with fruit by giving to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and follow the Lord “if thou wilt be perfect”, coupled with those amongst whom He speaketh wisdom, Who knoweth what to distribute to the day and to the night, that thou also mayest know it, that for thee also there may be lights in the firmament of heaven, which will not be unless thy heart be there; which likewise also will not be unless thy treasure be there, as thou hast heard from the good Master.”

He has added a few words, but he is here referring to **Matthew 19 (KJV):20** The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? 21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

Augustine then concludes, “**But the barren earth was grieved, and the thorns choked the word. (Matthew 19:16-24)**”

He is here referring to **Matthew 13 (KJV):7** And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

And in context to **Matthew 19 (KJV):22** But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. 23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

This paragraph helps us understand his analogy a little better. It is the doing of the word that makes “the dry land appear”, in his analogy, as he said at the beginning of this paragraph, ““But first, “Wash you, make you clean;” put away iniquity from your souls, and from before mine eyes, that the dry land may appear.” We now examine another paragraph where Augustine mentions spiritual gifts.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions**

#### **Book XIII, Chapter XXXIV, paragraph 49, spiritual gifts mentioned, page 206-207**

49. We have also examined what Thou willedst to be shadowed forth, whether by the creation, or the description of things in such an order. And we have seen that things severally are good, and all things very good, in Thy Word, in Thine Only-Begotten, both heaven and earth, the Head and the body of the Church, in Thy predestination before all times, without morning and evening. But when Thou didst begin to execute in time the things predestinated, that Thou mightest make manifest things hidden, and adjust our disorders (for our sins were over us, and we had sunk into profound darkness away from thee, **and Thy good Spirit was borne over us to help us in due season**), **Thou didst both justify the ungodly, and didst divide them from the wicked**; and madest firm the authority of Thy Book between those above, who would be docile unto Thee, and those under, who would be subject unto them; and Thou didst collect the society of unbelievers into one conspiracy, in order that the zeal of the faithful might appear, and that they might bring forth works of mercy unto Thee, even distributing unto the poor earthly riches, to obtain heavenly. **And after this didst Thou kindle certain lights in the firmament, Thy holy ones, having the word of life, and shining with an eminent authority preferred by spiritual gifts**; and then again, for the instruction of the unbelieving Gentiles, didst Thou out of corporeal matter produce the sacraments and visible miracles, and sounds of words

according to the firmament of Thy Book, by which the faithful should be blessed. Next didst Thou form the living soul of the faithful, through affections ordered by the vigour of continency; and afterwards, the mind subjected to Thee alone, and needing to imitate no human authority, Thou didst renew after Thine image and likeness; and didst subject its rational action to the excellency of the understanding, as the woman to the man; and to all Thy ministries, necessary for the perfecting of the faithful in this life, Thou didst will that, for their temporal uses, good things, fruitful in the future time, should be given by the same faithful. We behold all these things, and they are very good, because Thou dost see them in us,—Thou who hast given unto us Thy Spirit, whereby we might see them, and in them love Thee.

**Commentary:** Augustine here continues with his analogy as he says, “We have also examined what Thou willedst to be shadowed forth, whether by the creation, or the description of things in such an order. And we have seen that things severally are good, and all things very good, in Thy Word, in Thine Only-Begotten, both heaven and earth, the Head and the body of the Church, in Thy predestination **before all times, without morning and evening**. But when Thou didst begin to execute in time the things predestinated, that Thou mightest make manifest things hidden, and adjust our disorders (for our sins were over us, and we had sunk into profound darkness away from thee, **and Thy good Spirit was borne over us to help us in due season**), **Thou didst both justify the ungodly, and didst divide them from the wicked;**”

So again he refers to **Genesis 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

And this would have been a time “**before all times, without morning and evening**”, and “our sins were over us, and we had sunk into profound darkness away from thee, **and Thy good Spirit was borne over us to help us in due season**”. God then “divided the light from the darkness” in verse 3 above, and so in his analogy, “**Thou didst both justify the ungodly, and didst divide them from the wicked;**”

And Augustine continues his analogy as he then says, “and madest firm the authority of Thy Book between those above, who would be docile unto Thee, and those under, who would be subject unto them;”

In his analogy, I believe he is referring to **Genesis 1 (KJV):5** And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. 6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

By referring to “Those above, who would be docile unto Thee”, I believe he is speaking of those who have been baptized in the Catholic Church. And by referring to “those under, who would be subject unto them”, I believe he means all of the unbelievers in the empire at that time.

He continues, “and Thou didst collect the society of unbelievers into one conspiracy, in order that the zeal of the faithful might appear, and that they might bring forth works of mercy

unto Thee, even distributing unto the poor earthly riches, to obtain heavenly. **And after this didst Thou kindle certain lights in the firmament, Thy holy ones, having the word of life, and shining with an eminent authority preferred by spiritual gifts;**”

So the Book is the firmament, and those above are believers, and then probably the bishops and cardinals are **“certain lights in the firmament, Thy holy ones, having the word of life, and shining with an eminent authority preferred by spiritual gifts;”**

It is difficult to say exactly what he means by spiritual gifts. He refers to the gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, but just what he interprets these to be is still uncertain. Let us keep looking for an answer.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions**

### **Letter CLXIX. (a.d. 415.) Bishop Augustin to Bishop Evodius. Chap. I., paragraph 2, page 539**

2. For the words, “He that is ignorant shall be ignored,” (1 Corinthians 14:38) were not used by the apostle in reference to this subject, as your letter affirms; as if this punishment were to be inflicted on the man who is not able to discern by the exercise of his intellect the ineffable unity of the Trinity, in the same way as the unity of memory, understanding, and will in the soul of man is discerned. The apostle said these words with a wholly different design. Consult the passage and you will see that he was speaking of those things which might be for the edification of the many in faith and holiness, not of those which might with difficulty be comprehended by the few, and by them only in the small degree in which the comprehension of so great a subject is attainable in this life. **The positions laid down by him were,—that prophesying was to be preferred to speaking with tongues; that these gifts should not be exercised in a disorderly manner, as if the spirit of prophecy compelled them to speak even against their will; that women should keep silence in the Church; and that all things should be done decently and in order. While treating of these things he says: “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him know the things which I write to you, for they are the commands of the Lord. If any man be ignorant, he shall be ignored;” intending by these words to restrain and call to order persons who were specially ready to cause disorder in the Church, because they imagined themselves to excel in spiritual gifts, although they were disturbing everything by their presumptuous conduct. “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him know,” he says, “the things which I write to you, for they are the commands of the Lord.” If any man thinks himself to be, and in reality is not, a prophet, for he who is a prophet undoubtedly knows and does not need admonition and exhortation, because “he judgeth all things, and is himself judged of no man.” (1 Corinthians 2:15) Those persons, therefore, caused confusion and trouble in the Church who thought themselves to be in the Church what they were not. He teaches these to know the commandments of the Lord, for he is not a “God of confusion, but of peace.” (1 Corinthians 14:33) But “if any one is ignorant, he shall be ignored,” that is to say, he shall be rejected; for God is not ignorant—so far as mere knowledge is concerned—in regard to the persons to whom He shall one day say, “I know you not,” (Luke 13:27) but their rejection is signified by this expression.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “For the words, “He that is ignorant shall be ignored,” (1 Corinthians 14:38) were not used by the apostle in reference to this subject, as your letter affirms; as if this punishment were to be inflicted on the man who is not able to discern by the exercise of his intellect the ineffable unity of the Trinity, in the same way as the unity of memory, understanding, and will in the soul of man is discerned.”

In the **Latin Vulgate**, we read **1 Corinthians 14 (Douay Rheims):38** But if any man know not, he shall not be known.

This could explain Augustine’s translation as, “He that is ignorant shall be ignored”. But in the **King James Version** we read **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):38** But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

The words “let him be ignorant” are a translation of the Greek word ἄγνοέτω (pronounced äg-no-eh'-tō), from ἄλφα (pronounced alpha) (G1) (as a negative particle) and νοέω (pronounced no-eh-o) (G3539) meaning “to perceive, observe; to mark attentively, to understand, comprehend”. **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, 1978 Edition, Harold K. Moulton, Page 280.** The Greek word is a verb in the present, active, imperative tense. So combining the alpha (the negative particle) with the no-eh-o, the word means “let him not understand or know”, or “let him be ignorant” as in the **King James Version**.

Augustine then explains, “The apostle said these words with a wholly different design. Consult the passage and you will see that he was speaking of those things which might be for the edification of the many in faith and holiness, not of those which might with difficulty be comprehended by the few, and by them only in the small degree in which the comprehension of so great a subject is attainable in this life.”

Augustine is in part correct. He refers to Paul’s words in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):12** Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.

Augustine then continues, “**The positions laid down by him were,—that prophesying was to be preferred to speaking with tongues; that these gifts should not be exercised in a disorderly manner, as if the spirit of prophecy compelled them to speak even against their will; that women should keep silence in the Church; and that all things should be done decently and in order.**”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):5** I would that ye all spake with tongues but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

And to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):29** Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. **30** If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. **31** For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. **32** And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. **33** For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. **34** Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. **35** And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

And to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):40** Let all things be done decently and in order.

Augustine then continues, “**While treating of these things he says: “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him know the things which I write to you, for they are**

the commands of the Lord.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):37** If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

He continues, “If any man be ignorant, he shall be ignored;” intending by these words to restrain and call to order persons who were specially ready to cause disorder in the Church, because they imagined themselves to excel in spiritual gifts, although they were disturbing everything by their presumptuous conduct.”

I think that the apostle Paul had another purpose in these words. As we noted above, the **Latin Vulgate** reads as in **1 Corinthians 14 (Douay Rheims):38** But if any man know not, he shall not be known.

And as we said before, this could explain Augustine’s translation as, “He that is ignorant shall be ignored”. But the **King James Version** has a more correct translation from the Greek as in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):38** But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

Paul did not want to reject anyone. Rather, his method was to speak the truth in love. I think Paul’s intention was that, if in the course of their meetings, someone was there who did not know how the gifts of the Spirit should be exercised decently and in order, they were not to try to teach this person everything right away. Let them keep coming to the meetings and learn little by little.

Augustine then continues, ““If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him know,” he says, “the things which I write to you, for they are the commands of the Lord.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):37** If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

Augustine then says, “If any man thinks himself to be, and in reality is not, a prophet, for he who is a prophet undoubtedly knows and does not need admonition and exhortation, because “he judgeth all things, and is himself judged of no man.” (1 Corinthians 2:15)

Paul is speaking of the one who is spiritual, when he says in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):15** But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

But all prophecy is to be judged as Paul commands in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):29** Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

We are to judge prophecy according to its agreement with the word of God. We do not receive any new revelation in our day. That is, nothing is to be added to the word of God today. The canon is closed. So if a man claims to be a prophet, his prophecy is to be judged according to the word of God. This is Paul’s admonition, as we read again in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):**If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

Prophets must abide by the “commandments of the Lord”, that is, the word of God. So Paul wants us to maintain order in the church, but not to reject anyone who is ignorant. Rather, let us speak the truth in love. And the reason for prophecy is given in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. 4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

Prophecy not only speaks to men, and women, to edification, and exhortation, and



comfort, but also edifies the church.

As the order in the church is maintained, it is possible that the one who is ignorant will gain knowledge. But a prophet is not above accountability to others in the church who are spiritual. We are to “let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge”, as in 1 Corinthians 14:29 above. The word “other” in the Greek is in the plural, so it should be translated as in **1 Corinthians 14 (NKJV):29** Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.

Augustine then concludes, “Those persons, therefore, caused confusion and trouble in the Church who thought themselves to be in the Church what they were not. He teaches these to know the commandments of the Lord, for he is not a “God of confusion, but of peace.” (1 Corinthians 14:33)

God is a God of peace as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):33** For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

But then Augustine finishes as he then says, “But “if any one is ignorant, he shall be ignored,” that is to say, he shall be rejected; for God is not ignorant—so far as mere knowledge is concerned—in regard to the persons to whom He shall one day say, “I know you not,” (Luke 13:27) but their rejection is signified by this expression.”

Augustine makes this person who is ignorant one who is not known by the Lord. He refers in context to **Luke 13 (KJV):22** And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. 23 Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, 24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. 25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: 26 Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. 27 But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. 28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. 29 And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. 30 And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

Jesus was teaching the Jews here. Some did not have eyes to see or ears to hear His message. They were not saved. Translating 1 Corinthians 14:38 as the **Latin Vulgate** has it, one can readily understand Augustine’s thinking. However, Augustine must stand corrected because of the Greek, which again reads as in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):38** But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

There are many in our day who do not know how to exercise spiritual gifts decently and in order, as Paul has commanded. This does not mean that they are not saved, or that we should reject them and count them as unbelievers. Paul’s command in 1 Corinthians 14:38 reminds us of his instruction to the Romans in **Romans 14 (KJV):1** Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. 2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. 4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for

God is able to make him stand. 5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

And in **Romans 14 (KJV):22** Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

Let us rightly divide the word of God, and teach the proper order of exercising the gifts of the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit, that is the manifestations of the Spirit, are given to profit everyone as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):7** But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

Even those who are spiritual benefit from these. So let all things be done, decently and in order. But let us see what else Augustine says about spiritual gifts.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3, On Care to be Had for the Dead Paragraph 20, Spiritual Gifts Mentioned, page 549**

On Care to Be Had for the Dead. [De Cura Pro Mortuis.] Translated by Rev. H. Browne, M.A. Of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge; Late Principal of the Diocesan College, Chichester.

*From the Retractations*, Book ii. Chap. 64.

The book, *On care to be had for the dead*, I wrote, having been asked by letter whether it profits any person after death that his body shall be buried at the memorial of any Saint. The book begins thus: *Long time unto your Holiness, my venerable fellow-bishop Paulinus.*

The date may be conjectured from the order of the *Retractations*, where this book is mentioned next after the *Enchiridion ad Laurentium*, which was not finished earlier than A.D. 421. The first two paragraphs of this treatise will be found quoted by Augustin in his Book *On Eight Questions of Dulcitius*, Quæst. ii. 2, 3. *Ben. ed.* Paulinus, to whom it was addressed, was Bishop of Nolæ, and took great pains to honor the memory of St. Felix, who is mentioned in the beginning of it. Several poems of his on the subject are extant.

20. Howbeit it is a question which surpasses the strength of my understanding, after what manner the Martyrs aid them who by them, it is certain, are helped; whether themselves by themselves be present at the same time in so different places, and by so great distance lying apart one from another, either where their Memorials are, or beside their Memorials, wheresoever they are felt to be present: or whether, while they themselves, in a place congruous with their merits, are removed from all converse with mortals, and yet do in a general sort pray for the needs of their suppliants, (like as we pray for the dead, to whom however we are not present, nor know where they be or what they be doing,) God Almighty, Who is every where present, neither bounded in with us nor remote from us, hearing and granting the Martyrs' prayers, doth by angelic ministries every where diffused afford to men those solaces, to whom in the misery of this life He seeth meet to afford the same, and, touching His Martyrs, doth where He will, when He will, how He will, and chiefest through their Memorials, because this He knoweth to be expedient for us unto edifying of the faith of Christ for Whose confession

they suffered, by marvelous and ineffable power and goodness cause their merits to be had in honor. A matter is this, too high that I should have power to attain unto it, too abstruse that I should be able to search it out; and therefore which of these two be the case, or whether perchance both one and the other be the case, that sometimes these things be done by very presence of the Martyrs, sometimes by Angels taking upon them the person of the Martyrs, I dare not define; rather would I seek this at them who know it. **For it is not to be thought that no man knows these things: (not indeed he who thinks he knows, and knows not,) for there be gifts of God, Who bestows on these some one, on those some other, according to the Apostle who says, that “to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal; to one indeed,” saith he, “is given by the Spirit discourse of wisdom; to another discourse of science according to the same Spirit; while to another faith in the same Spirit; to another the gift of healings in one Spirit; to one workings of miracles; to one prophecy; to one discerning of spirits; to one kinds of tongues; to one interpretation of discourses. But all these worketh one and the same spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.” (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) Of all these spiritual gifts, which the Apostle hath rehearsed, to whomsoever is given discerning of spirits, the same knoweth these things as they are meet to be known.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Howbeit it is a question which surpasses the strength of my understanding, after what manner the Martyrs aid them who by them, it is certain, are helped; whether themselves by themselves be present at the same time in so different places, and by so great distance lying apart one from another, either where their Memorials are, or beside their Memorials, wheresoever they are felt to be present: or whether, while they themselves, in a place congruous with their merits, are removed from all converse with mortals, and yet do in a general sort pray for the needs of their suppliants, (like as we pray for the dead, to whom however we are not present, nor know where they be or what they be doing,)...”

Augustine admits what he doesn’t know. And yet he then says, “God Almighty, Who is every where present, neither bounded in with us nor remote from us, hearing and granting the Martyrs’ prayers, doth by angelic ministries every where diffused afford to men those solaces, to whom in the misery of this life He seeth meet to afford the same, and, touching His Martyrs, doth where He will, when He will, how He will, and chiefest through their Memorials, because this He knoweth to be expedient for us unto edifying of the faith of Christ for Whose confession they suffered, by marvelous and ineffable power and goodness cause their merits to be had in honor.”

Augustine didn’t know how God used the Martyrs, but it seemed to him there was no other explanation since many and diverse healings seemed to happen because of the honor given to their merits.

But Augustine acknowledges that it is God, who “doth where He will, when He will, how He will” to cause “by marvelous and ineffable power and goodness” the merits of the Martyrs “to be had in honor”. In other words, God puts the merits of the Martyrs to good use for those who need healing or deliverance.

Augustine then continues, and wonders, “A matter is this, too high that I should have power to attain unto it, too abstruse that I should be able to search it out; and therefore which of these two be the case, or whether perchance both one and the other be the case, that sometimes

these things be done by very presence of the Martyrs, sometimes by Angels taking upon them the person of the Martyrs, I dare not define; rather would I seek this at them who know it.”

Augustine then tries to explain, as he continues, “For it is not to be thought that no man knows these things: (not indeed he who thinks he knows, and knows not,) for there be gifts of God, Who bestows on these some one, on those some other, according to the Apostle who says, that “to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal; to one indeed,” saith he, “is given by the Spirit discourse of wisdom; to another discourse of science according to the same Spirit; while to another faith in the same Spirit; to another the gift of healings in one Spirit; to one workings of miracles; to one prophecy; to one discerning of spirits; to one kinds of tongues; to one interpretation of discourses. But all these worketh one and the same spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.” (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) Of all these spiritual gifts, which the Apostle hath rehearsed, to whomsoever is given discerning of spirits, the same knoweth these things as they are meet to be known.”

He is referring to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):7** But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. **8** For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; **9** To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; **10** To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: **11** But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Augustine mentions “discourse of wisdom”, and “discourse of science”. It is not clear that he understands what these gifts really are. It is helpful to see verse 8 in the Latin:

alii quidem per Spiritum datur sermo sapientiae alii autem sermo  
To one indeed, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom: and to another, the word of  
scientiae secundum eundem Spiritum  
knowledge, according to the same Spirit:

<http://www.latinvulgate.com/lv/verse.aspx?t=1&b=7&c=12>

The Latin word, “scientiae” may also be translated “science”. But the word in Greek translated “discourse” by Augustine is **λόγος** (pronounced lo'-gos), and simply means a word. The word in Greek translated “science” by Augustine is **γνῶσις** (pronounced gnō'-sē), and means knowledge.

In the context here, we must understand that the “word of wisdom” is a gift of the Spirit. That is, it is a divine enablement since it is given by the Spirit of God, and not a natural ability. In this case, it relates to knowledge about the future. An example of this gift is given in Scripture as we read in **Acts 11 (ESV):27** Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. **28** And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). **29** So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. **30** And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

So a “word of wisdom” was revealed to the prophet Agabus, who “foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world”, and “this took place in the days of Claudius”.

The knowledge of this famine was given by the Spirit through Agabus so that the disciples could “every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea”. God looks after His people.

An example of a “word of knowledge” is also found in **Acts 9 (KJV)**:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

God wanted to convince Saul that He had sent Jesus, so he appeared in a vision to a disciple named Ananias as we continue in **Acts 9 (KJV)**:10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

The Lord gave a word of knowledge to Ananias, and told him where Saul was, that is, on “the street which is called Straight” at “the house of Judas”. And the Lord also gave Saul a word of wisdom “in a vision” that “a man named Ananias” would come in, and put “his hand on him, that he might receive his sight”. There is no way Ananias or Saul could have had this knowledge. Ananias then argues with the Lord, but the Lord prevailed as we continue to read in **Acts 9 (KJV)**:13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. 19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

Imagine how our faith would be strengthened by the things that happened to Saul, who became Paul. This is one of the purposes of the gifts of the Spirit.

Augustine also says in his quotations, “while to another faith in the same Spirit; to



another the gift of healings in one Spirit". But a more correct translation is as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):9** To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

One of the operations of the gift of faith is to perform the working of miracles. This gift of faith is not for salvation, but for the performing of the gift of working of miracles. So Paul is saying that a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues are given to someone by the Spirit of God as a gift of the Spirit to enable them to see and speak supernaturally. Augustine does not seem to understand what these gifts are, nor how they are exercised. They are not human abilities, but manifestations of the Spirit of God.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 4, Anti-Manichæan  
Chapter 9-10, Paragraphs 10-11, the Holy Spirit given, page 133-134**

St. AUGUSTIN: against the epistle of manichæus, called fundamental.  
[contra epistolam manichæi quam vocant fundamentum]. A.D. 397. translated by Rev. Richard Stothert, M.A., Bombay  
Against the Epistle of Manichæus Called Fundamental. [Contra Epistolam Manichæi Quam Vocant Fundamentum.] a.d. 397.

**Chapter 9.—When the Holy Spirit Was Sent.**

10. Perhaps you will say to me, When, then, did the Paraclete promised by the Lord come? As regards this, had I nothing else to believe on the subject, I should rather look for the Paraclete as still to come, than allow that He came in Manichæus. But seeing that the advent of the Holy Spirit is narrated with perfect clearness in the Acts of the Apostles, where is the necessity of my so gratuitously running the risk of believing heretics? For in the Acts it is written as follows: "The former treatise have we made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, in the day in which He chose the apostles by the Holy Spirit, and commanded them to preach the gospel. By those to whom He showed Himself alive after His passion by many proofs in the daytime, He was seen forty days, teaching concerning the kingdom of God. And how He conversed with them, and commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of me. For John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall begin to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, whom also ye shall receive after not many days, that is, at Pentecost. When they had come, they asked him, saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time manifest Thyself? And when will be the kingdom of Israel? And He said unto them, No one can know the time which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:1-8) Behold you have here the Lord reminding His disciples of the promise of the Father, which they had heard from His mouth, of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Let us now see when He was sent; for shortly after we read as follows: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where

they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. And when the sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed, and marveled, saying one to another, Are not all these which speak Galilæans? And how heard we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Armenia, and in Cappadocia, in Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the regions of Africa about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews, natives, Cretes, and Arabians, they heard them speak in their own tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt on account of what had happened, saying, What meaneth this? But others, mocking, said, These men are full of new wine." (Acts 2:1-13) You see when the Holy Spirit came. What more do you wish? If the Scriptures are credible, should not I believe most readily in these Acts, which have the strongest testimony in their support, and which have had the advantage of becoming generally known, and of being handed down and of being publicly taught along with the gospel itself, which contains the promise of the Holy Spirit, which also we believe? On reading, then, these Acts of the Apostles, which stand, as regards authority, on a level with the gospel, I find that not only was the Holy Spirit promised to these true apostles, but that He was also sent so manifestly, that no room was left for errors on this subject.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "Perhaps you will say to me, When, then, did the Paraclete promised by the Lord come? As regards this, had I nothing else to believe on the subject, I should rather look for the Paraclete as still to come, than allow that He came in Manichæus."

Augustine here admits subtly that he has had no experience of exercising spiritual gifts, for had he exercised them himself, he would have had plenty to make him believe that the Paraclete had come. But we continue, as he says, "But seeing that the advent of the Holy Spirit is narrated with perfect clearness in the Acts of the Apostles, where is the necessity of my so gratuitously running the risk of believing heretics?"

So Augustine does believe this to be a past event, for he believes the Scripture as we continue, and he says, "For in the Acts it is written as follows: "The former treatise have we made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, in the day in which He chose the apostles by the Holy Spirit, and commanded them to preach the gospel. By those to whom He showed Himself alive after His passion by many proofs in the daytime, He was seen forty days, teaching concerning the kingdom of God. And how He conversed with them, and commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of me. For John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall begin to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, whom also ye shall receive after not many days, that is, at Pentecost. When they had come, they asked him, saying, Lord, wilt Thou at this time manifest Thyself? And when will be the kingdom of Israel? And He said unto them, No one can know the time which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:1-8)

Augustine is loosely quoting from **Acts 1 (KJV):**1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. 6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Augustine then continues as he says, “Behold you have here the Lord reminding His disciples of the promise of the Father, which they had heard from His mouth, of the coming of the Holy Spirit.”

Augustine is correct here. The Lord did make a promise to His disciples to send the Holy Spirit as we read in **Luke 24 (KJV):**49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

And in **John 14 (KJV):**25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

And in **John 15 (KJV):**26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: 27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

And in **John 16 (KJV):**7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

And in **John 16 (KJV):**13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

And Augustine continues as he says, “Let us now see when He was sent; for shortly after we read as follows: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. And when the sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed, and marveled, saying one to another, Are not all these which speak Galilæans? And how heard we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in

Armenia, and in Cappadocia, in Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the regions of Africa about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews, natives, Cretes, and Arabians, they heard them speak in their own tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt on account of what had happened, saying, What meaneth this? But others, mocking, said, These men are full of new wine." (Acts 2:1-13)"

Augustine quotes exactly from **Acts 2 (KJV)**: 1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. 7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. 12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? 13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

So Augustine then concludes as he says, "You see when the Holy Spirit came. What more do you wish? If the Scriptures are credible, should not I believe most readily in these Acts, which have the strongest testimony in their support, and which have had the advantage of becoming generally known, and of being handed down and of being publicly taught along with the gospel itself, which contains the promise of the Holy Spirit, which also we believe? On reading, then, these Acts of the Apostles, which stand, as regards authority, on a level with the gospel, I find that not only was the Holy Spirit promised to these true apostles, but that He was also sent so manifestly, that no room was left for errors on this subject."

And he is correct according to the Scriptures. But the promise was not just to "these true apostles", for there were 120 disciples in the upper room when the Holy Spirit came as we read in **Acts 1 (KJV)**: 12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. 13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. 14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. 15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

And in **Acts 2 (KJV)**: 1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And also, as we continue to read in Acts, the promise of the Holy Spirit was for all who are afar off as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV)**:37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? 38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Let us continue to read Augustine's thoughts about this.

## Chapter 10.—The Holy Spirit Twice Given.

11. For the glorification of our Lord among men is His resurrection from the dead and His ascension to heaven. For it is written in the Gospel according to John: "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:39) Now if the reason why He was not given was that Jesus was not yet glorified, **He was given immediately on the glorification of Jesus**. And since that glorification was twofold, as regards man and as regards God, twice also was the Holy Spirit given: once, when, after His resurrection from the dead, He breathed on the face of His disciples, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" (John 20:22) and again, ten days after His ascension to heaven. This number ten signifies perfection; for to the number seven which embraces all created things, is added the trinity of the Creator. On these things there is much pious and sober discourse among spiritual men. But I must keep to my point; for my business at present is not to teach you, which you might think presumptuous, but to take the part of an inquirer, and learn from you, as I tried to do for nine years without success. Now, therefore, I have a document to believe on the subject of the Holy Spirit's advent; and if you bid me not to believe this document, as your usual advice is not to believe ignorantly, without consideration, much less will I believe your documents. Away, then, with all books, and disclose the truth with logical clearness, so as to leave no doubt in my mind; or bring forward books where I shall find not an imperious demand for my belief, but a trustworthy statement of what I may learn. Perhaps you say this epistle is also of this character. Let me, then, no longer stop at the threshold: let us see the contents.

**Commentary:** Augustine here asserts that the Holy Spirit was twice given as he begins and writes, "For the glorification of our Lord among men is His resurrection from the dead and His ascension to heaven. For it is written in the Gospel according to John: "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7:39) Now if the reason why He was not given was that Jesus was not yet glorified, **He was given immediately on the glorification of Jesus**. And since that glorification was twofold, as regards man and as regards God, twice also was the Holy Spirit given: once, when, after His resurrection from the dead, He breathed on the face of His disciples, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" (John 20:22) and again, ten days after His ascension to heaven."

He first refers in context to **John 7 (KJV)**:38 He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)



The Holy Spirit would be given after Jesus was glorified, but not immediately as Augustine asserts, when he says, "...**He was given immediately on the glorification of Jesus**". Jesus had to depart first as we read again in **John 16 (KJV):7** Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

Now, let us understand what it means to be glorified. We read in **Philippians 3 (KJV):20** For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Glorification is speaking of a change to our vile, or mortal, body "that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body". Paul also explains the resurrection of the dead in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):35** But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come? 36 Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: 37 And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: 38 But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. 39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. 40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: 44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

And then in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):49** And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

So glorification is speaking of the change in our bodies at the time of our resurrection. Jesus was already baptized in the Holy Spirit as we read in **Mathew 3 (KJV):13** Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? 15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. 16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Nothing is said about Jesus receiving the Holy Spirit twice. So what did He mean when "after His resurrection from the dead, He breathed on the face of His disciples, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" (John 20:22).

We read in context in **John 20 (KJV):19** Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. 21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

Jesus has just stood in the midst of the disciples in verse 19 “when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews”. He was showing them that He was really alive. He then breathed on them, and reaffirmed His promise of the Holy Spirit as He “saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” He was just reaffirming the promise He had already made to them. If He was giving them the Holy Spirit here, He would not have told them in Acts 1:4 and Acts 1:8, just before He ascended, to wait for the promise as we read again in **Acts 1 (KJV):4** And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. 6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

This same promise is for us also, as many as are afar off, whoever the Lord our God shall call, as Peter revealed in **Acts 2 (KJV):38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

The promise of the Holy Spirit was for the purpose of empowering believers, as we read in Act 1:8 above. It is also to equip them with spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit is the power behind spiritual gifts. He is the one who gives them.

And it also must be understood that when we are born again, we have the Spirit. He is the life of our spirit, since we are born of Him, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Because the life of the Spirit is eternal, we now have eternal life if we have believed in Jesus Christ. And Christ is our life as we read in **Colossians 3 (KJV):4** When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

#### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 4, Anti-Manichaeon Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon, Book XXI, paragraph 8, page 267**

8. The same apostle again, when speaking of spiritual gifts as diverse, and yet tending to harmonious action, to illustrate a matter so great, and divine, and mysterious, makes a

comparison with the human body,—thus plainly intimating that this flesh is the handiwork of God. The whole passage, as found in the Epistle to the Corinthians, is so much to the point, that though it is long, I think it not amiss to insert it all: "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary; and those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need; but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked: that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Corinthians 12:1-26) **Apart altogether from Christian faith, which would lead you to believe the apostle, if you have common sense to perceive what is self-evident, let each examine and see for himself the plain truth regarding those things of which the apostle speaks,—what greatness belongs to the least, and what goodness to the lowest; for these are the things which the apostle extols, in order to illustrate by means of these common and visible bodily objects, unseen spiritual realities of the most exalted nature.**

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine begins as he says, "The same apostle again, when speaking of spiritual gifts as diverse, and yet tending to harmonious action, to illustrate a matter so great, and divine, and mysterious, makes a comparison with the human body,—thus plainly intimating that this flesh is the handiwork of God. The whole passage, as found in the Epistle to the Corinthians, is so much to the point, that though it is long, I think it not amiss to insert it all: "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant..."

Augustine then quotes the Scripture exactly here in 1 Corinthians 12:1-26.

He then concludes, “Apart altogether from Christian faith, which would lead you to believe the apostle, if you have common sense to perceive what is self-evident, let each examine and see for himself the plain truth regarding those things of which the apostle speaks,—what greatness belongs to the least, and what goodness to the lowest; for these are the things which the apostle extols, in order to illustrate by means of these common and visible bodily objects, unseen spiritual realities of the most exalted nature.”

His main intent is “to illustrate by means of these common and visible bodily objects, unseen spiritual realities of the most exalted nature.” But not much light is shed on his view of spiritual gifts here. He just mentions them in the Scripture, which he quotes exactly.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine  
On the Psalms, Psalm CXLVII, paragraph 8, page 666-667**

8. “Who telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names” (ver. 4). What great matter is it for God to “tell the number of the stars”? Men even have endeavoured to do this; whether they have been able to achieve it, is their concern; they would not however attempt it, did they not think that they should achieve it. Let us leave alone what they can do, and how far they have attained; for God I think it no great matter to count all the stars. Or doth He perhaps go over the number, lest He should forget it? Is it any great thing for God to number the stars, by whom “the very hairs of your head are numbered”? (Matthew 10:30) The stars are certain lights in the Church comforting our night; all of whom the Apostle saith, “In the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding the Word of life.” (Philippians 2:15-16) These stars God counteth; all who shall reign with Him, all who are to be gathered into the Body of His only-begotten Son, He hath counted, and still counteth them. Whoso is unworthy, is not even counted. Many too have believed, or rather may, with a kind of shadowy appearance of faith, have attached themselves to His people: yet He knoweth what He counteth, what He winnoweth away. For so great is the height of the Gospel, that it hath come to pass as was said, “I have declared, and have spoken: they are multiplied above number:” (Psalm 40:5) there are then among the people certain supernumeraries, so to speak. What do I mean by supernumeraries? More than will be there. Within these walls are more than will be in the kingdom of God, in the heavenly Jerusalem; these are above the number. Let each one of you consider whether he shineth in darkness, whether he refuseth to be led astray by the dark iniquity of the world; if he be not led astray, nor conquered, he will be, as it were, a star, which God already numbereth. “And calling them all by their names,” he saith. Herein is our whole reward. We may have certain names with God, that God may know our names, this we ought to wish, for this to act, for this to busy ourselves, as far as we are able; not to rejoice in other things, not even in certain spiritual gifts....When the disciples returned from their mission exulting, and saying, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us in Thy Name” (Luke 10:17)—then He (knowing that many would say, “have we not in Thy Name cast out devils?” to whom He should say, “I know you not”) said, “In this rejoice not, that the devils are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:20)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Who telleth the number of the stars, and

calleth them all by their names” (ver. 4).

He is quoting from **Psalms 147 (KJV):4** He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.

He continues as he says, “What great matter is it for God to “tell the number of the stars”! Men even have endeavoured to do this; whether they have been able to achieve it, is their concern; they would not however attempt it, did they not think that they should achieve it. Let us leave alone what they can do, and how far they have attained; for God I think it no great matter to count all the stars. Or doth He perhaps go over the number, lest He should forget it? Is it any great thing for God to number the stars, by whom “the very hairs of your head are numbered”? (Matthew 10:30)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 10 (KJV):29** Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

He then continues as he says, “The stars are certain lights in the Church comforting our night; all of whom the Apostle saith, “In the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding the Word of life.” (Philippians 2:15-16)

He refers in context here to **Philippians 2 (NASB):15** so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

And Daniel speaks of this same analogy in **Daniel 12 (KJV):3** And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Augustine then continues, “These stars God counteth; all who shall reign with Him, all who are to be gathered into the Body of His only-begotten Son, He hath counted, and still counteth them. Whoso is unworthy, is not even counted. Many too have believed, or rather may, with a kind of shadowy appearance of faith, have attached themselves to His people: yet He knoweth what He counteth, what He winnoweth away. For so great is the height of the Gospel, that it hath come to pass as was said, “I have declared, and have spoken: they are multiplied above number:” (Psalm 40:5) there are then among the people certain supernumeraries, so to speak.”

He is referring in context to **Psalms 40 (KJV):5** Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

But I believe he also is referring to the parable in **Matthew 13 (KJV):24** Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.



30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Augustine then explains, “What do I mean by supernumeraries? More than will be there. Within these walls are more than will be in the kingdom of God, in the heavenly Jerusalem; these are above the number. Let each one of you consider whether he shineth in darkness, whether he refuseth to be led astray by the dark iniquity of the world; if he be not led astray, nor conquered, he will be, as it were, a star, which God already numbereth. **“And calling them all by their names,” he saith. Herein is our whole reward.”**

In his analogy, again he is quoting from **Psalms 147 (KJV):4** He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.

Jesus also refers to this in **John 10 (KJV):2** But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

Augustine continues as he then says, **“We may have certain names with God, that God may know our names, this we ought to wish, for this to act, for this to busy ourselves, as far as we are able; not to rejoice in other things, not even in certain spiritual gifts....When the disciples returned from their mission exulting, and saying, “Lord, even the devils are subject unto us in Thy Name” (Luke 10:17)—then He (knowing that many would say, “have we not in Thy Name cast out devils?” to whom He should say, “I know you not”) said, “In this rejoice not, that the devils are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” (Luke 10:20)”**

He refers in context to **Luke 10 (KJV):17** And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

He also refers in context to **Matthew 7 (KJV):22** Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Casting out an evil spirit from someone is exercising the gift of working of miracles. Angels are greater in power and might than we are, as Peter notes in **2 Peter 2 (KJV):11** Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

To cast them out of someone takes more power than we have. But by the Holy Spirit, and the gift of working of miracles, we can do it. And Jesus has given us “power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you,” as in Luke 10:19 above. But we are to be humble, and acknowledge that the power is not of us, but of Him who fills us. We are to rejoice because our names are written in heaven.

## Tractate XIV. Chapter III. 29–36, paragraph 10, page 98

10. “For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.” This, of course, he said of Christ, to distinguish himself from Christ. What then? Did not God send John himself? Did he not say himself, “I am sent before Him”? and, “He that sent me to baptize with water”? And is it not of John that it is said, “Behold, I send my messenger before Thee, and he shall prepare Thy way”? (Malachi 3:1) Does he not himself speak the words of God, he of whom it is said that he is more than a prophet? Then, if God sent him too, and he speaks the words of God, how do we understand him to have distinctly said of Christ, “He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God”? But see what he adds: “For God giveth not the Spirit by measure.” What is this, “For God giveth not the Spirit by measure”? We find that God does give the Spirit by measure. Hear the apostle when he says, “According to the measure of the gift of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:7) To men He gives by measure, to the only Son He gives not by measure. How does He give to men by measure? “To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of wisdom according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another kinds of tongues; to another the gift of healing. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gift of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?” (1 Corinthians 12:1-31) This man has one gift, that man another; and what that man has, this has not: there is a measure, a certain division of gifts. To men, therefore, it is given by measure, and concord among them makes one body. As the hand receives one kind of gift to work, the eye another to see, the ear another to hear, the foot another to walk; nevertheless the soul that does all is one, in the hand to work, in the foot to walk, in the ear to hear, in the eye to see; so are also the gifts of believers diverse, distributed to them as to members, to each according to his proper measure. But Christ, who gives, receives not by measure.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.””

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):34** For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

He continues, “This, of course, he said of Christ, to distinguish himself from Christ. What then? Did not God send John himself? Did he not say himself, “I am sent before Him”? and, “He that sent me to baptize with water”? And is it not of John that it is said, “Behold, I send my messenger before Thee, and he shall prepare Thy way”? (Malachi 3:1)”

He refers to **Malachi 3 (KJV):1** Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

He continues, “Does he not himself speak the words of God, he of whom it is said that he is more than a prophet?”

He refers to **Matthew 11 (KJV):7** And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? 8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. 9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. 10 For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my

messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

He continues, “Then, if God sent him too, and he speaks the words of God, how do we understand him to have distinctly said of Christ, “He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God”? But see what he adds: “For God giveth not the Spirit by measure.” What is this, “For God giveth not the Spirit by measure”? We find that God does give the Spirit by measure. Hear the apostle when he says, “According to the measure of the gift of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:7)”

He refers in context to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

“Every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ”, as in verse 7 above, which is given “as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):**3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

He continues, “To men He gives by measure, to the only Son He gives not by measure. How does He give to men by measure? “To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of wisdom according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another kinds of tongues; to another the gift of healing. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all the gift of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?” (1 Corinthians 12:1-31)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. 2 Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. 3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. 4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to

another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

And then in context to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV)**:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

It is interesting that Augustine translated the “word of knowledge” as the “word of wisdom” for he quotes the Scripture as, “To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of wisdom according to the same Spirit”. But verse 8 is as in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV)**:8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

A word of wisdom was given to Agabus, as we read in **Acts 11 (KJV)**:28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. 29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: 30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

A word of wisdom has to do with the future. A word of knowledge is a fact hidden from the minds of man, as was given to Ananias in **Acts 9 (KJV)**:10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

A word of wisdom is a revelation by the Spirit of something in the future, or it may be direction to do something. A word of knowledge relates to a revelation of a fact unknown to the one receiving it. Ananias did not know that Paul was on a street called Straight. The Lord told him he was on a “street which is called Straight”, at “the house of Judas”, and that he was “praying”, and had “seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight”. Ananias could not have known these things on his own. But this was given so that when Ananias went there, his faith was increased to lay his hands on Saul, and pray for a miracle so Saul “might receive his sight”.

Augustine continues, “This man has one gift, that man another; and what that man has, this has not: there is a measure, a certain division of gifts. To men, therefore, it is given by measure, and concord among them makes one body. As the hand receives one kind of gift to work, the eye another to see, the ear another to hear, the foot another to walk; nevertheless the

soul that does all is one, in the hand to work, in the foot to walk, in the ear to hear, in the eye to see; so are also the gifts of believers diverse, distributed to them as to members, to each according to his proper measure. But Christ, who gives, receives not by measure.”

And this agrees with the Scripture as we continue to read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):12** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. 25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

The word “tempered” in verse 24 is translated as “composed” in **1 Corinthians 12 (NASB):24** whereas our more presentable members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked...

God has placed each member in the body in verse 18, “as it hath pleased him”. He has given each member a specific purpose, an “office”, or function in the body to perform, as in Romans 12:4 above. As each member does its part, the body increases as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):15** But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate XVI. Chapter IV. 43–54, paragraph 3, page 108**

3. Hear then, dearly beloved, what I think in this matter, without prejudice to your own judgment, if you have formed a better. For we have all one Master, and we are fellow disciples in one school. This, then, is my opinion, and see whether my opinion is not true, or near the truth. In Samaria He spent two days, and the Samaritans believed on Him; many were the days He spent in Galilee, and yet the Galileans did not believe on Him. Look back to the passage, or recall in memory the lesson and the discourse of yesterday. He came into Samaria, where at first He had been preached by that woman with whom He had spoken great mysteries at Jacob’s well. After they had seen and heard Him, the Samaritans believed on Him because of the woman’s word, and believed more firmly because of His own word, even many more believed:



thus it is written. After passing two days there (in which number of days is mystically indicated the number of the two precepts on which hang the whole law and the prophets, as you remember we intimated to you yesterday), He goes into Galilee, and comes to the city Cana of Galilee, where He made the water wine. And there, when He turned the water into wine, as John himself writes, His disciples believed on Him; but, of course, the house was full with a crowd of guests. So great a miracle was wrought, and yet only His disciples believed on Him. He has now returned to this city of Galilee. "And, behold, a certain ruler, whose son was sick, came to Him, and began to beseech Him to go down" to that city or house, "and heal his son; for he was at the point of death." Did he who besought not believe? What dost thou expect to hear from me? Ask the Lord what He thought of him. Having been besought, this is what He answered: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye believe not." He shows us a man lukewarm, or cold in faith, or of no faith at all; but eager to try by the healing of his son what manner of person Christ was, who He was, what He could do. The words of the suppliant, indeed, we have heard: we have not seen the heart of the doubter; but He who both heard the words and saw the heart has told us this. In short, the evangelist himself, by the testimony of his narrative, shows us that the man who desired the Lord to come to his house to heal his son, had not yet believed. For after he had been informed that his son was whole, and found that he had been made whole at that hour in which the Lord had said, "Go thy way, thy son liveth;" then he saith, "And himself believed, and all his house." Now, if the reason why he believed, and all his house, was that he was told that his son was whole, and found the hour they told him agreed with the hour of Christ's foretelling it, it follows that when he was making the request he did not yet believe. The Samaritans had waited for no sign, they believed simply His word; but His own fellow-citizens deserved to hear this said to them, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye believe not;" and even there, notwithstanding so great a miracle was wrought, there did not believe but "himself and his house." At His discourse alone many of the Samaritans believed; at that miracle, in the place where it was wrought, only that house believed. What is it, then, brethren, that the Lord doth show us here? Galilee of Judea was then the Lord's own country, because He was brought up in it. But now that the circumstance portends something,—for it is not without cause that "prodigies" are so called, but because they portend or presage something: for the word "prodigy" is so termed as if it were *porrodictum, quod porro dicat*, what betokens something to come, and portends something future,—now all those circumstances portended something, predicted something; let us just now assume the country of our Lord Jesus Christ after the flesh (for He had no country on earth, except after the flesh which He took on earth); let us, I say, assume the Lord's own country to mean the people of the Jews. Lo, in His own country He hath no honor. Observe at this moment the multitudes of the Jews; observe that nation now scattered over the whole world, and plucked up by the roots; observe the broken branches, cut off, scattered, withered, which being broken off, the wild olive has deserved to be grafted in; look at the multitude of the Jews: what do they say to us even now? "He whom you worship and adore was our brother." And we reply, "A prophet hath no honor in his own country." In short, those Jews saw the Lord as He walked on the earth and worked miracles; they saw Him giving sight to the blind, opening the ears of the deaf, loosing the tongues of the dumb, bracing up the limbs of the paralytics, walking on the sea, commanding the winds and waves, raising the dead: they saw Him working such great signs, and after all that scarcely a few believed. I am speaking to God's people; so many of us have believed, what signs have we

seen? It is thus, therefore, that what occurred at that time betokened what is now going on. The Jews were, or rather are, like the Galileans; we, like those Samaritans. **We have heard the gospel, have given it our consent, have believed on Christ through the gospel; we have seen no signs, none do we demand.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Hear then, dearly beloved, what I think in this matter, without prejudice to your own judgment, if you have formed a better. For we have all one Master, and we are fellow disciples in one school. This, then, is my opinion, and see whether my opinion is not true, or near the truth. In Samaria He spent two days, and the Samaritans believed on Him; many were the days He spent in Galilee, and yet the Galileans did not believe on Him. Look back to the passage, or recall in memory the lesson and the discourse of yesterday. He came into Samaria, where at first He had been preached by that woman with whom He had spoken great mysteries at Jacob’s well.”

What great mysteries did Jesus speak at Jacob’s well? He is referring to **John 4 (KJV):5** Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. 7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. 8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) 9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. 10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. 11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? 12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? 13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. 15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. 16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. 17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: 18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. 19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

Jesus received a word of knowledge by the Spirit of God about this woman. She had had five husbands, and was now with someone who was not her husband. Jesus did not know this woman. The woman knew by this that Jesus must be a prophet. They had never met. The Holy Spirit revealed these things to Jesus so that the woman might believe.

Augustine continues, “After they had seen and heard Him, the Samaritans believed on Him because of the woman’s word, and believed more firmly because of His own word, even many more believed: thus it is written.”

We continue to read in **John 4 (KJV):20** Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. 21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship:

for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. 25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. 26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. 27 And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? 28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? 30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

The woman believed because of the word of knowledge Jesus spoke to her.

And so “many believed”, as we read in **John 4 (KJV):39** And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

Augustine continues, “After passing two days there (in which number of days is mystically indicated the number of the two precepts on which hang the whole law and the prophets, as you remember we intimated to you yesterday), He goes into Galilee, and comes to the city Cana of Galilee, where He made the water wine. And there, when He turned the water into wine, as John himself writes, His disciples believed on Him; but, of course, the house was full with a crowd of guests. So great a miracle was wrought, and yet only His disciples believed on Him. He has now returned to this city of Galilee.”

The “two precepts” he refers to are as in **Matthew 22 (KJV):35** Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

He then refers in context to **John 4 (KJV):40** So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his own word; 42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world. 43 Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. 44 For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. 45 Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

Augustine continues, ““And, behold, a certain ruler, whose son was sick, came to Him, and began to beseech Him to go down” to that city or house, “and heal his son; for he was at the point of death.” Did he who besought not believe? What dost thou expect to hear from me? Ask the Lord what He thought of him. Having been besought, this is what He answered: “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye believe not.””

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):46** So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. 48 Then said Jesus

unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. 49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

He continues, “He shows us a man lukewarm, or cold in faith, or of no faith at all; but eager to try by the healing of his son what manner of person Christ was, who He was, what He could do. The words of the suppliant, indeed, we have heard: we have not seen the heart of the doubter; but He who both heard the words and saw the heart has told us this. In short, the evangelist himself, by the testimony of his narrative, shows us that the man who desired the Lord to come to his house to heal his son, had not yet believed. For after he had been informed that his son was whole, and found that he had been made whole at that hour in which the Lord had said, “Go thy way, thy son liveth;” then he saith, “And himself believed, and all his house.””

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):50** Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. 51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. 52 Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. 53 So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house. 54 This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.

He continues, “Now, if the reason why he believed, and all his house, was that he was told that his son was whole, and found the hour they told him agreed with the hour of Christ’s foretelling it, it follows that when he was making the request he did not yet believe. The Samaritans had waited for no sign, they believed simply His word; but His own fellow-citizens deserved to hear this said to them, “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye believe not;” and even there, notwithstanding so great a miracle was wrought, there did not believe but “himself and his house.” At His discourse alone many of the Samaritans believed; at that miracle, in the place where it was wrought, only that house believed. What is it, then, brethren, that the Lord doth show us here? Galilee of Judea was then the Lord’s own country, because He was brought up in it. But now that the circumstance portends something,—for it is not without cause that “prodigies” are so called, but because they portend or presage something: for the word “prodigy” is so termed as if it were *porrodictum*, *quod porro dicat*, what betokens something to come, and portends something future,—now all those circumstances portended something, predicted something; let us just now assume the country of our Lord Jesus Christ after the flesh (for He had no country on earth, except after the flesh which He took on earth); let us, I say, assume the Lord’s own country to mean the people of the Jews. Lo, in His own country He hath no honor. Observe at this moment the multitudes of the Jews; observe that nation now scattered over the whole world, and plucked up by the roots; observe the broken branches, cut off, scattered, withered, which being broken off, the wild olive has deserved to be grafted in; look at the multitude of the Jews: what do they say to us even now? “He whom you worship and adore was our brother.” And we reply, “A prophet hath no honor in his own country.” In short, those Jews saw the Lord as He walked on the earth and worked miracles; they saw Him giving sight to the blind, opening the ears of the deaf, loosing the tongues of the dumb, bracing up the limbs of the paralytics, walking on the sea, commanding the winds and waves, raising the dead: they saw Him working such great signs, and after all that scarcely a few believed. I am speaking to God’s people; so many of us have believed, what signs have we seen? It is thus, therefore, that

what occurred at that time betokened what is now going on. The Jews were, or rather are, like the Galileans; we, like those Samaritans. **We have heard the gospel, have given it our consent, have believed on Christ through the gospel; we have seen no signs, none do we demand.”**

It appears that Augustine had no personal experience with the gifts of the Spirit. But he did see miracles according to his own testimony as we read before under the heading, **Miracles in Augustine’s Time.**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XXXII. Chapter VII. 37–39, paragraphs 7-9, page 195-196**

7. How then, brethren, because he that is baptized in Christ, and believes on Him, does not speak now in the tongues of all nations, are we not to believe that he has received the Holy Ghost? God forbid that our heart should be tempted by this faithlessness. Certain we are that every man receives: but only as much as the vessel of faith that he shall bring to the fountain can contain, so much does He fill of it. Since, therefore, the Holy Ghost is even now received by men, some one may say, Why is it that no man speaks in the tongues of all nations? Because the Church itself now speaks in the tongues of all nations. Before, the Church was in one nation, where it spoke in the tongues of all. By speaking then in the tongues of all, it signified what was to come to pass; that by growing among the nations, it would speak in the tongues of all. Whoso is not in this Church, does not now receive the Holy Ghost. For, being cut off and divided from the unity of the members, which unity speaks in the tongues of all, let him declare for himself; he has it not. For if he has it, let him give the sign which was given then. What do we mean by saying, Let him give the sign which was then given? Let him speak in all tongues. He answers me: How then, dost thou speak in all tongues? Clearly I do; for every tongue is mine, namely, of the body of which I am a member. The Church, spread among the nations, speaks in all tongues; the Church is the body of Christ, in this body thou art a member: therefore, since thou art a member of that body which speaks with all tongues, believe that thou too speakest with all tongues. For the unity of the members is of one mind by charity; and that unity speaks as one man then spoke.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “How then, brethren, because he that is baptized in Christ, and believes on Him, does not speak now in the tongues of all nations, are we not to believe that he has received the Holy Ghost?”

So, by Augustine’s confession, the gift of speaking in tongues was not operational in the Catholic Church in his time.

He continues, “God forbid that our heart should be tempted by this faithlessness. Certain we are that every man receives: but only as much as the vessel of faith that he shall bring to the fountain can contain, so much does He fill of it. Since, therefore, the Holy Ghost is even now received by men, some one may say, Why is it that no man speaks in the tongues of all nations? Because the Church itself now speaks in the tongues of all nations. Before, the Church was in one nation, where it spoke in the tongues of all. By speaking then in the tongues of all, it signified what was to come to pass; that by growing among the nations, it would speak in the tongues of all.”

While the Church has expanded in order to reach all nations, the gift of speaking in



tongues is an enablement of the Spirit of God, and not a natural ability. Since the Holy Spirit is still filling believers today, it is very much an issue of the faith of the individual believer, which Augustine at first recognized above. Saints must be taught the correct operation of the gifts of the Spirit, according to the Scripture. When this is done, the manifestations of the Spirit will be operational, and everything will be done decently and in order.

And, his analogy that “Church itself now speaks in the tongues of all nations” falls short, for we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):8** For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

“To one is given by the Spirit...” This is speaking of an enablement given by the Spirit to speak in a tongue unknown to the one speaking. It is not a natural ability as one has who speaks in the tongue of their own nation.

Augustine then argues, “Whoso is not in this Church, does not now receive the Holy Ghost. For, being cut off and divided from the unity of the members, which unity speaks in the tongues of all, let him declare for himself; he has it not. For if he has it, let him give the sign which was given then. What do we mean by saying, Let him give the sign which was then given? Let him speak in all tongues. He answers me: How then, dost thou speak in all tongues? Clearly I do; for every tongue is mine, namely, of the body of which I am a member. The Church, spread among the nations, speaks in all tongues; the Church is the body of Christ, in this body thou art a member: therefore, since thou art a member of that body which speaks with all tongues, believe that thou too speakest with all tongues. For the unity of the members is of one mind by charity; and that unity speaks as one man then spoke.”

We are to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace as Paul encourages in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):1** I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

But when we believe in Jesus Christ, we are baptized by the Spirit of God into the body of Christ as in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Because we are not a member of any particular body of believers does not mean that we are not in the Church, the body of Christ.

Augustine misrepresents the gift of speaking in tongues with a persuasive argument which is not according to Scripture. This gift of speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift as we read again in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):10** To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

It is a supernatural ability given by the Spirit of God, as we read in **1 Corinthians 14**

**(KJV):**2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. 3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. 4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. 5 I would that ye all spake with tongues but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

The gift of the interpretation of tongues is also a spiritual gift, enabling the one who is given this gift to understand a tongue unknown to himself, or herself.

Let us continue to read Augustine's thoughts in the next paragraph.

8. Consequently, we too receive the Holy Ghost if we love the Church, if we are joined together by charity, if we rejoice in the Catholic name and faith. Let us believe, brethren; as much as every man loves the Church of Christ, so much has he the Holy Ghost. For the Spirit is given, as the apostle saith, "to manifestation." To what manifestation? Just as the same apostle saith, "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge after the same Spirit, to another faith in the same Spirit, to another the gift of healing in one Spirit, to another the working of miracles in the same Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:7-10) For there are many gifts given to manifestation, but thou, it may be, hast nothing of all those I have said. If thou lovest, it is not nothing that thou hast: if thou lovest unity, whoever has aught in that unity has it also for thee. Take away envy, and what I have is thine too. The envious temper puts men apart, soundness of mind unites them. In the body, the eye alone sees; but is it for itself alone that the eye sees? It sees both for the hand and the foot, and for all the other members. If a blow be coming against the foot, the eye does not turn away from it, so as not to take precaution. Again, in the body, the hand alone works, but is it for itself alone the hand works? For the eye also it works: for if a coming blow comes, not against the hand, but only against the face, does the hand say, I will not move, because it is not coming to me? So the foot by walking serves all the members: all the other members are silent, and the tongue speaks for all. **We have therefore the Holy Spirit if we love the Church; but we love the Church if we stand firm in its union and charity.** For the apostle himself, after he had said that diverse gifts were bestowed on diverse men, just as the offices of the several members, saith, "Yet I show you a still more preeminent way;" and begins to speak of charity. This he put before tongues of men and angels, before miracles of faith, before knowledge and prophecy, before even that great work of mercy by which a man distributes to the poor all that he possesses; and, lastly, put it before even the martyrdom of the body: before all these so great things he put charity. Have it, and thou shalt have all: for without it, whatever thou canst have will profit nothing. But that thou mayest know that the charity of which we are speaking refers to the Holy Spirit (for the question now in hand in the Gospel is concerning the Holy Spirit), hear the apostle when he says, "The charity of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us." (Romans 5:5)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, "Consequently, we too receive the Holy Ghost if we love the Church, if we are joined together by charity, if we rejoice in the Catholic name and faith."

There is no such requirement in the Scripture for receiving the Holy Spirit. We have but to ask, as Jesus taught in **Luke 11 (KJV):9** And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. 10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? 12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

This was the only condition Jesus made for receiving the Holy Spirit. We just have to ask. And when we receive Him, He never leaves as Jesus taught in **John 14 (KJV):16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.

Augustine continues, “Let us believe, brethren; as much as every man loves the Church of Christ, so much has he the Holy Ghost.”

Augustine makes it sound as if we only receive a little of the Holy Spirit if we have not much love for the Church. When we believe in Jesus, we have the Holy Spirit as the life of our spirits. When we are baptized with the Holy Spirit, we are filled with the Holy Spirit as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):4** And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The Gentiles at the house of Cornelius also were filled with the Holy Spirit for they received the Holy Spirit just as the 120 in the upper room as we read in **Acts 10 (KJV):44** While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

The same experience occurred in Samaria as we read in **Acts 8 (KJV):12** But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. 14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. 18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

Though no record of anyone speaking with tongues is mentioned in this account, it is recorded that Simon “saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given”, so it is safe to conclude that speaking with tongues was also in manifestation when the apostles laid hands on the Samaritans. We continue to read in **Acts 8 (KJV):20** But Peter said

unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. 21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. 24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

And we see that this was the normal practice of the Church in the time of the apostles, for Paul also prayed for believers to receive the Holy Spirit as we read in **Acts 19 (KJV)**: 1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

Augustine continues, “For the Spirit is given, as the apostle saith, “to manifestation.” To what manifestation? Just as the same apostle saith, “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge after the same Spirit, to another faith in the same Spirit, to another the gift of healing in one Spirit, to another the working of miracles in the same Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:7-10)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV)**: 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

Augustine says that the word of wisdom is given by the Spirit, but the word of knowledge “after the same Spirit, and “to another faith in the same Spirit”. His translation obscures the meaning in the verses. He is following the translation in the **Latin Vulgate** in **1 Corinthians 12 (Douay Rheims)**: 7 And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit. 8 To one indeed, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom: and to another, the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit: 9 To another, faith in the same spirit: to another, the grace of healing in one Spirit: 10 To another the working of miracles: to another, prophecy: to another, the discerning of spirits: to another, diverse kinds of tongues: to another, interpretation of speeches.

The verse should read, the gifts are given “by the Spirit” in verse 8.

He continues, “For there are many gifts given to manifestation, but thou, it may be, hast nothing of all those I have said.”

Remember, in paragraph 7, it was Augustine’s confession that the gift of speaking in tongues was not operational in the Catholic Church in his time.

He continues, “If thou lovest, it is not nothing that thou hast: if thou lovest unity, whoever has aught in that unity has it also for thee. Take away envy, and what I have is thine

too. The envious temper puts men apart, soundness of mind unites them. In the body, the eye alone sees; but is it for itself alone that the eye sees? It sees both for the hand and the foot, and for all the other members. If a blow be coming against the foot, the eye does not turn away from it, so as not to take precaution. Again, in the body, the hand alone works, but is it for itself alone the hand works? For the eye also it works: for if a coming blow comes, not against the hand, but only against the face, does the hand say, I will not move, because it is not coming to me? So the foot by walking serves all the members: all the other members are silent, and the tongue speaks for all. **We have therefore the Holy Spirit if we love the Church; but we love the Church if we stand firm in its union and charity.** For the apostle himself, after he had said that diverse gifts were bestowed on diverse men, just as the offices of the several members, saith, “Yet I show you a still more preeminent way;” and begins to speak of charity. This he put before tongues of men and angels, before miracles of faith, before knowledge and prophecy, before even that great work of mercy by which a man distributes to the poor all that he possesses; and, lastly, put it before even the martyrdom of the body: before all these so great things he put charity. Have it, and thou shalt have all: for without it, whatever thou canst have will profit nothing.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):** 1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

But Paul is not saying to love instead of speaking with tongues, or prophecy, for he then says in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):** 1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

And in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):** 39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. 40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

We are to have love in all that we do. And we are to continue to do what will edify ourselves and others. This is what Paul is saying in **1 Coriinthians 14 (KJV):** 1 Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. 2 For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. 3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

The gifts of the Spirit are very valuable if we exercise them in love. In all that we do, we are to do in love. We don't stop preaching the word because we have love. Neither do we stop exercising the gifts of the Spirit, because we have love. But all that we do, if we have not love, what we do will not profit us anything.

Augustine concludes, “But that thou mayest know that the charity of which we are speaking refers to the Holy Spirit (for the question now in hand in the Gospel is concerning the Holy Spirit), hear the apostle when he says, “The charity of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us.” (Romans 5:5)”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):** 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

Love is a fruit of having the Spirit, as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):** 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness,



temperance: against such there is no law.

We have the Holy Spirit when we believe, as Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

When we are born again, the Holy Spirit is the life principle of our spirits. But the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a filling of our spirits by the Spirit of God as we read **Acts 2 (KJV):4** And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And in **Ephesians 3 (KJV):16** That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

And in **Acts 1 (KJV):5** For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an empowering by the Holy Spirit as we read in **Acts 1 (KJV):8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

And in **Luke 24 (KJV):49** And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

The promise of this gift of the Holy Spirit is for all believers, past, present, and future, as Peter reveals in **Acts 2 (KJV):38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Evidently, in Augustine's time, probably because of severe persecutions on the Church that went before him, there had been a loss of good doctrine. The emphasis on Tradition and ritual had hidden some good doctrines from the Church. And spiritual manifestation, as described by Paul in Corinth, was not present in the Church in Augustine's time. Let us continue to read Augustine's thoughts in the next paragraph.

9. Why then was it the will of the Lord, seeing that the Spirit's benefits in us are the greatest, because by Him the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, to give us that Spirit after His resurrection? Why did He signify by this? In order that in our resurrection our love may be inflamed, and may part from the love of the world to run wholly towards God. For here we are born and die: let us not love this world; let us migrate hence by love; by love let us dwell above, by that love by which we love God. In this sojourn of our life let us meditate on nothing else, but that here we shall not always be, and that by good living we shall prepare a place for ourselves there, whence we shall never migrate. For our Lord Jesus Christ, after that He is risen again, "now dieth no more;" "death," as the apostle says, "shall no more have dominion over Him." (Romans 6:9) Behold what we must love. If we live, if we believe on Him who is risen again, He will give us, not that which men love here who love not God, or love the more the less they love Him, but love this the less the more they love Him; but let us see what He has promised us. Not earthly and temporal riches, not honors and power in this world; for you see all these things given to wicked men, that they may not be highly prized by the good. Not, in

short, bodily health itself, though it is He that gives that also, but that, as you see, He gives even to the beasts. Not long life; for what, indeed, is long that will some day have an end? It is not length of days that He has promised to His believers, as if that were a great thing, or decrepit old age, which all wish for before it comes, and all murmur at when it does come. Not beauty of person, which either bodily disease or that same old age which is desired drives away. One wishes to be beautiful, and also to live to be old: these two desires cannot agree together; if thou shalt be old, thou wilt not be beautiful; when old age comes, beauty will flee away; the vigor of beauty and the groaning of old age cannot dwell together in one body. All these things, then, are not what He promised us when He said, “He that believeth in me, let him come and drink, and out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” He has promised us eternal life, where we shall have no fear, where we shall not be troubled, whence we shall have no migration, where we shall not die; where there is neither bewailing a predecessor deceased, nor a hoping for a successor. Accordingly, because such is what He has promised to us that love Him, and glow with the charity of the Holy Spirit, therefore He would not give us that same Spirit until He should be glorified, so that He might show in His body the life which we have not now, but which we hope for in the resurrection.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he asks, “Why then was it the will of the Lord, seeing that the Spirit’s benefits in us are the greatest, because by Him the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, to give us that Spirit after His resurrection? Why did He signify by this?”

He then answers, “In order that in our resurrection our love may be inflamed, and may part from the love of the world to run wholly towards God.”

Jesus explains why in **John 16 (KJV):4** But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. 5 But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? 6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. 7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

It was also so that they could be empowered as we read in **Luke 24 (KJV):49** And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

And in **Acts 1 (KJV):8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

If Jesus didn’t go to the Father, we read in verse 7 above that the Comforter would not have come to them. And it was not just for them but for us also as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the

promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Augustine continues, “For here we are born and die: let us not love this world; let us migrate hence by love; by love let us dwell above, by that love by which we love God. In this sojourn of our life let us meditate on nothing else, but that here we shall not always be, and that by good living we shall prepare a place for ourselves there, whence we shall never migrate.”

So here we live and die, and “by good living we shall prepare a place for ourselves there”, that is, in heaven, “whence we shall never migrate”.

He continues, “For our Lord Jesus Christ, after that He is risen again, “now dieth no more;” “death,” as the apostle says, “shall no more have dominion over Him.” (Romans 6:9)”

He refers to **Romans 6 (KJV):9** Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

He continues, “Behold what we must love. If we live, if we believe on Him who is risen again, He will give us, not that which men love here who love not God, or love the more the less they love Him, but love this the less the more they love Him; but let us see what He has promised us.”

We love this life the less the more we love Him. Augustine then lists things He has not promised us:

- 1.) “Not earthly and temporal riches, not honors and power in this world; for you see all these things given to wicked men, that they may not be highly prized by the good.
- 2.) Not, in short, bodily health itself, though it is He that gives that also, but that, as you see, He gives even to the beasts.
- 3.) Not long life; for what, indeed, is long that will some day have an end? It is not length of days that He has promised to His believers, as if that were a great thing, or decrepit old age, which all wish for before it comes, and all murmur at when it does come.
- 4.) Not beauty of person, which either bodily disease or that same old age which is desired drives away. One wishes to be beautiful, and also to live to be old: these two desires cannot agree together; if thou shalt be old, thou wilt not be beautiful; when old age comes, beauty will flee away; the vigor of beauty and the groaning of old age cannot dwell together in one body.”

He continues, “All these things, then, are not what He promised us when He said, “He that believeth in me, let him come and drink, and out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.””

Augustine then lists things He has promised us:

- 1.) “He has promised us eternal life,
- 2.) where we shall have no fear,
- 3.) where we shall not be troubled,
- 4.) whence we shall have no migration,
- 5.) where we shall not die;
- 6.) where there is neither bewailing a predecessor deceased, nor a hoping for a successor.”

He continues, “Accordingly, because such is what He has promised to us that love Him, and glow with the charity of the Holy Spirit, therefore He would not give us that same Spirit

until He should be glorified, so that He might show in His body the life which we have not now, but which we hope for in the resurrection.”

But it was not only to show us “in His body the life which we have not now, but which we hope for in the resurrection.” Jesus gave the Holy Spirit as a promise to all believers in order that:

- 1.) They might be empowered for service as members of the Church, His body, as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):4** For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.
- 2.) They could be His witnesses as we read in **Acts 1 (KJV):8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.
- 3.) They would have comfort as we read in **John 14 (KJV):16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. 18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.
- 4.) He might call to our remembrance what He has said as we read in **John 14 (KJV):25** But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.
- 5.) He might guide us into all truth as we read in **John 16 (KJV):13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

## The Unction of the Holy Spirit

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine**

**First Epistle of John, Homily III. 1 John II. 18–27, paragraphs 12-13, page 480-481**

12. Remember then, my brethren, that Christ hath promised us eternal life: “This,” saith he, “is the promise which He hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written to you concerning them which seduce you.” (1 John 2:25-26) Let none seduce you unto death: desire the promise of eternal life. What can the world promise? Let it promise what you will, it makes the promise perchance to one that tomorrow shall die. And with what face wilt thou go hence to Him that abideth for ever? “But a powerful man threatens me, so that I must do some evil.” What does he threaten? Prisons, chains, fires, torments, wild beasts: aye, but not eternal

fire? Dread that which One Almighty threatens; love that which One Almighty promises; and all the world becomes vile in our regard, whether it promise or terrify. “These things have I written unto you concerning them which seduce you; that ye may know that ye have an unction, and the unction which we have received from Him may abide in you.” (1 John 2:26-27) **In the unction we have the sacramental sign [of a thing unseen], the virtue itself is invisible; the invisible unction is the Holy Ghost; the invisible unction is that charity, which, in whomsoever it be, shall be as a root to him: however burning the sun, he cannot wither. All that is rooted is nourished by the sun’s warmth, not withered.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Remember then, my brethren, that Christ hath promised us eternal life: “This,” saith he, “is the promise which He hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written to you concerning them which seduce you.” (1 John 2:25-26)”

He refers to **1 John 2 (KJV):25** And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. 26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

He continues, “Let none seduce you unto death: desire the promise of eternal life. What can the world promise? Let it promise what you will, it makes the promise perchance to one that tomorrow shall die. And with what face wilt thou go hence to Him that abideth for ever? “But a powerful man threatens me, so that I must do some evil.” What does he threaten? Prisons, chains, fires, torments, wild beasts: aye, but not eternal fire? Dread that which One Almighty threatens; love that which One Almighty promises; and all the world becomes vile in our regard, whether it promise or terrify. “These things have I written unto you concerning them which seduce you; that ye may know that ye have an unction, and the unction which we have received from Him may abide in you.” (1 John 2:26-27)”

His reference is closest to **1 John 2 (Douay Rheims):26** These things have I written to you concerning them that seduce you. 27 And as for you, let the unction, which you have received from him abide in you. And you have no need that any man teach you: but as his unction teacheth you of all things and is truth and is no lie. And as it hath taught you, abide in him.

In verse 27 the **Douay Rheims Bible**, which is the English translation of the **Latin Vulgate**, has “And as for you, let the unction, which you have received from him abide in you...” But we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):26** These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

The tense of the verb “have received” in verse 27 in the Greek is 2<sup>nd</sup> Aorist, Active, Indicative, 2<sup>nd</sup> Person, Plural. [https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1jo/2/1/t\\_conc\\_1161027](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1jo/2/1/t_conc_1161027)

The tense of the verb “abideth”, or abides in present day English, is Present, Active, Indicative, 3<sup>rd</sup> Person, Singular. [https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1jo/2/1/t\\_conc\\_1161027](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1jo/2/1/t_conc_1161027)

The Aorist is always a past tense. The **Douay Rheims Bible** has “let ... abide” which is in what is known in the Greek as the Hortatory Subjunctive. Dana and Mantey say the following about this tense in the Greek:

“The subjunctive is the mood of mild contingency; the mood of probability. While the indicative assumes reality, the subjunctive assumes unreality. It is the first step away from that



which is actual in the direction of that which is only conceivable, and, therefore, properly leads the list of the potential moods.”

They also say:

“*The Hortatory Subjunctive*. When one exhorts others to participate with him in any act or condition, the subjunctive is used in the first person plural.”

**A MANUAL GRAMMAR of the GREEK NEW TESTAMENT, H. E. Dana, Th.D., Julius R. Mantey T.H.D., D.D. , page 170-171**

As an example of the Hortatory Subjunctive in the New Testament, they list **1 John 4 (KJV):7** Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

The tense of the verb “let us love” is in Present, Active, Subjunctive, 1<sup>st</sup> Person, Plural.  
[https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1jo/4/1/t\\_conc\\_1163007](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1jo/4/1/t_conc_1163007)

This verb tense is expressing an exhortation to do something.

In 1 John 2:27, the apostle John is stating a fact, regarding reality. They have received the anointing. The unction they have received abides in them. The Scripture does not say that they should let the unction abide in them. This was an assumption by the translators of the **Latin Vulgate** translation of Jerome. But the Greek is very clearly in the Indicative.

Augustine continues, “**In the unction we have the sacramental sign [of a thing unseen], the virtue itself is invisible; the invisible unction is the Holy Ghost; the invisible unction is that charity, which, in whomsoever it be, shall be as a root to him: however burning the sun, he cannot wither. All that is rooted is nourished by the sun’s warmth, not withered.**”

Nothing is mentioned in the Scripture of the Holy Spirit being “the sacramental sign”. The purpose of the unction is to teach us all things. This is what the apostle John is teaching in 1 John 2:27. Let us continue to read his next paragraph.

13. “And ye have no need that any man teach you, because His unction teacheth you concerning all things.” (1 John 2:27) Then to what purpose is it that “we,” my brethren, teach you? If “His unction teacheth you concerning all things,” it seems we labor without a cause. And what mean we, to cry out as we do? Let us leave you to His unction, and let His unction teach you. But this is putting the question only to myself: I put it also to that same apostle: let him deign to hear a babe that asks of him: to John himself I say, Had those the unction to whom thou wast speaking? Thou hast said, “His unction teacheth you concerning all things.” To what purpose hast thou written an Epistle like this? What teaching didst “thou” give them? What instruction? What edification? See here now, brethren, see a mighty mystery. The sound of our words strikes the ears, the Master is within. Do not suppose that any man learns ought from man. We can admonish by the sound of our voice; if there be not One within that shall teach, vain is the noise we make. Aye, brethren, have ye a mind to know it? Have ye not all heard this present discourse? And yet how many will go from this place untaught! I, for my part, have spoken to all; but they to whom that Unction within speaketh not, they whom the Holy Ghost within teacheth not, those go back untaught. The teachings of the master from without are a sort of aids and admonitions. He that teacheth the hearts, hath His chair in heaven. Therefore saith He also Himself in the Gospel: “Call no man your master upon earth; One is your Master, even Christ.” (Matthew 23:8-9) Let Him therefore Himself speak to you within, when not one of mankind is there: for though there be some one at thy side, there is none in thine heart. Yet let

there not be none in thine heart: let Christ be in thine heart: let His unction be in the heart, lest it be a heart thirsting in the wilderness, and having no fountains to be watered withal. There is then, I say, a Master within that teacheth: Christ teacheth; His inspiration teacheth. Where His inspiration and His unction is not, in vain do words make a noise from without. So are the words, brethren, which we speak from without, as is the husbandman to the tree: from without he worketh, applieth water and diligence of culture; let him from without apply what he will, does he form the apples? Does he clothe the nakedness of the wood with a shady covering of leaves? Does he do any thing like this from within? But whose doing is this? Hear the husbandman, the apostle: both see what we are, and hear the Master within: “I have planted, Apollos hath watered; but God gave the increase: neither he that planteth is any thing, neither he that watereth, but He that giveth the increase, even God.” (1 Corinthians 3:6-7) This then we say to you: whether we plant, or whether we water, by speaking we are not any thing; but He that giveth the increase, even God: that is, “His unction which teacheth you concerning all things.”

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, ““And ye have no need that any man teach you, because His unction teacheth you concerning all things.” (1 John 2:27)”

He refers to **1 John 2 (KJV):27** But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

He continues, “Then to what purpose is it that “we,” my brethren, teach you? If “His unction teacheth you concerning all things,” it seems we labor without a cause. And what mean we, to cry out as we do? Let us leave you to His unction, and let His unction teach you. But this is putting the question only to myself: I put it also to that same apostle: let him deign to hear a babe that asks of him: to John himself I say, Had those the unction to whom thou wast speaking? Thou hast said, “His unction teacheth you concerning all things.” To what purpose hast thou written an Epistle like this? What teaching didst “thou” give them? What instruction? What edification? See here now, brethren, see a mighty mystery. The sound of our words strikes the ears, the Master is within. Do not suppose that any man learns ought from man. We can admonish by the sound of our voice; if there be not One within that shall teach, vain is the noise we make. Aye, brethren, have ye a mind to know it? Have ye not all heard this present discourse? And yet how many will go from this place untaught! I, for my part, have spoken to all; but they to whom that Unction within speaketh not, they whom the Holy Ghost within teacheth not, those go back untaught. The teachings of the master from without are a sort of aids and admonitions. He that teacheth the hearts, hath His chair in heaven. Therefore saith He also Himself in the Gospel: “Call no man your master upon earth; One is your Master, even Christ.” (Matthew 23:8-9)”

He refers to **Matthew 23 (Douay Rheims):8** But be not you called Rabbi. For one is your master: and all you are brethren. 9 And call none your father upon earth; for one is your father, who is in heaven.

And we read in **Matthew 23 (KJV):8** But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

The word “Master” in the Greek is **καθηγητής** (pronounced kā-thā-gā-tā's), from a

compound of G2596 and G2233; a guide, i.e. (figuratively) a teacher:—master. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2519.**

This Greek word comes from two words. The first is **κατά** (pronounced kā-tā'), a primary particle; (prepositionally) down (in place or time), in varied relations (according to the case (genitive, dative or accusative) with which it is joined):—about, according as (to), after, against, (when they were)... **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2596.**

The second is **ἡγέομαι** (pronounced hā-ge'-o-mī), middle voice of a (presumed) strengthened form of G71; to lead, i.e. command (with official authority); figuratively, to deem, i.e. consider:—account, (be) chief, count, esteem, governor, judge, have the rule over, suppose, think. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2233.**

The Holy Spirit is the one who leads us to follow after Him. The Holy Spirit is the one who guides us into all truth. He is the witness to the truth as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):6** This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

It is the Spirit in believers who witnesses to the truth, because the Spirit is truth. As we rely on the Holy Spirit to convince of the truth, we are able to discern what is true from what is error. This is what the apostle Paul explains in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):9** But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

The things of God are spiritual things. We continue in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

So how do we become spiritual? We need teachers as we read in **Hebrews 5 (KJV):12** For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Teachers teach us what are the first principles as we continue reading in **Hebrews 6 (KJV):1** Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

Once we have these Biblical truths as our foundation, we can then progress to the strong meat. So the apostle John is not saying that we don't need teachers. He is saying that you have no need for anyone to tell you what is truth and what is not, for the anointing of the Holy Spirit

convinces us of what is truth by His witness with our spirit, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

When we rely on the Holy Spirit to convince us of the truth, we will then see the fruit that James speaks of in **James 3 (KJV):16** For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Augustine continues, “Let Him therefore Himself speak to you within, when not one of mankind is there: for though there be some one at thy side, there is none in thine heart. Yet let there not be none in thine heart: let Christ be in thine heart: let His unction be in the heart, lest it be a heart thirsting in the wilderness, and having no fountains to be watered withal. There is then, I say, a Master within that teacheth: Christ teacheth; His inspiration teacheth. Where His inspiration and His unction is not, in vain do words make a noise from without. So are the words, brethren, which we speak from without, as is the husbandman to the tree: from without he worketh, applieth water and diligence of culture; let him from without apply what he will, does he form the apples? Does he clothe the nakedness of the wood with a shady covering of leaves? Does he do any thing like this from within? But whose doing is this? Hear the husbandman, the apostle: both see what we are, and hear the Master within: “I have planted, Apollos hath watered; but God gave the increase: neither he that planteth is any thing, neither he that watereth, but He that giveth the increase, even God.” (1 Corinthians 3:6-7)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):6** I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

He concludes, “This then we say to you: whether we plant, or whether we water, by speaking we are not any thing; but He that giveth the increase, even God: that is, “His unction which teacheth you concerning all things.””

We can agree with Augustine here. It is the Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth. Good teachers help us, like Apollos, as we read in **Acts 18 (KJV):24** And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. 26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. 27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: 28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

But we must have our ears on, and remember what James taught in **James 3 (KJV):17** But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

The wisdom from above, which the Holy Spirit illumines to our minds, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

10. In the earliest times, “the Holy Ghost fell upon them that believed: and they spake with tongues,” which they had not learned, “as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4) These were signs adapted to the time. For there behooved to be that betokening of the Holy Spirit in all tongues, to shew that the Gospel of God was to run through all tongues over the whole earth. That thing was done for a betokening, and it passed away. In the laying on of hands now, that persons may receive the Holy Ghost, do we look that they should speak with tongues? Or when we laid the hand on these infants, did each one of you look to see whether they would speak with tongues, and, when he saw that they did not speak with tongues, was any of you so wrongminded as to say, These have not received the Holy Ghost; for, had they received, they would speak with tongues as was the case in those times? **If then the witness of the presence of the Holy Ghost be not now given through these miracles, by what is it given, by what does one get to know that he has received the Holy Ghost? Let him question his own heart. If he love his brother the Spirit of God dwelleth in him.** Let him see, let him prove himself before the eyes of God, let him see whether there be in him the love of peace and unity, the love of the Church that is spread over the whole earth. Let him not rest only in his loving the brother whom he has before his eyes, for we have many brethren whom we do not see, and in the unity of the Spirit we are joined to them. What marvel that they are not with us? We are in one body, we have one Head, in heaven. Brethren, our two eyes do not see each other; as one may say, they do not know each other. But in the charity of the bodily frame do they not know each other? For, to shew you that in the charity which knits them together they do know each other; when both eyes are open, the right may not rest on some object, on which the left shall not rest likewise. Direct the glance of the right eye without the other, if thou canst. Together they meet in one object, together they are directed to one object: their aim is one, their places diverse. If then all who with thee love God have one aim with thee, heed not that in the body thou are separated in place; the eyesight of the heart ye have alike fixed on the light of truth. Then if thou wouldest know that thou hast received the Spirit, question thine heart: lest haply thou have the sacrament, and have not the virtue of the sacrament. Question thine heart. If love of thy brethren be there, set thy mind at rest. There cannot be love without the Spirit of God: since Paul cries, “The love of God is shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.” (Romans 5:5)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “In the earliest times, “the Holy Ghost fell upon them that believed: and they spake with tongues,” which they had not learned, “as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4)”

He refers to **Acts 2 (KJV):4** And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

He continues, “These were signs adapted to the time. For there behooved to be that betokening of the Holy Spirit in all tongues, to shew that the Gospel of God was to run through all tongues over the whole earth. That thing was done for a betokening, and it passed away. In the laying on of hands now, that persons may receive the Holy Ghost, do we look that they should speak with tongues? Or when we laid the hand on these infants, did each one of you look to see whether they would speak with tongues, and, when he saw that they did not speak with tongues, was any of you so wrongminded as to say, These have not received the Holy Ghost;



for, had they received, they would speak with tongues as was the case in those times? **If then the witness of the presence of the Holy Ghost be not now given through these miracles, by what is it given, by what does one get to know that he has received the Holy Ghost?"**

Augustine was not aware of anyone in the Church speaking in tongues at the time of his writing. He assumes that this was just a token to show that the Gospel was to be preached to all languages.

He then explains, **"Let him question his own heart. If he love his brother the Spirit of God dwelleth in him.** Let him see, let him prove himself before the eyes of God, let him see whether there be in him the love of peace and unity, the love of the Church that is spread over the whole earth. Let him not rest only in his loving the brother whom he has before his eyes, for we have many brethren whom we do not see, and in the unity of the Spirit we are joined to them. What marvel that they are not with us? We are in one body, we have one Head, in heaven. Brethren, our two eyes do not see each other; as one may say, they do not know each other. But in the charity of the bodily frame do they not know each other? For, to shew you that in the charity which knits them together they do know each other; when both eyes are open, the right may not rest on some object, on which the left shall not rest likewise. Direct the glance of the right eye without the other, if thou canst. Together they meet in one object, together they are directed to one object: their aim is one, their places diverse. If then all who with thee love God have one aim with thee, heed not that in the body thou are separated in place; the eyesight of the heart ye have alike fixed on the light of truth. Then if thou wouldest know that thou hast received the Spirit, question thine heart: lest haply thou have the sacrament, and have not the virtue of the sacrament. Question thine heart. If love of thy brethren be there, set thy mind at rest. There cannot be love without the Spirit of God: since Paul cries, "The love of God is shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us." (Romans 5:5)"

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):5** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

However, if speaking in tongues were just a token, why would Paul include it in the list of spiritual gifts. We read of these in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):1** Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. **2** Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. **3** Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Paul explains first how to tell if one is speaking by the Spirit of God. He continues, as he lists the manifestations of the Spirit, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):4** Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. **5** And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. **6** And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. **7** But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. **8** For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; **9** To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; **10** To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: **11** But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. **12** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

The gifts of the Spirit are given to the members of the body of Christ to “profit withal” as in verse 7 above. God has a definite purpose for these gifts.

And if these gifts are just a token, why did Paul want everyone to speak with tongues, as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):5** I would that ye all spake with tongues but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

And Paul also says in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):39** Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. 40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

Love is a fruit of the Spirit as we read in **Galatians 5 (KJV):22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

The gifts of the Spirit are manifestations of the Spirit, and not fruits. They are also not human abilities. In Augustine’s time, ritual had taken the place of spiritual manifestation. It is likely that the persecutions of the early church are responsible for the loss of much of the doctrines of the word of God. We must all strive to edify the Church, and spiritual manifestation can help as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. 4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. 5 I would that ye all spake with tongues but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.

So when the brethren come together it should be as in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):26** How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. 27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. 28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. 29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. 30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. 31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. 32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

The order of operation of the gifts must be taught and learned, for all may learn to prophesy. But everything must be judged by the word of God, as in vers 29.

Let everything be done in order as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):40** Let all things be done decently and in order.

Let us remember Paul’s words to the Romans in **Romans 1 (NASB):11** For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; 12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other’s faith, both yours and mine.

It takes faith to exercise the gifts of the Spirit, and faith comes by hearing as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):17** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

## Summary

Augustine believed that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was given at baptism. The

evidence that one had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit was the love of God expressed in the body of Christ, which was the Catholic Church in his time. The word of wisdom and the word of knowledge, as gifts of the Spirit, were present in the Church according to Augustine, but his understanding of what these gifts are was not a Scriptural understanding. Augustine mentions them as the “**discourse of wisdom**”, and the “**discourse of science**”. He did not understand that these gifts are given in the need of the moment, and they are not just the wisdom and knowledge of God in general.

It was Augustine’s confession that the gift of speaking in tongues was not operational in the Catholic Church in his time. And he says, “**If then the witness of the presence of the Holy Ghost be not now given through these miracles, by what is it given, by what does one get to know that he has received the Holy Ghost?**”

Augustine was not aware of anyone in the Church speaking in tongues at the time of his writing. He assumes that this was just a token to show that the Gospel was to be preached to all languages.

He then says, “**Let him question his own heart. If he love his brother the Spirit of God dwelleth in him.**” It is evident that spiritual gifts, the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, were not operational in the Church in the time of Augustine.

The anointing of the Holy Spirit is not just to fill us with God’s love as Augustine suggests. The Holy Spirit is also given to equip us with spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit is also given to guide us into all truth, to comfort us, to teach us, and to lead us. He convinces us of the truth. From milk to solid food, the Scriptures are the truth that the Holy Spirit convinces us of.

Augustine did quote 1 John 2:27, as he says, ““These things have I written unto you concerning them which seduce you; that ye may know that ye have an unction, and the unction which we have received from Him may abide in you.””

But he quotes from the Latin version, as he says “may abide in you”. This makes the reader or listener feel like he could lose the anointing. But we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):27** But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

If we have been born again, the Holy Spirit will not leave us. The anointing will abide in us.

But Augustine did say, “Do not suppose that any man learns ought from man. We can admonish by the sound of our voice; if there be not One within that shall teach, vain is the noise we make. Aye, brethren, have ye a mind to know it? Have ye not all heard this present discourse? And yet how many will go from this place untaught! I, for my part, have spoken to all; but they to whom that Unction within speaketh not, they whom the Holy Ghost within teacheth not, those go back untaught. The teachings of the master from without are a sort of aids and admonitions. He that teacheth the hearts, hath His chair in heaven. Therefore saith He also Himself in the Gospel: “Call no man your master upon earth; One is your Master, even Christ.” (Matthew 23:8-9)”

In the thinking of the early Church, one could lose the Holy Spirit if they were not in communion with the Catholic Church. This would make the reader or listener very dependent on the “master from without”, that is, a teacher like Augustine.

Augustine knew that the Holy Spirit was our guide to find the truth, and that teachers

were merely “aids”, or helpers “from without”. It is the “Unction within” that we must pay attention to, because “One is your Master, even Christ.”

# The Lord's Supper, Communion, Or the Eucharist

Let us begin by reading what Justin Martyr, 100 to 165 A.D., says about the Eucharist.

**Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1,  
Dialog with Trypho, Chapter XLI, page 215**

Chapter XLI.—The oblation of fine flour was a figure of the Eucharist.

“And the offering of fine flour, sirs,” I said, “which was prescribed to be presented on behalf of those purified from leprosy, was a type of the bread of the Eucharist, the celebration of which our Lord Jesus Christ prescribed, in remembrance of the suffering which He endured on behalf of those who are purified in soul from all iniquity, in order that we may at the same time thank God for having created the world, with all things therein, for the sake of man, and for delivering us from the evil in which we were, and for utterly overthrowing with a perfect overthrow principalities and powers by Him who suffered according to His will. Hence God speaks by the mouth of Malachi, one of the twelve [prophets], as I said before, about the sacrifices at that time presented by you: ‘I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord; and I will not accept your sacrifices at your hands: for, from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, My name has been glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure offering: for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord: but ye profane it.’ (Malachi 1:10-12) [So] He then speaks of those Gentiles, namely us, who in every place offer sacrifices to Him, i.e., the bread of the Eucharist, and also the cup of the Eucharist, affirming both that we glorify His name, and that you profane [it]. The command of circumcision, again, bidding [them] always circumcise the children on the eighth day, was a type of the true circumcision, by which we are circumcised from deceit and iniquity through Him who rose from the dead on the first day after the Sabbath, [namely through] our Lord Jesus Christ. For the first day after the Sabbath, remaining the first of all the days, is called, however, the eighth, according to the number of all the days of the cycle, and [yet] remains the first.

**Commentary:** Justin Martyr begins as he says, ““And the offering of fine flour, sirs,” I said, “which was prescribed to be presented on behalf of those purified from leprosy, was a type of the bread of the Eucharist, the celebration of which our Lord Jesus Christ prescribed, in remembrance of the suffering which He endured on behalf of those who are purified in soul from all iniquity, in order that we may at the same time thank God for having created the world, with all things therein, for the sake of man, and for delivering us from the evil in which we were, and for utterly overthrowing with a perfect overthrow principalities and powers by Him who suffered according to His will. Hence God speaks by the mouth of Malachi, one of the twelve [prophets], as I said before, about the sacrifices at that time presented by you: ‘I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord; and I will not accept your sacrifices at your hands: for, from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, My name has been glorified among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered to My name, and a pure offering: for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord: but ye profane it.’ (Malachi 1:10-12)”



He refers to **Malachi 1 (Septuagint):10** Because even among you the doors shall be shut, and one will not kindle the fire of mine altar for nothing, I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord Almighty, and I will not accept a sacrifice at your hands. 11 For from the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof my name has been glorified among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord Almighty. 12 But ye profane it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted, and his meats set thereon are despised.

In the **Septuagint** in verse 11 we read that the Lord's name "has been glorified among the Gentiles". But in the **King James Version** we read of a prophecy that is future, as in **Malachi 1 (KJV):10** Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. 11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts. 12 But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible.

Justin Martyr then concludes, "[So] He then speaks of those Gentiles, namely us, who in every place offer sacrifices to Him, i.e., the bread of the Eucharist, and also the cup of the Eucharist, affirming both that we glorify His name, and that you profane [it]."

Justin Martyr is using Malachi 1:10-12 as a foundation to support his belief that the Eucharist was a sacrifice offered by the Gentiles.

He then finishes, "The command of circumcision, again, bidding [them] always circumcise the children on the eighth day, was a type of the true circumcision, by which we are circumcised from deceit and iniquity through Him who rose from the dead on the first day after the Sabbath, [namely through] our Lord Jesus Christ. For the first day after the Sabbath, remaining the first of all the days, is called, however, the eighth, according to the number of all the days of the cycle, and [yet] remains the first."

When he says "true circumcision", he is referring to **Romans 2 (KJV):29** But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Jesus offered one sacrifice forever as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):12** But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God;

We do not offer a sacrifice when we celebrate the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist. We celebrate the Lord's Supper, or Communion, or the Eucharist, in remembrance of the one sacrifice Jesus did for sins forever. This is how Jesus commanded it to be done as we read in **Luke 22 (KJV):19** And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

And through Paul, the Lord has spoken as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):25** For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new

testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Augustine inherited this tradition through the Catholic Church. Now we will read in his writings.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God  
Book X, Chapters 4-6, page 182-184**

Chapter 4.—That Sacrifice is Due to the True God Only.

**But, putting aside for the present the other religious services with which God is worshipped, certainly no man would dare to say that sacrifice is due to any but God.** Many parts, indeed, of divine worship are unduly used in showing honor to men, whether through an excessive humility or pernicious flattery; yet, while this is done, those persons who are thus worshipped and venerated, or even adored, are reckoned no more than human; and who ever thought of sacrificing save to one whom he knew, supposed, or feigned to be a god? And how ancient a part of God's worship sacrifice is, those two brothers, Cain and Abel, sufficiently show, of whom God rejected the elder's sacrifice, and looked favorably on the younger's.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, **“But, putting aside for the present the other religious services with which God is worshipped, certainly no man would dare to say that sacrifice is due to any but God.”**

And how true, for so it was in the beginning in **Genesis 4 (KJV):1** And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. 2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. 4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

Augustine continues, “Many parts, indeed, of divine worship are unduly used in showing honor to men, whether through an excessive humility or pernicious flattery; yet, while this is done, those persons who are thus worshipped and venerated, or even adored, are reckoned no more than human; and who ever thought of sacrificing save to one whom he knew, supposed, or feigned to be a god? And how ancient a part of God's worship sacrifice is, those two brothers, Cain and Abel, sufficiently show, of whom God rejected the elder's sacrifice, and looked favorably on the younger's.”

It is certain that God knew Cain's heart, and sin indeed did lie at the door as we continue in **Genesis 4 (KJV):5** But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. 6 And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? 7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. 9 And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

It is evident that Cain did not know who he was talking to, for he was of that wicked one as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):12** Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

And we then read of God's judgment on Cain in **Genesis 4 (KJV):10** And he said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. 11 And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; 12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. 13 And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear. 14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. 15 And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. 16 And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. 17 And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

We must keep reading to understand Augustine's thinking about sacrifice.

Chapter 5.—Of the Sacrifices Which God Does Not Require, But Wished to Be Observed for the Exhibition of Those Things Which He Does Require.

And who is so foolish as to suppose that the things offered to God are needed by Him for some uses of His own? Divine Scripture in many places explodes this idea. Not to be wearisome, suffice it to quote this brief saying from a psalm: "I have said to the Lord, Thou art my God: for Thou needest not my goodness." (Psalm 16:2) We must believe, then, that God has no need, not only of cattle, or any other earthly and material thing, but even of man's righteousness, and that whatever right worship is paid to God profits not Him, but man. For no man would say he did a benefit to a fountain by drinking, or to the light by seeing. And the fact that the ancient church offered animal sacrifices, which the people of God now-a-days read of without imitating, proves nothing else than this, that those sacrifices signified the things which we do for the purpose of drawing near to God, and inducing our neighbor to do the same. **A sacrifice, therefore, is the visible sacrament or sacred sign of an invisible sacrifice.** Hence that penitent in the psalm, or it may be the Psalmist himself, entreating God to be merciful to his sins, says, "If Thou desiredst sacrifice, I would give it: Thou delightest not in whole burnt-offerings. The sacrifice of God is a broken heart: a heart contrite and humble God will not despise." (Psalm 51:16-17) Observe how, in the very words in which he is expressing God's refusal of sacrifice, he shows that God requires sacrifice. He does not desire the sacrifice of a slaughtered beast, but He desires the sacrifice of a contrite heart. Thus, that sacrifice which he says God does not wish, is the symbol of the

sacrifice which God does wish. God does not wish sacrifices in the sense in which foolish people think He wishes them, viz., to gratify His own pleasure. For if He had not wished that the sacrifices He requires, as, *e.g.*, a heart contrite and humbled by penitent sorrow, should be symbolized by those sacrifices which He was thought to desire because pleasant to Himself, the old law would never have enjoined their presentation; and they were destined to be merged when the fit opportunity arrived, in order that men might not suppose that the sacrifices themselves, rather than the things symbolized by them, were pleasing to God or acceptable in us. Hence, in another passage from another psalm, he says, “If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine and the fullness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?” (Psalm 50:12-13) as if He should say, Supposing such things were necessary to me, I would never ask thee for what I have in my own hand. Then he goes on to mention what these signify: “Offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and pay thy vows unto the Most High. And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shall glorify me.” (Psalm 50:14-15) So in another prophet: “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? Hath He showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:6-8) In the words of this prophet, these two things are distinguished and set forth with sufficient explicitness, that God does not require these sacrifices for their own sakes, and that He does require the sacrifices which they symbolize. In the epistle entitled “To the Hebrews” it is said, “To do good and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” (Hebrews 13:16) And so, when it is written, “I desire mercy rather than sacrifice,” (Hosea 6:6) nothing else is meant than that one sacrifice is preferred to another; for that which in common speech is called sacrifice is only the symbol of the true sacrifice. Now mercy is the true sacrifice, and therefore it is said, as I have just quoted, “with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” All the divine ordinances, therefore, which we read concerning the sacrifices in the service of the tabernacle or the temple, we are to refer to the love of God and our neighbor. For “on these two commandments,” as it is written, “hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:40)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “And who is so foolish as to suppose that the things offered to God are needed by Him for some uses of His own? Divine Scripture in many places explodes this idea. Not to be wearisome, suffice it to quote this brief saying from a psalm: “I have said to the Lord, Thou art my God: for Thou needest not my goodness.” (Psalm 16:2)”

He refers to **Psalm 16 (Septuagint):2** I said to the Lord, Thou art my Lord; for thou has no need of my goodness.

And to **Psalm 16 (KJV):2** O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee;

He continues, “We must believe, then, that God has no need, not only of cattle, or any

other earthly and material thing, but even of man's righteousness, and that whatever right worship is paid to God profits not Him, but man. For no man would say he did a benefit to a fountain by drinking, or to the light by seeing. And the fact that the ancient church offered animal sacrifices, which the people of God now-a-days read of without imitating, proves nothing else than this, that those sacrifices signified the things which we do for the purpose of drawing near to God, and inducing our neighbor to do the same."

He then explains, "**A sacrifice, therefore, is the visible sacrament or sacred sign of an invisible sacrifice.** Hence that penitent in the psalm, or it may be the Psalmist himself, entreating God to be merciful to his sins, says, "If Thou desiredst sacrifice, I would give it: Thou delightest not in whole burnt-offerings. The sacrifice of God is a broken heart: a heart contrite and humble God will not despise." (Psalm 51:16-17)"

He refers to **Psalm 51 (KJV)**:16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

He then explains further, "Observe how, in the very words in which he is expressing God's refusal of sacrifice, he shows that God requires sacrifice. He does not desire the sacrifice of a slaughtered beast, but He desires the sacrifice of a contrite heart. Thus, that sacrifice which he says God does not wish, is the symbol of the sacrifice which God does wish. God does not wish sacrifices in the sense in which foolish people think He wishes them, viz., to gratify His own pleasure. For if He had not wished that the sacrifices He requires, as, *e.g.*, a heart contrite and humbled by penitent sorrow, should be symbolized by those sacrifices which He was thought to desire because pleasant to Himself, the old law would never have enjoined their presentation; and they were destined to be merged when the fit opportunity arrived, in order that men might not suppose that the sacrifices themselves, rather than the things symbolized by them, were pleasing to God or acceptable in us. Hence, in another passage from another psalm, he says, "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is mine and the fullness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" (Psalm 50:12-13) as if He should say, Supposing such things were necessary to me, I would never ask thee for what I have in my own hand."

He refers to **Psalm 50 (KJV)**:12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. 13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?

He then continues, "Then he goes on to mention what these signify: "Offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and pay thy vows unto the Most High. And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." (Psalm 50:14-15)

He refers to **Psalm 49 (Doauy Rheims)**:14 Offer to God the sacrifice of praise: and pay thy vows to the most High. 15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

And to **Psalm 50 (KJV)**:14 Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: 15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

He then continues, "So in another prophet: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with



calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? Hath He showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:6-8)"

He refers to **Micah 6 (KJV):6** Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? 7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

He continues, "In the words of this prophet, these two things are distinguished and set forth with sufficient explicitness, that God does not require these sacrifices for their own sakes, and that He does require the sacrifices which they symbolize. In the epistle entitled "To the Hebrews" it is said, "To do good and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Hebrews 13:16)"

He refers here to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):16** But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

He continues, "And so, when it is written, "I desire mercy rather than sacrifice," (Hosea 6:6) nothing else is meant than that one sacrifice is preferred to another; for that which in common speech is called sacrifice is only the symbol of the true sacrifice."

He refers to **Hosea 6 (KJV):6** For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

He continues, "Now mercy is the true sacrifice, and therefore it is said, as I have just quoted, "with such sacrifices God is well pleased." All the divine ordinances, therefore, which we read concerning the sacrifices in the service of the tabernacle or the temple, we are to refer to the love of God and our neighbor. For "on these two commandments," as it is written, "hang all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:40)"

He refers in context to **Matthew 22 (KJV):35** Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

## Chapter 6.—Of the True and Perfect Sacrifice.

Thus a true sacrifice is every work which is done that we may be united to God in holy fellowship, and which has a reference to that supreme good and end in which alone we can be truly blessed. And therefore even the mercy we show to men, if it is not shown for God's sake, is not a sacrifice. For, though made or offered by man, sacrifice is a divine thing, as those who called it sacrifice meant to indicate. Thus man himself, consecrated in the name of God, and vowed to God, is a sacrifice in so far as he dies to the world that he may live to God. For this is

a part of that mercy which each man shows to himself; as it is written, “Have mercy on thy soul by pleasing God.” Our body, too, as a sacrifice when we chasten it by temperance, if we do so as we ought, for God’s sake, that we may not yield our members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but instruments of righteousness unto God. Exhorting to this sacrifice, the apostle says, “I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” If, then, the body, which, being inferior, the soul uses as a servant or instrument, is a sacrifice when it is used rightly, and with reference to God, how much more does the soul itself become a sacrifice when it offers itself to God, in order that, being inflamed by the fire of His love, it may receive of His beauty and become pleasing to Him, losing the shape of earthly desire, and being remolded in the image of permanent loveliness? And this, indeed, the apostle subjoins, saying, “And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed in the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” Since, therefore, true sacrifices are works of mercy to ourselves or others, done with a reference to God, and since works of mercy have no other object than the relief of distress or the conferring of happiness, and since there is no happiness apart from that good of which it is said, “It is good for me to be very near to God,” it follows that the whole redeemed city, that is to say, the congregation or community of the saints, is offered to God as our sacrifice through the great High Priest, who offered Himself to God in His passion for us, that we might be members of this glorious head, according to the form of a servant. For it was this form He offered, in this He was offered, because it is according to it He is Mediator, in this He is our Priest, in this the Sacrifice. Accordingly, when the apostle had exhorted us to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, our reasonable service, and not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed in the renewing of our mind, that we might prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, that is to say, the true sacrifice of ourselves, he says, “For I say, through the grace of God which is given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For, as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another, having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.” This is the sacrifice of Christians: we, being many, are one body in Christ. And this also is the sacrifice which the Church continually celebrates in the sacrament of the altar, known to the faithful, in which she teaches that she herself is offered in the offering she makes to God.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Thus a true sacrifice is every work which is done that we may be united to God in holy fellowship, and which has a reference to that supreme good and end in which alone we can be truly blessed. And therefore even the mercy we show to men, if it is not shown for God’s sake, is not a sacrifice. For, though made or offered by man, sacrifice is a divine thing, as those who called it sacrifice meant to indicate. Thus man himself, consecrated in the name of God, and vowed to God, is a sacrifice in so far as he dies to the world that he may live to God. For this is a part of that mercy which each man shows to himself; as it is written, “Have mercy on thy soul by pleasing God.”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 30 (Douay Rheims):24** Have mercy on thy soul by pleasing

God.

He continues, “Our body, too, as a sacrifice when we chasten it by temperance, if we do so as we ought, for God’s sake, that we may not yield our members instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but instruments of righteousness unto God.”

Here he refers to **Romans 6 (KJV):13** Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

He continues, “Exhorting to this sacrifice, the apostle says, “I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”

He refers to **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

He continues, “If, then, the body, which, being inferior, the soul uses as a servant or instrument, is a sacrifice when it is used rightly, and with reference to God, how much more does the soul itself become a sacrifice when it offers itself to God, in order that, being inflamed by the fire of His love, it may receive of His beauty and become pleasing to Him, losing the shape of earthly desire, and being remolded in the image of permanent loveliness? And this, indeed, the apostle subjoins, saying, “And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed in the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

He refers to **Romans 12 (KJV):2** And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

He continues, “Since, therefore, true sacrifices are works of mercy to ourselves or others, done with a reference to God, and since works of mercy have no other object than the relief of distress or the conferring of happiness, and since there is no happiness apart from that good of which it is said, “It is good for me to be very near to God,” it follows that the whole redeemed city, that is to say, the congregation or community of the saints, is offered to God as our sacrifice through the great High Priest, who offered Himself to God in His passion for us, that we might be members of this glorious head, according to the form of a servant.”

Our “great High Priest” is mentioned in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):14** Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

He continues, “For it was this form He offered, in this He was offered, because it is according to it He is Mediator, in this He is our Priest, in this the Sacrifice. Accordingly, when the apostle had exhorted us to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, our reasonable service, and not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed in the renewing of our mind, that we might prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, that is to say, the true sacrifice of ourselves, he says, “For I say, through the grace of God which is given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For, as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so

we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another, having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us.”

Here he refers to **Romans 12 (KJV):3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith;

He then concludes, “This is the sacrifice of Christians: we, being many, are one body in Christ. And this also is the sacrifice which the Church continually celebrates in the sacrament of the altar, known to the faithful, in which she teaches that she herself is offered in the offering she makes to God.”

In verse 5, we are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. So Augustine sees us all in one body as a “living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God”, as in verse 1 of Romans 12. But he then says, “this also is the sacrifice which the Church continually celebrates in the sacrament of the altar, known to the faithful, in which she teaches that she herself is offered in the offering she makes to God”, referring to Communion, or the Eucharist, or the Lord’s Supper, as it is variously named.

So he says that the “sacrament of the altar” is “the sacrifice which the Church continually celebrates”, “in which she teaches that she herself is offered in the offering she makes to God”. Augustine is focusing on the body as a corporate entity. The Catholic Church in his time may have taught this, but the Scripture is speaking of the individuality of believers. Every member has a measure of faith. Every member does not have the same office, or function, with gifts “differing according to the grace that is given to us”, in verse 6. We are “one body in Christ, and every one members one of another”, in verse 5, and so we need to function together, but not forget that we are “members in particular” as in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):27** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

We are each one, individually, to present ourselves a living sacrifice to God, as in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book 1, Chapter 34, page 28**

Chapter 34 [XXIV.]—Baptism is Called Salvation, and the Eucharist, Life, by the Christians of Carthage.

The Christians of Carthage have an excellent name for the sacraments, when they say that baptism is nothing else than “salvation,” and the sacrament of the body of Christ nothing else than “life.” Whence, however, was this derived, but from that primitive, as I suppose, and apostolic tradition, by which the Churches of Christ maintain it to be an inherent principle, that without baptism and partaking of the supper of the Lord it is impossible for any man to attain either to the kingdom of God or to salvation and everlasting life? So much also does Scripture

testify, according to the words which we already quoted. For wherein does their opinion, who designate baptism by the term salvation, differ from what is written: “He saved us by the washing of regeneration?” (Titus 3:5) or from Peter’s statement: “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us?” (1 Peter 3:21) And what else do they say who call the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper life, than that which is written: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven;” (John 6:51) and “The bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world;” (John 6:53) and “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye shall have no life in you?” (John 6:53) If, therefore, as so many and such divine witnesses agree, neither salvation nor eternal life can be hoped for by any man without baptism and the Lord’s body and blood, it is vain to promise these blessings to infants without them. Moreover, if it be only sins that separate man from salvation and eternal life, there is nothing else in infants which these sacraments can be the means of removing, but the guilt of sin,—respecting which guilty nature it is written, that “no one is clean, not even if his life be only that of a day.” (Job 14:4) Whence also that exclamation of the Psalmist: “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me!” (Psalm 51:5) This is either said in the person of our common humanity, or if of himself only David speaks, it does not imply that he was born of fornication, but in lawful wedlock. We therefore ought not to doubt that even for infants yet to be baptized was that precious blood shed, which previous to its actual effusion was so given, and applied in the sacrament, that it was said, “This is my blood, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins.” (Matthew 26:28) Now they who will not allow that they are under sin, deny that there is any liberation. For what is there that men are liberated from, if they are held to be bound by no bondage of sin?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “The Christians of Carthage have an excellent name for the sacraments, when they say that baptism is nothing else than “salvation,” and the sacrament of the body of Christ nothing else than “life.” Whence, however, was this derived, but from that primitive, as I suppose, and apostolic tradition, by which the Churches of Christ maintain it to be an inherent principle, that without baptism and partaking of the supper of the Lord it is impossible for any man to attain either to the kingdom of God or to salvation and everlasting life?”

So here we have the teaching of the “Churches of Christ” in Augustine’s time spelled out. And they maintained that is was “from that primitive, as I suppose, and apostolic tradition”. We know from the teaching of Irenaeus that the tradition of a church was held to be from “apostolic tradition” if a church could show its succession of bishops back to an apostle.

He continues, “So much also does Scripture testify, according to the words which we already quoted. For wherein does their opinion, who designate baptism by the term salvation, differ from what is written: “He saved us by the washing of regeneration?” (Titus 3:5) or from Peter’s statement: “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us?” (1 Peter 3:21)”

He refers to **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

But this Scripture refers to the cleansing from sin that happens when we have faith in Jesus Christ, and we are born again, or regenerated in our spirit which is born of the Holy Spirit.



And in Titus 3:5, the first part of the verse, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us”, explains the second part, “by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”

When we believe in Jesus Christ from our heart, we are born again. It is when we are born again that we are forgiven of all our sins. The word “washing” is symbolic of this, as Jesus spoke in **John 13 (KJV):6** Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. 8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. 9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

All but one of the disciples present had believed in him, and were thus “washed”, and were clean.

And Augustine also refers in context to **1 Peter 3 (KJV):21** Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

In verse 21, when he says that “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us”, he refers to the “water” at the end of verse 21. Baptism is only a “like figure”.

Kenneth Wuest explains that, “The words “the like figure” are in the Greek **ho antitupon**. The question as to whether the word “figure” refers back to the word “ark” or the word “water,” is easily settled by the Greek grammar involved in this expression, for the relative pronoun **ho** is neuter, the word “ark” is feminine, and the word “water” is neuter. The relative pronoun agrees with its antecedent in gender. Therefore the word “figure” which is neuter and construed grammatically with the pronoun **ho** goes back to the word “water.” The word “figure” is the translation of **antitupon** which means “the counterpart of reality.” The Greek word “baptism” is in apposition with the word “figure”. Our translation so far reads, “which (water) also (as a) counterpart now saves you, (namely) baptism.” Water baptism is clearly in the apostle’s mind, not the baptism by the Holy Spirit, for he speaks of the waters of the flood as saving the inmates of the ark, and in this verse, of baptism saving believers. But he says that it saves them only as a counterpart. That is, water baptism is the counterpart of the reality, the Lord Jesus. They did not actually save the believer, only in type. It is not argued here that these sacrifices are analogous to Christian water baptism. The author is merely using them as an illustration of the use of the word “counterpart.” So water baptism only saves the believer in type. The Old Testament Jew was saved before he brought the offering. That offering was only his outward testimony that he was placing his faith in the Lamb of God of whom the sacrifices were a type. The moment he conceived in his heart that he would bring his offering to the Tabernacle, his faith leaped the centuries to the time when God would offer the Sacrifice that would pay for his sin. Our Lord said, “Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad” (John 8:56). The act of bringing the sacrifice was his outward expression and testimony of his inward faith. Water baptism is the outward testimony of the believer’s inward faith. The person is saved the moment he places his faith in the Lord Jesus. Water

baptism is his visible testimony to his faith and the salvation he was given in answer to that faith.

Peter is careful to inform his readers that he is not teaching baptismal regeneration, namely, that a person who submits to baptism is thereby regenerated, for he says, “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh.” Baptism, Peter explains, does not wash away the filth of the flesh, either in a literal sense as a bath for the body, nor in a metaphorical sense as a cleansing for the soul. No ceremonies really affect the conscience. But he defines what he means by salvation, in the words, “the answer of a good conscience toward God,” and he explains how this is accomplished, namely “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” in that the believing sinner is identified with Him in that resurrection.” **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume II, First Peter in the Greek New Testament, Page 108-109.**

The Catholic Church in Augustine’s time was becoming more about ritual than reality.

Augustine continues, “**And what else do they say who call the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper life, than that which is written: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven;” (John 6:51) and “The bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world;” (John 6:53) and “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye shall have no life in you?” (John 6:53)”**

He refers in context to **John 6 (KJV):51** I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. 52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

Augustine then continues, and concludes, “**If, therefore, as so many and such divine witnesses agree, neither salvation nor eternal life can be hoped for by any man without baptism and the Lord’s body and blood, it is vain to promise these blessings to infants without them.”**

But let us now continue to read more in **John 6 (KJV):54** Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

Jesus likened his body and blood to the manna in that it “came down from heaven”. The difference was that “he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever”.

But His disciples still did not understand. We continue to read in **John 6 (KJV):59** These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. 60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

If He ascended “up where he was before”, He wouldn’t be around for them to eat Him. But He then explains in verse 63, “It is the spirit that quickeneth (or gives life); the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

In other words, we receive life when we are born again of the Spirit of God, as Jesus also taught in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

What Jesus is saying is that the “flesh profiteth nothing”. It is not about eating His flesh, but about partaking in what His flesh stands for. He is our propitiation as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

And in **1 John 2 (KJV):2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

And in **1 John 4 (KJV):10** Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

He is a propitiation for our sins through faith in his blood. This is how we have the remission of sins that are past. So His words are “are spirit, and they are life.” That is, through faith we are born from above, of the Spirit of God, who gives our spirits eternal life since we are then born of God.

Jesus continues in **John 6 (KJV):64** But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. 66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. 67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. 69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

By faith Peter and the other disciples who believed were born from above. So we are not born again by the baptism in water. And we are not given life when we partake of the Lord’s Supper. If we have believed, we already have the life of the Spirit of God in our spirits. Water baptism is only a token, like circumcision, testifying to our faith. The bread and wine, with which we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, are just tokens of the life we received when we partook of His sacrifice on the cross in which He gave his flesh and blood to be a propitiation for our sins. This is why every time we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, we do it in remembrance of Him who died for us.

Augustine continues, “Moreover, if it be only sins that separate man from salvation and eternal life, there is nothing else in infants which these sacraments can be the means of removing, but the guilt of sin,—respecting which guilty nature it is written, that “no one is clean, not even if his life be only that of a day.” (Job 14:4)”

He refers to **Job 14 (KJV):4** Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.

And he then continues, “Whence also that exclamation of the Psalmist: “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me!” (Psalm 51:5)”

He refers to **Psalm 51 (KJV):5** Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

He continues, “This is either said in the person of our common humanity, or if of himself only David speaks, it does not imply that he was born of fornication, but in lawful wedlock. We

therefore ought not to doubt that even for infants yet to be baptized was that precious blood shed, which previous to its actual effusion was so given, and applied in the sacrament, that it was said, “This is my blood, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins.” (Matthew 26:28)”

And he refers to **Matthew 26 (KJV):28** For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

He concludes, “Now they who will not allow that they are under sin, deny that there is any liberation. For what is there that men are liberated from, if they are held to be bound by no bondage of sin?”

All are under sin as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Irenaeus, who lived between 120 and 202 A.D. approximately, was the bishop of the church in Lyons, France. The following are excerpts from **Against Heresies by Irenaeus A Commentary, Commentary Summary: Communion, by Will Smee, page 502-507:**

“Irenaeus states that it is the invocation of God which changes the bread and wine into a heavenly reality as we read in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 5**, where he says, “For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.”

Irenaeus believed that receiving the Eucharist gives us spiritual life, again referring to **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 5**, where he says, “...so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.”

And also in **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 2**, “For it was not because He was angry, like a man, as many venture to say, that He rejected their sacrifices; but out of compassion to their blindness, and with the view of suggesting to them the true sacrifice, by offering which they shall appease God, that they may receive life from Him.”

And in **Fragment XXXVII**, where he says, “And then, when we have perfected the oblation, we invoke the Holy Spirit, that He may exhibit this sacrifice, both the bread the body of Christ, and the cup the blood of Christ, in order that the receivers of these antitypes may obtain remission of sins and life eternal.”

Irenaeus believed that the wine and bread becomes the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ, when they receive the word of God as we read in **Book 5 Chapter II, paragraph 3**, where he says “When, therefore, the mingled cup and the manufactured bread receives the Word of God, and the Eucharist of the blood and the body of Christ is made....” And again in the same paragraph he states that the Eucharist is “the body and blood of Christ” when he says, “And just as a cutting from the vine planted in the ground fructifies in its season, or as a corn of wheat falling into the earth and becoming decomposed, rises with manifold increase by the Spirit of God, who contains all things, and then, through the wisdom of God, serves for the use of men, and having received the Word of God, becomes the Eucharist, which is the body and blood of Christ.”

“With this understanding about sacrifice, Irenaeus prepares us for his belief that the Church has received from the apostles the new oblation, “For it behoves us to make an oblation

to God, and in all things to be found grateful to God our Maker, in a pure mind, and in faith without hypocrisy, in well-grounded hope, in fervent love, offering the first-fruits of His own created things,” as he says in **Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 4**. The Eucharist meal was then a fulfillment of the prophecy in Malachi 1:11. Therefore, he says, it is the “new oblation of the new covenant; which the Church receiving from the apostles, offers to God throughout all the world,” in **Book 4: Chapter XVII, paragraph 5**. Irenaeus speaks of the Eucharist meal as a sacrifice on this basis. And he says it is a sacrifice of the same class as those in the Old Testament, though not of the same species. The only difference, he says, is that the Eucharist is offered by freemen as opposed to those who offered under the law in the Old Testament. The elements of this new oblation are the bread and the wine which, when the invocation of the word of God is made, become the body and blood of Christ, according to Irenaeus. The bread is therefore no longer common bread but consists “of two realities, earthly and heavenly.” Since then the bread and wine consist of a heavenly reality in the Eucharist, they are the “means of subsistence” of our bodies which are then incorruptible “when they receive the Eucharist.” Irenaeus believed that the “flesh, which is nourished with the body of the Lord and with His blood,” partakes of life and has “the hope of the resurrection to eternity.” Irenaeus says also that the oblations of the New Testament “are not according to the law, the handwriting of which the Lord took away from the midst by cancelling it,” as he quotes from **Colossians 2 (KJV):13** And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;”

The oblations of the New Testament are spiritual sacrifices and not carnal ones according to Irenaeus. Therefore nothing is physically killed in sacrifice. Irenaeus taught that those who receive the Eucharist receive eternal life and remission of sins. This is in accordance with his thinking about sacrifice which he believes the Eucharist meal to be. When it is offered with a clean heart and purely, the offering, or oblation or sacrifice, of the Eucharist justifies the one who receives it. This is the gist of Irenaeus’ teaching on the Eucharist.”

<http://www.theriskofchrist.com/mainbook/commentary.pdf>

Now as we remember that Augustine lived between 354 and 430 AD, we can understand more readily by these excerpts what influenced his writing. And a more complete discussion of the thinking of Irenaeus can be found at the above link.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine  
Sermons on New Testament Lessons, Sermon LXXXII. [CXXXII. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel, John 6:55, “For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh,” etc., paragraph 1, page 504-505**

1. As we heard when the Holy Gospel was being read, the Lord Jesus Christ exhorted us by the promise of eternal life to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood. Ye that heard these words, have not all as yet understood them. For those of you who have been baptized and the faithful do know what He meant. But those among you who are yet called Catechumens, or Hearers, could be hearers, when it was being read, could they be understanders too? Accordingly our



discourse is directed to both. Let them who already eat the Flesh of the Lord and drink His Blood, think What it is they eat and drink, lest, as the Apostle says, “They eat and drink judgment to themselves.” (1 Corinthians 11:29) But they who do not yet eat and drink, let them hasten when invited to such a Banquet. Throughout these days the teachers feed you. Christ daily feedeth you, That His Table is ever ordered before you. What is the reason. O Hearers, that ye see the Table, and come not to the Banquet? And peradventure, just now when the Gospel was being read, ye said in your hearts, “We are thinking what it is that He saith, ‘My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed.’” (John 6:55) How is the Flesh of the Lord eaten, and the Blood of the Lord drunk? We are thinking what He saith.” Who hath closed it against thee, that thou dost not know this? There is a veil over it; but if thou wilt, the veil shall be taken away. Come to the profession, and thou hast resolved the difficulty. For what the Lord Jesus said, the faithful know well already. But thou art called a Catechumen, art called a Hearer, and art deaf. For the ears of the body thou hast open, seeing that thou hearest the words which were spoken; but the ears of the heart thou hast still closed, seeing thou understandest not what was spoken. I plead, I do not discuss it. Lo, Easter is at hand, give in thy name for baptism. If the festivity arouse thee not, let the very curiosity induce thee: that thou mayest know the meaning of, Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him.” (John 6:56) That thou mayest know with me what is meant, “Knock, and it shall be opened unto thee.” (Matthew 7:7) and as I say to thee, “Knock, and it shall be opened unto thee,” so do I too knock, open thou to me. When I speak aloud to the ears, I knock at the breast.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “As we heard when the Holy Gospel was being read, the Lord Jesus Christ exhorted us by the promise of eternal life to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood.”

He refers in context to **John 6 (KJV):** 47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. 48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. 52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

He continues, “Ye that heard these words, have not all as yet understood them. For those of you who have been baptized and the faithful do know what He meant. But those among you who are yet called Catechumens, or Hearers, could be hearers, when it was being read, could they be understanders too? Accordingly our discourse is directed to both. Let them who already eat the Flesh of the Lord and drink His Blood, think What it is they eat and drink, lest, as the Apostle says, “They eat and drink judgment to themselves.” (1 Corinthians 11:29)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 11 (Douay Rheims):29** For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord.

And to **1 Corinthians 11 (ESV):29** For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.

He continues, “But they who do not yet eat and drink, let them hasten when invited to such a Banquet. Throughout these days the teachers feed you. Christ daily feedeth you, That His Table is ever ordered before you. What is the reason. O Hearers, that ye see the Table, and come not to the Banquet? And peradventure, just now when the Gospel was being read, ye said in your hearts, “We are thinking what it is that He saith, ‘My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed.’ (John 6:55)”

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):55** For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

He continues, “How is the Flesh of the Lord eaten, and the Blood of the Lord drunk? We are thinking what He saith.” Who hath closed it against thee, that thou dost not know this? There is a veil over it; but if thou wilt, the veil shall be taken away. Come to the profession, and thou hast resolved the difficulty. For what the Lord Jesus said, the faithful know well already. But thou art called a Catechumen, art called a Hearer, and art deaf. For the ears of the booty thou hast open, seeing that thou hearest the words which were spoken; but the ears of the heart thou hast still closed, seeing thou understandest not what was spoken. I plead, I do not discuss it. Lo, Easter is at hand, give in thy name for baptism. If the festivity arouse thee not, let the very curiosity induce thee: that thou mayest know the meaning of, Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him.” (John 6:56)”

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):56** He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

He concludes, “That thou mayest know with me what is meant, “Knock, and it shall be opened unto thee:” (Matthew 7:7) and as I say to thee, “Knock, and it shall be opened unto thee,” so do I too knock, open thou to me. When I speak aloud to the ears, I knock at the breast.”

He refers to **Matthew 7 (KJV):7** Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

But Augustine does not explain to the Catechumens here what Jesus meant when He said that “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him”, in John 6:56. But Jesus explains as we continue in **John 6 (KJV):60** Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. 64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

The word “quickeneth” in verse 63 means to “give life”, as it is also translated in **John 6 (NASB):63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

Jesus says that “the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life”. That is, His words “quicken” or give life to the believer. And so we read in **James 1 (NASB):18** In the

exercise of His will He gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

And in **John 1 (NASB):12** But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of a man, but of God.

In John 6:63, Jesus was speaking of the spiritual life that those who heard His words, and believed in Him, had received. And in John 6:56, He was also speaking of His death that was going to be the one sacrifice that would open the door to heaven for the righteous. So the one who eats His flesh and drinks His blood is partaking of His blood sacrifice on the cross, and has spiritual life. His sacrifice had not yet been accomplished when He spoke these words. Some had already believed, and had received spiritual life. Others were as He spoke in verse 64, “But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.”

When we are born again, we are born of the Spirit of God. Our spirit is now alive to God, and we are a child of God as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

This all happens by faith, when we believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord. The belief that, at the Lord’s Supper, or Communion, we receive eternal life by partaking of the bread and wine, could only mean that we are maintaining our spiritual life in this way. But the apostle John is clear in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

The Lord’s Supper is merely a ritual that, as often as we perform it, we remember or show the Lord’s death until He comes. We have eternal life when we believe on the name of the Son of God, as Jesus taught in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate XXVI. Chapter VI. 41–59, paragraphs 15-18, page 172-173**

15. But that which they ask, while striving among themselves, namely, how the Lord can give His flesh to be eaten, they do not immediately hear: but further it is said to them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye will have no life in you.” How, indeed, it may be eaten, and what may be the mode of eating this bread, ye are ignorant of; nevertheless, “except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye will not have life in you.” He spoke these words, not certainly to corpses, but to living men. Whereupon, lest they, understanding it to mean this life, should strive about this thing also, He going on added, “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.” Wherefore, he that eateth not this bread, nor drinketh this blood, hath not this life; for men can have temporal life without that, but they can noways have eternal life. He then that eateth not His flesh, nor drinketh His blood, hath no life in him; and he that eateth His flesh, and drinketh His blood, hath life. This epithet, eternal, which He used, answers to both. It is not so in the case of that food which we take for the purpose of sustaining this temporal life. For he who will

not take it shall not live, nor yet shall he who will take it live. For very many, even who have taken it, die; it may be by old age, or by disease, or by some other casualty. But in this food and drink, that is, in the body and blood of the Lord, it is not so. For both he that doth not take it hath no life, and he that doth take it hath life, and that indeed eternal life. **And thus He would have this meat and drink to be understood as meaning the fellowship of His own body and members, which is the holy Church in his predestinated, and called, and justified, and glorified saints and believers.** Of these, the first is already effected, namely, predestination; the second and third, that is, the vocation and justification, have taken place, are taking place, and will take place; but the fourth, namely, the glorifying, is at present in hope; but a thing future in realization. The sacrament of this thing, namely, of the unity of the body and blood of Christ, is prepared on the Lord's table in some places daily, in some places at certain intervals of days, and from the Lord's table it is taken, by some to life, by some to destruction: but the thing itself, of which it is the sacrament, is for every man to life, for no man to destruction, whosoever shall have been a partaker thereof.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "But that which they ask, while striving among themselves, namely, how the Lord can give His flesh to be eaten, they do not immediately hear: but further it is said to them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye will have no life in you.""

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):53** Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

He continues, "How, indeed, it may be eaten, and what may be the mode of eating this bread, ye are ignorant of; nevertheless, "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye will not have life in you." He spoke these words, not certainly to corpses, but to living men. Whereupon, lest they, understanding it to mean this life, should strive about this thing also, He going on added, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life."

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):54** Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

He continues, "Wherefore, he that eateth not this bread, nor drinketh this blood, hath not this life; for men can have temporal life without that, but they can noways have eternal life. He then that eateth not His flesh, nor drinketh His blood, hath no life in him; and he that eateth His flesh, and drinketh His blood, hath life. This epithet, eternal, which He used, answers to both. It is not so in the case of that food which we take for the purpose of sustaining this temporal life. For he who will not take it shall not live, nor yet shall he who will take it live. For very many, even who have taken it, die; it may be by old age, or by disease, or by some other casualty. But in this food and drink, that is, in the body and blood of the Lord, it is not so. For both he that doth not take it hath no life, and he that doth take it hath life, and that indeed eternal life. **And thus He would have this meat and drink to be understood as meaning the fellowship of His own body and members, which is the holy Church in his predestinated, and called, and justified, and glorified saints and believers.**"

By "**holy Church**" he means the Catholic Church in his time. So one must be in fellowship with the Catholic Church in his time, which he understood to be the "**fellowship of His own body and members**". But fellowship with any particular members in the body of Christ is not a requirement for salvation. Our fellowship in the body of Christ is in large part

determined by the maintenance of our fellowship with the Lord, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Walking in the light is maintaining our fellowship with the Lord, and this makes possible our fellowship one with another in the body of Christ. Fellowship is another word for relationship. And relationship speaks of connection. We feel a connection to someone when we have relationship with them. And so, when we are born again, we now have relationship with God, our Father. And we maintain that feeling of connection by our obedience to His known will. And His will is revealed to us in His word. As we walk in the light of His word, we maintain that feeling of connection with our Father.

Augustine continues, “Of these, the first is already effected, namely, predestination; the second and third, that is, the vocation and justification, have taken place, are taking place, and will take place; but the fourth, namely, the glorifying, is at present in hope; but a thing future in realization. The sacrament of this thing, namely, of the unity of the body and blood of Christ, is prepared on the Lord’s table in some places daily, in some places at certain intervals of days, and from the Lord’s table it is taken, by some to life, by some to destruction: but the thing itself, of which it is the sacrament, is for every man to life, for no man to destruction, whosoever shall have been a partaker thereof.”

Before commenting further, let us continue to read the next paragraph.

16. But lest they should suppose that eternal life was promised in this meat and drink in such manner that they who should take it should not even now die in the body, He condescended to meet this thought; for when He had said, “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life,” He forthwith subjoined, “and I will raise him up on the last day.” That meanwhile, according to the Spirit, he may have eternal life in that rest into which the spirits of the saints are received; but as to the body, he shall not be defrauded of its eternal life, but, on the contrary, he shall have it in the resurrection of the dead at the last day.

**Commentary:** In summary, he refers to **John 6 (KJV):54** Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

And so let us continue to read in the next paragraph.

17. “For my flesh,” saith He, “is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.” For whilst by meat and drink men seek to attain to this, neither to hunger nor thirst, there is nothing that truly affords this, except this meat and drink, which doth render them by whom it is taken immortal and incorruptible; that is, the very fellowship of the saints, where will be peace and unity, full and perfect. Therefore, indeed, it is, even as men of God understood this before us, that our Lord Jesus Christ has pointed our minds to His body and blood in those things, which from being many are reduced to some one thing. For a unity is formed by many grains forming together; and another unity is effected by the clustering together of many berries.

**Commentary:** In summary, he sounds very logical. But let us continue to read in the next paragraph.



18. In a word, He now explains how that which He speaks of comes to pass, and what it is to eat His body and to drink His blood. “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” This it is, therefore, for a man to eat that meat and to drink that drink, to dwell in Christ, and to have Christ dwelling in him. Consequently, he that dwelleth not in Christ, and in whom Christ dwelleth not, doubtless neither eateth His flesh [spiritually] nor drinketh His blood [although he may press the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ carnally and visibly with his teeth], but rather doth he eat and drink the sacrament of so great a thing to his own judgment, because he, being unclean, has presumed to come to the sacraments of Christ, which no man taketh worthily except he that is pure: of such it is said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he says, “In a word, He now explains how that which He speaks of comes to pass, and what it is to eat His body and to drink His blood. “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.””

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):56** He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

He continues, “This it is, therefore, for a man to eat that meat and to drink that drink, to dwell in Christ, and to have Christ dwelling in him. Consequently, he that dwelleth not in Christ, and in whom Christ dwelleth not, doubtless neither eateth His flesh [spiritually] nor drinketh His blood [although he may press the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ carnally and visibly with his teeth], but rather doth he eat and drink the sacrament of so great a thing to his own judgment, because he, being unclean, has presumed to come to the sacraments of Christ, which no man taketh worthily except he that is pure: of such it is said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):8** Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

In the time of his writing, no one was allowed to partake of Communion if they were not baptized. And likewise, in Augustine’s time, they could not partake of any of the sacraments if they were not pure. Paul teaches us that we should judge ourselves before coming to the Lord’s table as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):27** Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Also, in Augustine’s time, it was thought that with the invocation of the priest, the bread and wine were changed into the body and blood of Christ. This was a tradition that was inherited from the Church in the time of Irenaeus, who was a bishop of Lyons, France from about 177 to 202 AD. Irenaeus states that it is the invocation of God which changes the bread and wine into a heavenly reality as we read in **Adversus Heresies, Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 5**, where he says, “For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.”

But in order to understand what Jesus is saying in John, chapter 6, we must read the following verses in **John 6 (KJV)**:57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. 60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

If Jesus was going to ascend up where he was before in verse 62, then it follows that He was speaking figuratively of spiritual food, as He then explains in verse 63. When we partake of His sacrifice, we receive eternal life. That is, when we believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, and we confess Him as Lord, we are saved as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV)**:8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

When we believe, we pass from death to life as Jesus taught in **John 5 (KJV)**:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

The one who believes in Jesus has eternal life, because he or she has passed from death to life. We do not maintain eternal life by partaking of the Lord's Supper. We are remembering that we have eternal life because of what He has done for us, and the sacrifice He has made once and for all, as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV)**:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

And in **Hebrews 7 (KJV)**:27 He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

And in **Hebrews 9 (KJV)**:28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Eternal life is not dependent on ritual sacrifice, or any earthly foods. Eternal life is given by the Spirit of God when we believe. The Catholic Church in Augustine's time had inherited a tradition which taught that the Lord's Supper, at the invocation of the priest, becomes the body and blood of the Lord. We must recognize it as a tradition, and let it go.

But Augustine continues in the next Tractate.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XXVII. Chapter VI. 60–72, paragraphs 1-9, page 174-177**

1. We have just heard out of the Gospel the words of the Lord which follow the former discourse. From these a discourse is due to your ears and minds, and it is not unseasonable

today; for it is concerning the body of the Lord which He said that He gave to be eaten for eternal life. And He explained the mode of this bestowal and gift of His, in what manner He gave His flesh to eat, saying, “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” The proof that a man has eaten and drank is this, if he abides and is abode in, if he dwells and is dwelt in, if he adheres so as not to be deserted. This, then, He has taught us, and admonished us in mystical words that we may be in His body, in His members under Himself as head, eating His flesh, not abandoning our unity with Him. But most of those who were present, by not understanding Him, were offended; for in hearing these things, they thought only of flesh, that which themselves were. But the apostle says, and says what is true, “To be carnally-minded is death.” (Romans 8:6) The Lord gives us His flesh to eat, and yet to understand it according to the flesh is death; while yet He says of His flesh, that therein is eternal life. Therefore we ought not to understand the flesh carnally. As in these words that follow:

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, as he says, “We have just heard out of the Gospel the words of the Lord which follow the former discourse. From these a discourse is due to your ears and minds, and it is not unseasonable today; for it is concerning the body of the Lord which He said that He gave to be eaten for eternal life. And He explained the mode of this bestowal and gift of His, in what manner He gave His flesh to eat, saying, “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” The proof that a man has eaten and drank is this, if he abides and is abode in, if he dwells and is dwelt in, if he adheres so as not to be deserted. This, then, He has taught us, and admonished us in mystical words that we may be in His body, in His members under Himself as head, eating His flesh, not abandoning our unity with Him.”

Augustine now interprets the teaching of Jesus in John 6, chapter 6, here. He is saying that “The proof that a man has eaten and drank is this, if he abides and is abode in, if he dwells and is dwelt in, if he adheres so as not to be deserted.”

He continues, “But most of those who were present, by not understanding Him, were offended; for in hearing these things, they thought only of flesh, that which themselves were. But the apostle says, and says what is true, “To be carnally minded is death.” (Romans 8:6)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):6** For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

He continues, “The Lord gives us His flesh to eat, and yet to understand it according to the flesh is death; while yet He says of His flesh, that therein is eternal life. Therefore we ought not to understand the flesh carnally. As in these words that follow:”

He continues in the next paragraph.

2. “Many therefore,” not of His enemies, but “of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?” If His disciples accounted this saying hard, what must His enemies have thought? And yet so it behooved that to be said which should not be understood by all. The secret of God ought to make men eagerly attentive, not hostile. But these men quickly departed from Him, while the Lord said such things: they did not believe Him to be saying something great, and covering some grace by these words; they understood just according to their wishes, and in the manner of men, that Jesus was able, or was determined

upon this, namely, to distribute the flesh with which the Word was clothed, piecemeal, as it were, to those that believe on Him. “This,” say they, “is a hard saying; who can hear it?”

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he says, ““Many therefore,” not of His enemies, but “of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?””

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):60** Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

He continues, “If His disciples accounted this saying hard, what must His enemies have thought? And yet so it behooved that to be said which should not be understood by all. The secret of God ought to make men eagerly attentive, not hostile. But these men quickly departed from Him, while the Lord said such things: they did not believe Him to be saying something great, and covering some grace by these words; they understood just according to their wishes, and in the manner of men, that Jesus was able, or was determined upon this, namely, to distribute the flesh with which the Word was clothed, piecemeal, as it were, to those that believe on Him. “This,” say they, “is a hard saying; who can hear it?””

And some did depart as we read in **John 6 (KJV):66** From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

He continues in the next paragraph.

3. “But Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples murmured at it,”—for they so said these things with themselves that they might not be heard by Him: but He who knew them in themselves, hearing within Himself,—answered and said, “This offends you;” because I said, I give you my flesh to eat, and my blood to drink, this forsooth offends you. “Then what if ye shall see the Son of man ascending where He was before?” What is this? Did He hereby solve the question that perplexed them? Did He hereby uncover the source of their offense? He did clearly, if only they understood. For they supposed that He was going to deal out His body to them; but He said that He was to ascend into heaven, of course, whole: “When ye shall see the Son of man ascending where He was before;” certainly then, at least, you will see that not in the manner you suppose does He dispense His body; certainly then, at least, you will understand that His grace is not consumed by tooth-biting.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he says, ““But Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples murmured at it,”—for they so said these things with themselves that they might not be heard by Him: but He who knew them in themselves, hearing within Himself,—answered and said, “This offends you;” because I said, I give you my flesh to eat, and my blood to drink, this forsooth offends you. “Then what if ye shall see the Son of man ascending where He was before?””

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):61** When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? **62** What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

He continues, “What is this? Did He hereby solve the question that perplexed them? Did He hereby uncover the source of their offense? He did clearly, if only they understood. For they supposed that He was going to deal out His body to them; but He said that He was to ascend into heaven, of course, whole: “When ye shall see the Son of man ascending where He was

before;” certainly then, at least, you will see that not in the manner you suppose does He dispense His body; certainly then, at least, you will understand that His grace is not consumed by tooth-biting.”

So Augustine understood that Jesus did not expect us to be cannibals, eating His flesh and drinking His blood.

4. And He said, “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.” Before we expound this, as the Lord grants us, that other must not be negligently passed over, where He says, “Then what if ye shall see the Son of man ascending where He was before?” For Christ is the Son of man, of the Virgin Mary. Therefore Son of man He began to be here on earth, where He took flesh from the earth. For which cause it was said prophetically, “Truth is sprung from the earth.” (Psalm 85:11) Then what does He mean when He says, “When ye shall see the Son of man ascending where He was before”? For there had been no question if He had spoken thus: “If ye shall see the Son of God ascending where He was before.” But since He said, “The Son of man ascending where He was before,” surely the Son of man was not in heaven before the time when He began to have a being on earth? Here, indeed, He said, “where He was before,” just as if He were not there at this time when He spoke these words. But in another place He says, “No man has ascended into heaven but He that came down from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven.” (John 3:13) He said not “was,” but, saith He, “the Son of man who is in heaven.” He was speaking on earth, and He declared Himself to be in heaven. And yet He did not speak thus: “No man hath ascended into heaven but He that came down from heaven,” the Son of God, “who is in heaven.” Whither tends it, but to make us understand that which even in the former discourse I commended to your minds, my beloved, that Christ, both God and man, is one person, not two persons, lest our faith be not a trinity, but a quaternity? Christ, therefore, is one; the Word, soul and flesh, one Christ; the Son of God and Son of man, one Christ; Son of God always, Son of man in time, yet one Christ in regard to unity of person. In heaven He was when He spoke on earth. He was Son of man in heaven in that manner in which He was Son of God on earth; Son of God on earth in the flesh which He took, Son of man in heaven in the unity of person.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he says, “And He said, “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.””

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):63** It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

He continues, “Before we expound this, as the Lord grants us, that other must not be negligently passed over, where He says, “Then what if ye shall see the Son of man ascending where He was before?” For Christ is the Son of man, of the Virgin Mary. Therefore Son of man He began to be here on earth, where He took flesh from the earth. For which cause it was said prophetically, “Truth is sprung from the earth.” (Psalm 85:11)

He refers to **Psalm 85 (Septuagint):11** Truth has sprung out of the earth; and righteousness has looked down from heaven.

And to **Psalm 85 (KJV):11** Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

He continues, “Then what does He mean when He says, “When ye shall see the Son of



man ascending where He was before”? For there had been no question if He had spoken thus: “If ye shall see the Son of God ascending where He was before.” But since He said, “The Son of man ascending where He was before,” surely the Son of man was not in heaven before the time when He began to have a being on earth? Here, indeed, He said, “where He was before,” just as if He were not there at this time when He spoke these words. But in another place He says, “No man has ascended into heaven but He that came down from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven.” (John 3:13)”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):13** And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

He continues, “He said not “was,” but, saith He, “the Son of man who is in heaven.” He was speaking on earth, and He declared Himself to be in heaven. And yet He did not speak thus: “No man hath ascended into heaven but He that came down from heaven,” the Son of God, “who is in heaven.” Whither tends it, but to make us understand that which even in the former discourse I commended to your minds, my beloved, that Christ, both God and man, is one person, not two persons, lest our faith be not a trinity, but a quaternity? Christ, therefore, is one; the Word, soul and flesh, one Christ; the Son of God and Son of man, one Christ; Son of God always, Son of man in time, yet one Christ in regard to unity of person. In heaven He was when He spoke on earth. He was Son of man in heaven in that manner in which He was Son of God on earth; Son of God on earth in the flesh which He took, Son of man in heaven in the unity of person.”

Jesus spoke as in **John 6 (KJV):62** What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

This came to pass for some as we read in **Acts 1 (KJV):9** And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

He continues in the next paragraph.

5. What is it, then, that He adds? “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.” Let us say to Him (for He permits us, not contradicting Him, but desiring to know), O Lord, good Master, in what way does the flesh profit nothing, whilst Thou hast said, “Except a man eat my flesh, and drink my blood, he shall not have life in him?” Or does life profit nothing? And why are we what we are, but that we may have eternal life, which Thou dost promise by Thy flesh? Then what means “the flesh profiteth nothing”? It profiteth nothing, but only in the manner in which they understood it. They indeed understood the flesh, just as when cut to pieces in a carcass, or sold in the shambles; not as when it is quickened by the Spirit. Wherefore it is said that “the flesh profiteth nothing,” in the same manner as it is said that “knowledge puffeth up.” Then, ought we at once to hate knowledge? Far from it! And what means “Knowledge puffeth up”? Knowledge alone, without charity. Therefore he added, “but charity edifieth.” (1 Corinthians 8:1) Therefore add thou to knowledge charity, and knowledge will be profitable, not by itself, but through charity. So also here, “the flesh profiteth nothing,” only when alone. Let the Spirit be added to the flesh, as charity is added to knowledge, and it

profiteth very much. For if the flesh profited nothing, the Word would not be made flesh to dwell among us. If through the flesh Christ has greatly profited us, does the flesh profit nothing? But it is by the flesh that the Spirit has done somewhat for our salvation. Flesh was a vessel; consider what it held, not what it was. The apostles were sent forth; did their flesh profit us nothing? If the apostles' flesh profited us, could it be that the Lord's flesh should have profited us nothing? For how should the sound of the Word come to us except by the voice of the flesh? Whence should writing come to us? All these are operations of the flesh, but only when the spirit moves it, as if it were its organ. Therefore "it is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing," as they understood the flesh, but not so do I give my flesh to be eaten.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he says, "What is it, then, that He adds? "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." Let us say to Him (for He permits us, not contradicting Him, but desiring to know), O Lord, good Master, in what way does the flesh profit nothing, whilst Thou hast said, "Except a man eat my flesh, and drink my blood, he shall not have life in him?" Or does life profit nothing? And why are we what we are, but that we may have eternal life, which Thou dost promise by Thy flesh? Then what means "the flesh profiteth nothing"? It profiteth nothing, but only in the manner in which they understood it. They indeed understood the flesh, just as when cut to pieces in a carcass, or sold in the shambles; not as when it is quickened by the Spirit. Wherefore it is said that "the flesh profiteth nothing," in the same manner as it is said that "knowledge puffeth up." Then, ought we at once to hate knowledge? Far from it! And what means "Knowledge puffeth up"? Knowledge alone, without charity. Therefore he added, "but charity edifieth." (1 Corinthians 8:1)"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 8 (KJV):1** Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

Nevertheless, knowledge is important as we read in **Isaiah 5 (KJV):13** Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge: and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.

And in **Jeremiah 4 (KJV):22** For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

And in **Romans 10 (KJV):2** For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

So we could say that love without knowledge does no good. But love with knowledge edifies.

Augustine agrees as he continues, "Therefore add thou to knowledge charity, and knowledge will be profitable, not by itself, but through charity. So also here, "the flesh profiteth nothing," only when alone. Let the Spirit be added to the flesh, as charity is added to knowledge, and it profiteth very much. For if the flesh profited nothing, the Word would not be made flesh to dwell among us. If through the flesh Christ has greatly profited us, does the flesh profit nothing? But it is by the flesh that the Spirit has done somewhat for our salvation. Flesh was a vessel; consider what it held, not what it was. The apostles were sent forth; did their flesh profit us nothing? If the apostles' flesh profited us, could it be that the Lord's flesh should have profited us nothing? For how should the sound of the Word come to us except by the voice of the flesh? Whence should writing come to us? All these are operations of the flesh, but only

when the spirit moves it, as if it were its organ. Therefore “it is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing,” as they understood the flesh, but not so do I give my flesh to be eaten.””

It is faith in what Jesus was going to do with His flesh that was going to gain everlasting life. This is what Jesus was teaching those who followed Him after He multiplied the loaves and fishes to feed about five thousand men, for we read in **John 6 (KJV):**25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? 26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. 27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. 28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

Jesus says that the work of God is to believe on him whom he hath sent.

We continue to read in **John 6 (KJV):**30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work? 31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. 36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

It is about faith in Jesus, as He says in verse 35, “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”

We continue in **John 6 (KJV):**37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Again, Jesus teaches us that it is the Father's will that “every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day”.

We continue in **John 6 (KJV):**41 The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42 And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? 43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. 47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

He again says, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”

Let us continue to read Augustine's thoughts.

6. Hence "the words," saith He, "which I have spoken to you are Spirit and life." For we have said, brethren, that this is what the Lord had taught us by the eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood, that we should abide in Him and He in us. But we abide in Him when we are His members, and He abides in us when we are His temple. But that we may be His members, unity joins us together. And what but love can effect that unity should join us together? And the love of God, whence is it? Ask the apostle: "The love of God," saith he, "is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us." (Romans 5:5) Therefore "it is the Spirit that quickeneth," for it is the Spirit that makes living members. Nor does the Spirit make any members to be living except such as it finds in the body, which also the Spirit itself quickens. For the Spirit which is in thee, O man, by which it consists that thou art a man, does it quicken a member which it finds separated from thy flesh? I call thy soul thy spirit. Thy soul quickeneth only the members which are in thy flesh; if thou takest one away, it is no longer quickened by thy soul, because it is not joined to the unity of thy body. These things are said to make us love unity and fear separation. For there is nothing that a Christian ought to dread so much as to be separated from Christ's body. For if he is separated from Christ's body, he is not a member of Christ; if he is not a member of Christ, he is not quickened by the Spirit of Christ. "But if any man," saith the apostle, "have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Romans 8:9) "It is the Spirit," then, "that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." What means "are spirit and life"? They are to be understood spiritually. Hast thou understood spiritually? "They also "are they spirit and life," but are not so to thee.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he says, "Hence "the words," saith He, "which I have spoken to you are Spirit and life.""

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):63** It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

He continues, "For we have said, brethren, that this is what the Lord had taught us by the eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood, that we should abide in Him and He in us."

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):56** He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

The word for "dwelleth" in the Greek is μένω (pronounced me'-nō), "a primary verb; to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy):—abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry (for), thine own." **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3306.**

He continues, "But we abide in Him when we are His members, and He abides in us when we are His temple. But that we may be His members, unity joins us together. And what but love can effect that unity should join us together? And the love of God, whence is it? Ask the apostle: "The love of God," saith he, "is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us." (Romans 5:5)"

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):5** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

He continues, "Therefore "it is the Spirit that quickeneth," for it is the Spirit that makes

living members. Nor does the Spirit make any members to be living except such as it finds in the body, which also the Spirit itself quickens.”

This sounds very logical, but is actually backwards. The Spirit makes those who have faith in Jesus Christ to be alive to God in their spirit, that is, to be born again. It is these that the Spirit then baptizes into the body of Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

We are not made members of His body by maintaining unity with anyone. We are made members of the body of Christ when we believe in Jesus. And we don't become members of the body of Christ until we believe in Jesus.

Augustine continues, “For the Spirit which is in thee, O man, by which it consists that thou art a man, does it quicken a member which it finds separated from thy flesh? I call thy soul thy spirit. Thy soul quickeneth only the members which are in thy flesh; if thou takest one away, it is no longer quickened by thy soul, because it is not joined to the unity of thy body. These things are said to make us love unity and fear separation. For there is nothing that a Christian ought to dread so much as to be separated from Christ's body. For if he is separated from Christ's body, he is not a member of Christ; if he is not a member of Christ, he is not quickened by the Spirit of Christ.”

This sounds again very logical, but it has no basis in the word of God. We were made alive with Christ when we believed as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

And in **Colossians 2 (NASB):13** When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Our spiritual life in Christ and membership in His body are done when we believe in Jesus Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Our salvation is not dependent on maintaining unity in the body of Christ. We are given a place in the body of Christ when we believe, which corresponds to a specific function in the body. If we serve effectively in that place, we will receive a reward. If not, we will still be saved, but we will not receive any rewards.

Augustine is making our membership in the body dependent on the Spirit of God quickening us, that is, making us alive by His presence, as he continues, ““But if any man,” saith the apostle, “have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” (Romans 8:9)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):9** But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

He continues, ““It is the Spirit,” then, “that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” What means “are spirit and life”? They are



to be understood spiritually. Hast thou understood spiritually? “They are spirit and life.” Hast thou understood carnally? So also “are they spirit and life,” but are not so to thee.”

So Augustine is saying that, just as the body is quickened, or made alive, by our spirit, and our arm or leg, if it were cut off, it would not have life, so we, if abide not in Him, that is, in his body, we will be cut off as it were from the presence of the Spirit, and lose life. But his analogy fails because the body of Christ is not a fleshly body, but a spiritual body. We are members by virtue of the fact that we have been born of the Spirit of God. Being born from above, we are alive to God in our spirit.

Let us continue to read in the next paragraph.

7. “But,” saith He, “there are some among you that believe not.” He said not, There are some among you that understand not; but He told the cause why they understand not. “There are some among you that believe not,” and therefore they understand not, because they believe not. For the prophet has said, “If ye believe not, ye shall not understand.” (Isaiah 7:9 Septuagint) We are united by faith, quickened by understanding. Let us first adhere to Him through faith, that there may be that which may be quickened by understanding. For he who adheres not resists; he that resists believes not. And how can he that resists be quickened? He is an adversary to the ray of light by which he should be penetrated: he turns not away his eye, but shuts his mind. “There are,” then, “some who believe not.” Let them believe and open, let them open and be illumined. “For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed, and who should betray Him.” For Judas also was there. Some indeed, were offended; but he remained to watch his opportunity, not to understand. And because he remained for that purpose, the Lord kept not silence concerning him. He described him not by name, but neither was He silent about him; that all might fear though only one should perish. But after He spoke, and distinguished those that believe from those that believe not, He clearly showed the cause why they believed not. “Therefore I said unto you,” saith He, “that no man can come unto me except it were given to him of my Father.” Hence to believe is also given to us; for certainly to believe is something. And if it is something great, rejoice that thou hast believed, yet be not lifted up; for “What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” (1 Corinthians 4:7)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he says, ““But,” saith He, “there are some among you that believe not.” He said not, There are some among you that understand not; but He told the cause why they understand not. “There are some among you that believe not,” and therefore they understand not, because they believe not. For the prophet has said, “If ye believe not, ye shall not understand.” (Isaiah 7:9 Septuagint)”

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):64** But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

And to **Isaiah 7 (Septuagint):9** And the head of Ephraim is Somoron, and the head of Somoron the son of Romelias: but if ye believe not, neither will ye at all understand.

And to **Isaiah 7 (KJV):9** And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

He continues, “We are united by faith, quickened by understanding. Let us first adhere to Him through faith, that there may be that which may be quickened by understanding. For he who adheres not resists; he that resists believes not. And how can he that resists be quickened?

He is an adversary to the ray of light by which he should be penetrated: he turns not away his eye, but shuts his mind. "There are," then, "some who believe not." Let them believe and open, let them open and be illumined. "For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed, and who should betray Him." For Judas also was there. Some indeed, were offended; but he remained to watch his opportunity, not to understand. And because he remained for that purpose, the Lord kept not silence concerning him. He described him not by name, but neither was He silent about him; that all might fear though only one should perish. But after He spoke, and distinguished those that believe from those that believe not, He clearly showed the cause why they believed not. "Therefore I said unto you," saith He, "that no man can come unto me except it were given to him of my Father.""

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):65** And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

He continues, "Hence to believe is also given to us; for certainly to believe is something. And if it is something great, rejoice that thou hast believed, yet be not lifted up; for "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4:7)"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):7** For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

He continues in the next paragraph.

8. "From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." Went back, but after Satan, not after Christ. For our Lord Christ once addressed Peter as Satan, rather because he wished to precede his Lord, and to give counsel that He should not die, He who had come to die, that we might not die for ever; and He says to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." (Matthew 16:23) He did not drive him back to go after Satan, and so called him Satan; but He made him go behind Himself, that by walking after his Lord he should not be a Satan. But these went back in the same manner as the apostle says of certain women: "For some are turned back after Satan." (1 Timothy 5:15) They walked not further with Him. Behold, cut off from the body, for perhaps they were not in the body, they have lost life. They must be reckoned among the unbelieving, notwithstanding they were called disciples. Not a few, but "many went back." This happened, it may be, for our consolation. For sometimes it happens that a man may declare the truth, and that what he says may not be understood, and so they that hear it are offended and go away. Now the man regrets that he had spoken that truth, and he says to himself, "I ought not to have spoken so, I ought not to have said this." Behold; it happened to the Lord: He spoke, and lost many; He remained with few. But yet He was not troubled, because He knew from the beginning who they were that believed and that believed not. If it happen to us, we are sorely perplexed. Let us find comfort in the Lord, and yet let us speak words with prudence.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he says, "'From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.'"

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):66** From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

He continues, "Went back, but after Satan, not after Christ. For our Lord Christ once

addressed Peter as Satan, rather because he wished to precede his Lord, and to give counsel that He should not die, He who had come to die, that we might not die for ever; and He says to him, “Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.” (Matthew 16:23)”

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):23** But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

He continues, “He did not drive him back to go after Satan, and so called him Satan; but He made him go behind Himself, that by walking after his Lord he should not be a Satan. But these went back in the same manner as the apostle says of certain women: “For some are turned back after Satan.” (1 Timothy 5:15)”

He refers in context to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):15** I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. 15 For some are already turned aside after Satan.

He continues, “They walked not further with Him. Behold, cut off from the body, for perhaps they were not in the body, they have lost life.”

Augustine is not clear here. If they were not in the body, they never had life.

He continues, “They must be reckoned among the unbelieving, notwithstanding they were called disciples.”

He refers again to **John 6 (KJV):66** From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

He continues, “Not a few, but “many went back.” This happened, it may be, for our consolation. For sometimes it happens that a man may declare the truth, and that what he says may not be understood, and so they that hear it are offended and go away. Now the man regrets that he had spoken that truth, and he says to himself, “I ought not to have spoken so, I ought not to have said this.” Behold; it happened to the Lord: He spoke, and lost many; He remained with few. But yet He was not troubled, because He knew from the beginning who they were that believed and that believed not. If it happen to us, we are sorely perplexed. Let us find comfort in the Lord, and yet let us speak words with prudence.”

This is a wise choice. He continues in the next paragraph.

9. And now addressing the few that remained: “Then said Jesus to the twelve” (namely, those twelve who remained), “Will ye also,” said He, “go away?” Not even Judas departed. But it was already manifest to the Lord why he remained: to us he was made manifest afterwards. Peter answered in behalf of all, one for many, unity for the collective whole: “Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go?” Thou drivest us from Thee; give us Thy other self. “To whom shall we go?” If we abandon Thee, to whom shall we go? “Thou hast the words of eternal life.” See how Peter, by the gift of God and the renewal of the Holy Spirit, understood Him. How other than because he believed? “Thou hast the words of eternal life.” For Thou hast eternal life in the ministration of Thy body and blood. “And we have believed and have known.” Not have known and believed, but “believed and known.” For we believed in order to know; for if we wanted to know first, and then to believe, we should not be able either to know or to believe. What have we believed and known? “That Thou art Christ, the Son of God;” that is, that Thou art that very eternal life, and that Thou givest in Thy flesh and blood only that

which Thou art.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he says, “And now addressing the few that remained: “Then said Jesus to the twelve” (namely, those twelve who remained), “Will ye also,” said He, “go away?””

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):67** Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

He continues, “Not even Judas departed. But it was already manifest to the Lord why he remained: to us he was made manifest afterwards. Peter answered in behalf of all, one for many, unity for the collective whole: “Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go?” Thou drivest us from Thee; give us Thy other self. “To whom shall we go?” If we abandon Thee, to whom shall we go? “Thou hast the words of eternal life.””

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):68** Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.

He continues, “See how Peter, by the gift of God and the renewal of the Holy Spirit, understood Him. How other than because he believed? “Thou hast the words of eternal life.” For Thou hast eternal life in the ministration of Thy body and blood. “And we have believed and have known.” Not have known and believed, but “believed and known.” For we believed in order to know; for if we wanted to know first, and then to believe, we should not be able either to know or to believe. What have we believed and known? “That Thou art Christ, the Son of God;””

He is referring to **John 6 (KJV):69** And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

He continues, “that is, that Thou art that very eternal life, and that Thou givest in Thy flesh and blood only that which Thou art.”

He continues in the next paragraph.

10. Then said the Lord Jesus: “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” Therefore, should He have said, “I have chosen eleven.” or is a devil also chosen, and among the elect? Persons are wont to be called “elect” by way of praise: or was man elected because some great good was done by him, without his will and knowledge? This belongs peculiarly to God; the contrary is characteristic of the wicked. For as wicked men make a bad use of the good works of God; so, on the contrary, God makes a good use of the evil works of wicked men. How good it is that the members of the body are, as they can be disposed only by God, their author and framer! Nevertheless what evil use doth wantonness make of the eyes? What ill use doth falsehood make of the tongue? Does not the false witness first both slay his own soul with his tongue, and then, after he has destroyed himself, endeavor to injure another? He makes an ill use of the tongue, but the tongue is not therefore an evil thing; the tongue is God’s work, but iniquity makes an ill use of that good work of God. How do they use their feet who run into crimes? How do murderers employ their hands? And what ill use do wicked men make of those good creatures of God that lie outside of them? With gold they corrupt judgment and oppress the innocent. Bad men make a bad use of the very light; for by evil living they employ even the very light with which they see into the service of their villanies. A bad man, when going to do a bad deed, wishes the light to shine for him, lest he stumble; he who has already stumbled and fallen within; that which he is afraid of in his body has already befallen him in his heart. Hence,

to avoid the tediousness of running through them separately, a bad man makes a bad use of all the good creatures of God: a good man, on the contrary, makes a good use of the evil deeds of wicked men. And what is so good as the one God? Since, indeed, the Lord Himself said, "There is none good, but the one God." (Mark 10:18) By how much He is better, then, by so much the better use He makes of our evil deeds. What worse than Judas? Among all that adhered to the Master, among the twelve, to him was committed the common purse; to him was allotted the dispensing for the poor. Unthankful for so great a favor, so great an honor, he took the money, and lost righteousness: being dead, he betrayed life: Him whom he followed as a disciple, he persecuted as an enemy. All this evil was Judas's; but the Lord employed his evil for good. He endured to be betrayed, to redeem us. Behold, Judas's evil was turned to good. How many martyrs has Satan persecuted! If Satan left off persecuting, we should not today be celebrating the very glorious crown of Saint Laurence. If then God employs the evil works of the devil himself for good, what the bad man effects, by making a bad use, is to hurt himself, not to contradict the goodness of God. The Master makes use of that man. And if He knew not how to make use of him, the Master contriver would not have permitted him to be. Therefore, He saith, "One of you is a devil," whilst I have chosen you twelve. This saying, "I have chosen you twelve," may be understood in this way, that twelve is a sacred number. For the honor of that number was not taken away because one was lost, for another was chosen into the place of the one that perished. (Acts 1:26) The number remained a sacred number, a number containing twelve: because they were to make known the Trinity throughout the whole world, that is, throughout the four quarters of the world. That is the reason of the three times four. Judas, then only cut himself off, not profaned the number twelve: he abandoned his Teacher, for God appointed a successor to take his place.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he says, "Then said the Lord Jesus: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?""

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):70** Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?

He continues, "Therefore, should He have said, "I have chosen eleven:" or is a devil also chosen, and among the elect? Persons are wont to be called "elect" by way of praise: or was man elected because some great good was done by him, without his will and knowledge? This belongs peculiarly to God; the contrary is characteristic of the wicked. For as wicked men make a bad use of the good works of God; so, on the contrary, God makes a good use of the evil works of wicked men. How good it is that the members of the body are, as they can be disposed only by God, their author and framer! Nevertheless what evil use doth wantonness make of the eyes? What ill use doth falsehood make of the tongue? Does not the false witness first both slay his own soul with his tongue, and then, after he has destroyed himself, endeavor to injure another? He makes an ill use of the tongue, but the tongue is not therefore an evil thing; the tongue is God's work, but iniquity makes an ill use of that good work of God. How do they use their feet who run into crimes? How do murderers employ their hands? And what ill use do wicked men make of those good creatures of God that lie outside of them? With gold they corrupt judgment and oppress the innocent. Bad men make a bad use of the very light; for by evil living they employ even the very light with which they see into the service of their villanies. A bad man, when going to do a bad deed, wishes the light to shine for him, lest he



stumble; he who has already stumbled and fallen within; that which he is afraid of in his body has already befallen him in his heart. Hence, to avoid the tediousness of running through them separately, a bad man makes a bad use of all the good creatures of God: a good man, on the contrary, makes a good use of the evil deeds of wicked men. And what is so good as the one God? Since, indeed, the Lord Himself said, “There is none good, but the one God.” (Mark 10:18)”

He refers to **Mark 10 (KJV):18** And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God.

He continues, “By how much He is better, then, by so much the better use He makes of our evil deeds. What worse than Judas? Among all that adhered to the Master, among the twelve, to him was committed the common purse; to him was allotted the dispensing for the poor. Unthankful for so great a favor, so great an honor, he took the money, and lost righteousness: being dead, he betrayed life: Him whom he followed as a disciple, he persecuted as an enemy. All this evil was Judas’s; but the Lord employed his evil for good. He endured to be betrayed, to redeem us. Behold, Judas’s evil was turned to good. How many martyrs has Satan persecuted! If Satan left off persecuting, we should not today be celebrating the very glorious crown of Saint Laurence. If then God employs the evil works of the devil himself for good, what the bad man effects, by making a bad use, is to hurt himself, not to contradict the goodness of God. The Master makes use of that man. And if He knew not how to make use of him, the Master contriver would not have permitted him to be. Therefore, He saith, “One of you is a devil,” whilst I have chosen you twelve. This saying, “I have chosen you twelve,” may be understood in this way, that twelve is a sacred number. For the honor of that number was not taken away because one was lost, for another was chosen into the place of the one that perished. (Acts 1:26)”

He refers to **Acts 1 (KJV):26** And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

He continues, “The number remained a sacred number, a number containing twelve: because they were to make known the Trinity throughout the whole world, that is, throughout the four quarters of the world. That is the reason of the three times four. Judas, then only cut himself off, not profaned the number twelve: he abandoned his Teacher, for God appointed a successor to take his place.”

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):71** He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

He continues in the next paragraph.

11. All this that the Lord spoke concerning His flesh and blood;—and in the grace of that distribution He promised us eternal life, and that He meant those that eat His flesh and drink His blood to be understood, from the fact of their abiding in Him and He in them; and that they understood not who believed not; and that they were offended through their understanding spiritual things in a carnal sense; and that, while these were offended and perished, the Lord was present for the consolation of the disciples who remained, for proving whom He asked, “Will ye also go away?” that the reply of their steadfastness might be known to us, for He knew that they remained with Him;—let all this, then, avail us to this end, most beloved, that we eat not the flesh and blood of Christ merely in the sacrament, as many evil men do, but that we eat

and drink to the participation of the Spirit, that we abide as members in the Lord's body, to be quickened by His Spirit, and that we be not offended, even if many do now with us eat and drink the sacraments in a temporal manner, who shall in the end have eternal torments. For at present Christ's body is as it were mixed on the threshing floor: "But the Lord knoweth them that are His." (2 Timothy 2:19) If thou knowest what thou threshest, that the substance is there hidden, that the threshing has not consumed what the winnowing has purged; certain are we, brethren, that all of us who are in the Lord's body, and abide in Him, that He also may abide in us, have of necessity to live among evil men in this world even unto the end. I do not say among those evil men who blaspheme Christ; for there are now few found who blaspheme with the tongue, but many who do so by their life. Among those, then, we must necessarily live even unto the end.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he says, "All this that the Lord spoke concerning His flesh and blood;—and in the grace of that distribution He promised us eternal life, and that He meant those that eat His flesh and drink His blood to be understood, from the fact of their abiding in Him and He in them; and that they understood not who believed not; and that they were offended through their understanding spiritual things in a carnal sense; and that, while these were offended and perished, the Lord was present for the consolation of the disciples who remained, for proving whom He asked, "Will ye also go away?" that the reply of their steadfastness might be known to us, for He knew that they remained with Him;—let all this, then, avail us to this end, most beloved, that we eat not the flesh and blood of Christ merely in the sacrament, as many evil men do, but that we eat and drink to the participation of the Spirit, that we abide as members in the Lord's body, to be quickened by His Spirit, and that we be not offended, even if many do now with us eat and drink the sacraments in a temporal manner, who shall in the end have eternal torments. For at present Christ's body is as it were mixed on the threshing floor: "But the Lord knoweth them that are His." (2 Timothy 2:19)"

He refers to **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):19** Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

He continues, "If thou knowest what thou threshest, that the substance is there hidden, that the threshing has not consumed what the winnowing has purged; certain are we, brethren, that all of us who are in the Lord's body, and abide in Him, that He also may abide in us, have of necessity to live among evil men in this world even unto the end. I do not say among those evil men who blaspheme Christ; for there are now few found who blaspheme with the tongue, but many who do so by their life. Among those, then, we must necessarily live even unto the end."

He is referring to **Matthew 13 (KJV):30** Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

He continues in the next paragraph.

12. But what is this that He saith: "He that abideth in me, and I in him"? What, but that which the martyrs heard: "He that persevereth unto the end, the same shall be saved"? (Matthew 24:13) How did Saint Laurence, whose feast we celebrate today, abide in Him? He abode even

to temptation, abode even to tyrannical questioning, abode even to bitterest threatening, abode even to destruction;—that were a trifle, abode even to savage torture. For he was not put to death quickly, but tormented in the fire: he was allowed to live a long time; nay, not allowed to live a long time, but forced to die a slow, lingering death. Then, in that lingering death, in those torments, because he had well eaten and well drunk, as one who had feasted on that meat, as one intoxicated with that cup, he felt not the torments. For He was there who said, “It is the Spirit that quickeneth.” For the flesh indeed was burning, but the Spirit was quickening the soul. He shrunk not back, and he mounted into the kingdom. But the holy martyr Xystus, whose day we celebrated five days ago, had said to him, “Mourn not, my son;” for Xystus was a bishop, he was a deacon. “Mourn not,” said he; “thou shalt follow me after three days.” He said three days, meaning the interval between the day of Saint Xystus’s suffering and that of Saint Laurence’s suffering, which falls on today. Three days is the interval. What comfort! He says not, “Mourn not, my son; the persecution will cease, and thou wilt be safe;” but, “do not mourn: whither I precede thou shalt follow; nor shall thy pursuit be deferred: three days will be the interval, and thou shalt be with me.” He accepted the oracle, vanquished the devil, and attained to the triumph.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he says, “But what is this that He saith: “He that abideth in me, and I in him”? What, but that which the martyrs heard: “He that persevereth unto the end, the same shall be saved”? (Matthew 24:13)”

In Matthew, Jesus was speaking of the time of the end as we read in context in **Matthew 24 (KJV):**9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. 10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. 11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

It is not a condition of salvation, but an encouragement to endure unto the end, even when there are many trials that you are facing.

Jesus also spoke as in **John 14 (KJV):**23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

And in **John 15 (KJV):**10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

Enduring to the end is abiding in Him, when we keep His words, and his commandments.

Augustine continues, “How did Saint Laurence, whose feast we celebrate today, abide in Him? He abode even to temptation, abode even to tyrannical questioning, abode even to bitterest threatening, abode even to destruction;—that were a trifle, abode even to savage torture. For he was not put to death quickly, but tormented in the fire: he was allowed to live a long time; nay, not allowed to live a long time, but forced to die a slow, lingering death. Then, in that lingering death, in those torments, because he had well eaten and well drunk, as one who had feasted on that meat, as one intoxicated with that cup, he felt not the torments. For He was there who said, “It is the Spirit that quickeneth.” For the flesh indeed was burning, but the Spirit was quickening the soul. He shrunk not back, and he mounted into the kingdom.”

By what Augustine describes, Saint Laurence was already in the kingdom as a believer.

When he died, he was promoted to glory.

Augustine continues, "But the holy martyr Xystus, whose day we celebrated five days ago, had said to him, "Mourn not, my son;" for Xystus was a bishop, he was a deacon. "Mourn not," said he; "thou shalt follow me after three days." He said three days, meaning the interval between the day of Saint Xystus's suffering and that of Saint Laurence's suffering, which falls on today. Three days is the interval. What comfort! He says not, "Mourn not, my son; the persecution will cease, and thou wilt be safe;" but, "do not mourn: whither I precede thou shalt follow; nor shall thy pursuit be deferred: three days will be the interval, and thou shalt be with me." He accepted the oracle, vanquished the devil, and attained to the triumph."

**SERMON 227: PREACHED ON THE HOLY DAY OF EASTER TO THE *INFANTES*, ON THE SACRAMENTS** <http://david.heizman.net/sermons227-229a.html>

**Date:414-415**

### **You are yourselves what you receive**

I haven't forgotten my promise. I had promised those of you who have just been baptized a sermon to explain the sacrament of the Lord's table, which you can see right now, and which you shared in last night. You ought to know what you have received, what you are about to receive, what you ought to receive every day. That bread which you can see on the altar, sanctified by the word of God, is the body of Christ. That cup, or rather what the cup contains, sanctified by the word of God, is the blood of Christ. It was by means of these things that the Lord Christ wished to present us with his body and blood, which he shed for our sake for the forgiveness of sins. If you receive them well, you are yourselves what you receive. You see, the apostle says, We, being many, are one loaf, one body (1 Cor 10:17). That's how he explained the sacrament of the Lord's table; one loaf, one body, is what we all are, many though we be.

In this loaf of bread you are given clearly to understand how much you should love unity. I mean, was that loaf made from one grain? Weren't there many grains of wheat? But before they came into the loaf they were all separate; they were joined together by means of water after a certain amount of pounding and crushing. Unless wheat is ground, after all, and moistened with water, it can't possibly get into this shape which is called bread. In the same way you too were being ground and pounded, as it were, by the humiliation of fasting and the sacrament of exorcism. Then came baptism, and you were, in a manner of speaking, moistened with water in order to be shaped into bread. But it's not yet bread without fire to bake it. So what does fire represent? That's the chrism, the anointing. Oil, the fire-feeder, you see, is the sacrament of the Holy Spirit.

Notice it, when the Acts of the Apostles are read; the reading of that book begins now, you see. Today begins the book which is called the Acts of the Apostles. Anybody who wishes to make progress has the means of doing so. When you assemble in church, put aside silly stories and concentrate on the scriptures. We here are your books. So pay attention, and see how the Holy Spirit is going to come at Pentecost. And this is how he will come; he will show himself in tongues of fire. You see, he breathes into us the charity which should set us on fire for God, and have us think lightly of the world, and burn up our straw, and purge and refine our hearts like gold. So the Holy Spirit comes, fire after water, and you are baked into the bread which is the body of Christ. And that's how unity is signified.

Now you have the sacraments in the order they occur. First, after the prayer, you are urged to lift up your hearts; that's only right for the members of Christ. After all, if you have become members of Christ, where is your head? Members have a head. If the head hadn't gone ahead before, the members would never follow. Where has our head gone? What did you give back in the creed? On the third day he rose again from the dead, he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father. So our head is in heaven. That's why, after the words Lift up your hearts, you reply, We have lifted them up to the Lord.

And you mustn't attribute it to your own powers, your own merits, your own efforts, this lifting up of your hearts to the Lord, because it's God's gift that you should have your heart up above. That's why the bishop, or the presbyter who's offering, goes on to say, when the people have answered We have lifted them up to the Lord, why he goes on to say, Let us give thanks to the Lord our God, because we have lifted up our hearts. Let us give thanks, because unless he had enabled us to lift them up, we would still have our hearts down here on earth. And you signify your agreement by saying, It is right and just to give thanks to the one who caused us to lift up our hearts to our head.

Then, after the consecration of the sacrifice of God, because he wanted us to be ourselves his sacrifice, which is indicated by where that sacrifice was first put, that is the sign of the thing that we are; why, then after the consecration is accomplished, we say the Lord's prayer, which you have received and given back. After that comes the greeting, Peace be with you, and Christians kiss one another with a holy kiss. It's a sign of peace; what is indicated by the lips should happen in the conscience; that is, just as your lips approach the lips of your brothers or sisters, so your heart should not be withdrawn from theirs.

So they are great sacraments and signs, really serious and important sacraments. Do you want to know how their seriousness is impressed on us? The apostle says, Whoever eats the body of Christ or drinks the blood of the Lord unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord (1 Cor 11:27). What is receiving unworthily? Receiving with contempt, receiving with derision. Don't let yourselves think that what you can see is of no account. What you can see passes away, but the invisible reality signified does not pass away, but remains. Look, it's received, it's eaten, it's consumed. Is the body of Christ consumed, is the Church of Christ consumed, are the members of Christ consumed? Perish the thought! Here they are being purified, there they will be crowned with the victor's laurels. So what is signified will remain eternally, although the thing that signifies it seems to pass away. So receive the sacrament in such a way that you think about yourselves, that you retain unity in your hearts, that you always fix your hearts up above. Don't let your hope be placed on earth, but in heaven. Let your faith be firm in God, let it be acceptable to God. Because what you don't see now, but believe, you are going to see there, where you will have joy without end.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, as he says, **"I haven't forgotten my promise. I had promised those of you who have just been baptized a sermon to explain the sacrament of the Lord's table, which you can see right now, and which you shared in last night."**

We must remember that the word "sacrament" is not found in the Scriptures. Let us use the following as a working definition of a sacrament:

a Christian rite (such as baptism or the Eucharist) that is believed to have been ordained by Christ and that is held to be a means of divine grace or to be a sign or



symbol of a spiritual reality (**Merriam Webster**)

Augustine continues, “You ought to know what you have received, what you are about to receive, what you ought to receive every day. That bread which you can see on the altar, sanctified by the word of God, is the body of Christ. That cup, or rather what the cup contains, sanctified by the word of God, is the blood of Christ.”

Irenaeus, who was a bishop of Lyons, France from about 177 to 202 AD, stated that it is the invocation of God which changes the bread and wine into a heavenly reality as we read again in **Adversus Heresies, Book 4: Chapter XVIII, paragraph 5**, where he says, “For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.”

This is the tradition of the Church which was handed down to the Church in Augustine’s time.

He continues, “It was by means of these things that the Lord Christ wished to present us with his body and blood, which he shed for our sake for the forgiveness of sins. If you receive them well, you are yourselves what you receive. You see, the apostle says, We, being many, are one loaf, one body (1 Cor 10:17). That’s how he explained the sacrament of the Lord’s table; one loaf, one body, is what we all are, many though we be.”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):16** The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

The word for “communion” in the Greek is **κοινωνία** (pronounced koi-nō-nē'-ä), partnership, i.e. (literally) participation, or (social) intercourse, or (pecuniary) benefaction:—(to) communicate(-ation), communion, (contri-)distribution, fellowship. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2842**

Augustine continues, “In this loaf of bread you are given clearly to understand how much you should love unity. I mean, was that loaf made from one grain? Weren’t there many grains of wheat? But before they came into the loaf they were all separate; they were joined together by means of water after a certain amount of pounding and crushing. Unless wheat is ground, after all, and moistened with water, it can’t possibly get into this shape which is called bread. In the same way you too were being ground and pounded, as it were, by the humiliation of fasting and the sacrament of exorcism. Then came baptism, and you were, in a manner of speaking, moistened with water in order to be shaped into bread. But it’s not yet bread without fire to bake it. So what does fire represent? That’s the chrism, the anointing. Oil, the fire-feeder, you see, is the sacrament of the Holy Spirit.”

But we do not become the body of Christ by sharing the Lord’s Supper, or Communion. We become a member of the body of Christ when we believe in Jesus Christ, and we are set there sovereignly by the Lord in a specific place as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

This setting relates to our function that we are to have in the body as we continue in **1**

**Corinthians 12 (KJV):**19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.

Some are eyes, some are hands, and some are feet, but there is one head as we read in **Colossians 1 (KJV):**18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. 19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

Augustine continues, “Notice it, when the Acts of the Apostles are read; the reading of that book begins now, you see. Today begins the book which is called the Acts of the Apostles. Anybody who wishes to make progress has the means of doing so. When you assemble in church, put aside silly stories and concentrate on the scriptures. We here are your books. So pay attention, and see how the Holy Spirit is going to come at Pentecost. And this is how he will come; he will show himself in tongues of fire. You see, he breathes into us the charity which should set us on fire for God, and have us think lightly of the world, and burn up our straw, and purge and refine our hearts like gold. So the Holy Spirit comes, fire after water, and you are baked into the bread which is the body of Christ. And that's how unity is signified.”

Augustine's analogy of baking bread falls short in that he makes it a process of ritual where one becomes a member of the body of Christ. In fact, one becomes a member the moment they believe in Jesus Christ. That is when we are saved. That is when we are born again. That is when we are set by the Lord in the body of Christ.

Augustine continues, as he explains the ritual of the Church in his time. He then says, “Now you have the sacraments in the order they occur. First, after the prayer, you are urged to lift up your hearts; that's only right for the members of Christ. After all, if you have become members of Christ, where is your head? Members have a head. If the head hadn't gone ahead before, the members would never follow. Where has our head gone? What did you give back in the creed? On the third day he rose again from the dead, he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father. So our head is in heaven. That's why, after the words Lift up your hearts, you reply, We have lifted them up to the Lord.

And you mustn't attribute it to your own powers, your own merits, your own efforts, this lifting up of your hearts to the Lord, because it's God's gift that you should have your heart up above. That's why the bishop, or the presbyter who's offering, goes on to say, when the people have answered We have lifted them up to the Lord, why he goes on to say, Let us give thanks to the Lord our God, because we have lifted up our hearts. Let us give thanks, because unless he had enabled us to lift them up, we would still have our hearts down here on earth. And you signify your agreement by saying, It is right and just to give thanks to the one who caused us to lift up our hearts to our head.

Then, after the consecration of the sacrifice of God, because he wanted us to be ourselves his sacrifice, which is indicated by where that sacrifice was first put, that is the sign of the thing that we are; why, then after the consecration is accomplished, we say the Lord's prayer, which you have received and given back. After that comes the greeting, Peace be with you, and Christians kiss one another with a holy kiss. It's a sign of peace; what is indicated by the lips should happen in the conscience; that is, just as your lips approach the lips of your brothers or sisters, so your heart should not be withdrawn from theirs.”

So Augustine says, as we read before, “The consecration of the sacrifice of God” relates

to “That bread which you can see on the altar, sanctified by the word of God,” which “is the body of Christ”, and “That cup, or rather what the cup contains, sanctified by the word of God, is the blood of Christ”.

And, “If you receive them well, you are yourselves what you receive”, as he said before. But again, when we believe, we are made members of the body of Christ by the Lord. We do not continue to be the body of Christ by partaking of the Lord’s Supper. We already are members of the body of Christ when we believe.

Augustine continues, “So they are great sacraments and signs, really serious and important sacraments. Do you want to know how their seriousness is impressed on us? The apostle says, Whoever eats the body of Christ or drinks the blood of the Lord unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord (1 Cor 11:27).”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):27** Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

He continues, “What is receiving unworthily? Receiving with contempt, receiving with derision. Don't let yourselves think that what you can see is of no account. What you can see passes away, but the invisible reality signified does not pass away, but remains. Look, it's received, it's eaten, it's consumed. Is the body of Christ consumed, is the Church of Christ consumed, are the members of Christ consumed? Perish the thought! Here they are being purified, there they will be crowned with the victor's laurels. So what is signified will remain eternally, although the thing that signifies it seems to pass away. So receive the sacrament in such a way that you think about yourselves, that you retain unity in your hearts, that you always fix your hearts up above. Don't let your hope be placed on earth, but in heaven. Let your faith be firm in God, let it be acceptable to God. Because what you don't see now, but believe, you are going to see there, where you will have joy without end.”

We must examine ourselves before we eat of the bread and drink of the cup as Paul taught in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):28** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

## Sermon 272

[https://earlychurchtexts.com/public/augustine\\_sermon\\_272\\_eucharist.htm](https://earlychurchtexts.com/public/augustine_sermon_272_eucharist.htm)

What you see on God's altar, you've already observed during the night that has now ended. But you've heard nothing about just what it might be, or what it might mean, or what great thing it might be said to symbolize. For what you see is simply bread and a cup - this is the information your eyes report. But your faith demands far subtler insight: the bread is Christ's body, the cup is Christ's blood. Faith can grasp the fundamentals quickly, succinctly, yet it hungers for a fuller account of the matter. As the prophet says, "Unless you believe, you will not understand." [Is. 7:9; Septuagint] So you can say to me, "You urged us to believe; now explain, so we can understand." Inside each of you, thoughts like these are rising: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, we know the source of his flesh; he took it from the virgin Mary. Like any infant,

he was nursed and nourished; he grew; became a youngster; suffered persecution from his own people. To the wood he was nailed; on the wood he died; from the wood, his body was taken down and buried. On the third day (as he willed) he rose; he ascended bodily into heaven whence he will come to judge the living and the dead. There he dwells even now, seated at God's right. So how can bread be his body? And what about the cup? How can it (or what it contains) be his blood?" My friends, these realities are called sacraments because in them one thing is seen, while another is grasped. What is seen is a mere physical likeness; what is grasped bears spiritual fruit. So now, if you want to understand the body of Christ, listen to the Apostle Paul speaking to the faithful: "You are the body of Christ, member for member." [1 Cor. 12.27] If you, therefore, are Christ's body and members, it is your own mystery that is placed on the Lord's table! It is your own mystery that you are receiving! You are saying "Amen" to what you are: your response is a personal signature, affirming your faith. When you hear "The body of Christ", you reply "Amen." Be a member of Christ's body, then, so that your "Amen" may ring true! But what role does the bread play? We have no theory of our own to propose here; listen, instead, to what Paul says about this sacrament: "The bread is one, and we, though many, are one body." [1 Cor. 10.17] Understand and rejoice: unity, truth, faithfulness, love. "One bread," he says. What is this one bread? Is it not the "one body," formed from many? Remember: bread doesn't come from a single grain, but from many. When you received exorcism, you were "ground." When you were baptized, you were "leavened." When you received the fire of the Holy Spirit, you were "baked." Be what you see; receive what you are. This is what Paul is saying about the bread. So too, what we are to understand about the cup is similar and requires little explanation. In the visible object of bread, many grains are gathered into one just as the faithful (so Scripture says) form "a single heart and mind in God" [Acts 4.32]. And thus it is with the wine. Remember, friends, how wine is made. Individual grapes hang together in a bunch, but the juice from them all is mingled to become a single brew. This is the image chosen by Christ our Lord to show how, at his own table, the mystery of our unity and peace is solemnly consecrated. All who fail to keep the bond of peace after entering this mystery receive not a sacrament that benefits them, but an indictment that condemns them. So let us give God our sincere and deepest gratitude, and, as far as human weakness will permit, let us turn to the Lord with pure hearts. With all our strength, let us seek God's singular mercy, for then the Divine Goodness will surely hear our prayers. God's power will drive the Evil One from our acts and thoughts; it will deepen our faith, govern our minds, grant us holy thoughts, and lead us, finally, to share the divine happiness through God's own son Jesus Christ. Amen!

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, as he says, "What you see on God's altar, you've already observed during the night that has now ended. But you've heard nothing about just what it might be, or what it might mean, or what great thing it might be said to symbolize. For what you see is simply bread and a cup - this is the information your eyes report. But your faith demands far subtler insight: the bread is Christ's body, the cup is Christ's blood. Faith can grasp the fundamentals quickly, succinctly, yet it hungers for a fuller account of the matter. As the prophet says, "Unless you believe, you will not understand." [Isaiah 7:9; Septuagint]"

He refers to **Isaiah 7 (Septuagint):9** And the head of Ephraim is Somoron, and the head of Somoron the son of Romelias: but if ye believe not, neither will ye at all understand.

He continues, "So you can say to me, "You urged us to believe; now explain, so we can

understand." Inside each of you, thoughts like these are rising: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, we know the source of his flesh; he took it from the virgin Mary. Like any infant, he was nursed and nourished; he grew; became a youngster; suffered persecution from his own people. To the wood he was nailed; on the wood he died; from the wood, his body was taken down and buried. On the third day (as he willed) he rose; he ascended bodily into heaven whence he will come to judge the living and the dead. There he dwells even now, seated at God's right. So how can bread be his body? And what about the cup? How can it (or what it contains) be his blood?" My friends, these realities are called sacraments because in them one thing is seen, while another is grasped. What is seen is a mere physical likeness; what is grasped bears spiritual fruit. So now, if you want to understand the body of Christ, listen to the Apostle Paul speaking to the faithful: "You are the body of Christ, member for member." [1 Cor. 12.27]"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (Douay Rheims):27** Now you are the body of Christ and members of member.

And to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):27** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

The word in the Greek for "particular" is μέρος (pronounced me'-ros), from an obsolete but more primary form of μείρομαι meíromai (to get as a section or allotment); a division or share (literally or figuratively, in a wide application):—behalf, course, coast, craft, particular (+ -ly), part (+ -ly), piece, portion, respect, side, some sort(-what)." **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3313.**

He continues, "If you, therefore, are Christ's body and members, it is your own mystery that is placed on the Lord's table! It is your own mystery that you are receiving! You are saying "Amen" to what you are: your response is a personal signature, affirming your faith. When you hear "The body of Christ", you reply "Amen." Be a member of Christ's body, then, so that your "Amen" may ring true!"

We become members of His body when we believe in Jesus Christ, as we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

The Lord's Supper is not about us, but about Him, and what He has done for us as we read in **Luke 22 (KJV):19** And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

And in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):26** For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

He continues, "But what role does the bread play? We have no theory of our own to propose here; listen, instead, to what Paul says about this sacrament: "The bread is one, and we, though many, are one body." [1 Cor. 10.17]"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):17** For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

He continues, "Understand and rejoice: unity, truth, faithfulness, love. "One bread," he says. What is this one bread? Is it not the "one body," formed from many? Remember: bread doesn't come from a single grain, but from many. When you received exorcism, you were "ground." When you were baptized, you were "leavened." When you received the fire of the Holy Spirit, you were "baked." Be what you see; receive what you are. This is what Paul is saying about the bread. So too, what we are to understand about the cup is similar and requires



little explanation. In the visible object of bread, many grains are gathered into one just as the faithful (so Scripture says) form "a single heart and mind in God" [Acts 4.32]."

He refers to **Acts 4 (KJV):32** And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

He continues, "And thus it is with the wine. Remember, friends, how wine is made. Individual grapes hang together in a bunch, but the juice from them all is mingled to become a single brew. This is the image chosen by Christ our Lord to show how, at his own table, the mystery of our unity and peace is solemnly consecrated. All who fail to keep the bond of peace after entering this mystery receive not a sacrament that benefits them, but an indictment that condemns them. So let us give God our sincere and deepest gratitude, and, as far as human weakness will permit, let us turn to the Lord with pure hearts. With all our strength, let us seek God's singular mercy, for then the Divine Goodness will surely hear our prayers. God's power will drive the Evil One from our acts and thoughts; it will deepen our faith, govern our minds, grant us holy thoughts, and lead us, finally, to share the divine happiness through God's own son Jesus Christ. Amen!"

Unity was a huge concern of Augustine. In his time, there were many heresies. We are to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace as we read in context in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):1** I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, **2** With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; **3** Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4** There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; **5** One Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. **7** But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. **8** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Why did He give gifts to men? We continue reading in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):9** (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? **10** He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) **11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; **12** For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

The gifts are for the work of the ministry. The word "perfecting" in the Greek is **καταρτισμός** (pronounced kā-tār-tē-smo's), "from G2675; complete furnishing (objectively):—perfecting." **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2677.**

G2675 is **καταρτίζω** (pronounced kā-tār-tē'-zō); from G2596 and a derivative of G739; to complete thoroughly, i.e. repair (literally or figuratively) or adjust:—fit, frame, mend, (make) perfect(-ly join together), prepare, restore." **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 2675.**

Instead of "perfecting", the **New American Standard Bible** has translated **καταρτισμός** (pronounced kā-tār-tē-smo's) as "equipping" as we read in **Ephesians 4 (NASB):11** And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, **12** for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

Were these gifts only given to the first apostles? The Scripture says that they are to continue, as we continue reading in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):13** Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

The body is not one member but many. Every member in the body of Christ has been set there in a particular place in order that the “effectual working in the measure” of that part will make “increase of the body” in verse 16. The increase is not only in numbers but in growth, for we all are to “grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ”, as in verse 15, and “unto the edifying of itself in love” in verse 16.

It is not the unity of conformity that we are to keep, but the unity of the Spirit. This can only be done as we agree with the word of God. This may mean we must give up the way we have always done things, that is our traditions, and surrender to the Lord in agreement with Him as we walk in the light of His word. Our loyalty is to the Lord.

## **Adore His Footstool**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine  
On the Psalms, Psalm 99, paragraphs 8-9, page 485-486**

8. “O magnify the Lord our God” (ver. 5). Magnify Him truly, magnify Him well. Let us praise Him, let us magnify Him who hath wrought the very righteousness which we have; who wrought it in us, Himself. For who but He who justified us, wrought righteousness in us? For of Christ it is said, “who justifieth the ungodly.” (Romans 4:5) ...“And fall down before (Adorate.) His footstool: for He is holy.” What are we to fall down before? His footstool. What is under the feet is called a footstool, in Greek ὑποπόδιον (pronounced hoo-po-po-d-on), in Latin Scabellum or Suppedaneum. But consider, brethren, what he commandeth us to fall down before. In another passage of the Scriptures it is said, “The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool.” (Isaiah 66:1) Doth he then bid us worship the earth, since in another passage it is said, that it is God’s footstool? How then shall we worship the earth, when the Scripture saith openly, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God”? (Deuteronomy 6:13) Yet here it saith, “fall down before His footstool:” and, explaining to us what His footstool is, it saith, “The earth is My footstool.” I am in doubt; I fear to worship the earth, lest He who made the heaven and the earth condemn me; again, I fear not to worship the footstool of my Lord, because the Psalm biddeth me, “fall down before His footstool.” I ask, what is His footstool? and the Scripture telleth me, “the earth is My footstool.” **In hesitation I turn unto Christ, since I am herein seeking Himself: and I discover how the earth may be worshipped without impiety, how His footstool may be worshipped without impiety. For He took upon Him earth from earth; because flesh is from earth, and He received flesh from the flesh of Mary. And because He walked here in very**

flesh, and gave that very flesh to us to eat for our salvation; and no one eateth that flesh, unless he hath first worshipped: we have found out in what sense such a footstool of our Lord's may be worshipped, and not only that we sin not in worshipping it, but that we sin in not worshipping. But doth the flesh give life? Our Lord Himself, when He was speaking in praise of this same earth, said, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing."...But when our Lord praised it, He was speaking of His own flesh, and He had said, "Except a man eat My flesh, he shall have no life in him. (John 6:54) Some disciples of His, about seventy, were offended, and said, "This is an hard saying, who can hear it?" And they went back, and walked no more with Him. It seemed unto them hard that He said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you:" they received it foolishly, they thought of it carnally, and imagined that the Lord would cut off parts from His body, and give unto them; and they said, "This is a hard saying." It was they who were hard, not the saying; for unless they had been hard, and not meek, they would have said unto themselves, He saith not this without reason, but there must be some latent mystery herein. They would have remained with Him, softened, not hard: and would have learnt that from Him which they who remained, when the others departed, learnt. For when twelve disciples had remained with Him, on their departure, these remaining followers suggested to Him, as if in grief for the death of the former, that they were offended by His words, and turned back. But He instructed them, and saith unto them, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, but the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63) Understand spiritually what I have said; ye are not to eat this body which ye see; nor to drink that blood which they who will crucify Me shall pour forth. I have commended unto you a certain mystery; spiritually understood, it will quicken. Although it is needful that this be visibly celebrated, yet it must be spiritually understood.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, as he says, "'O magnify the Lord our God" (ver. 5)."

He refers to **Psalms 98 (Douay Rheims):5** Exalt ye the Lord our God, and adore his footstool, for it is holy.

And to **Psalms 99 (Septuagint):5** Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.

And to **Psalms 99 (KJV):5** Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.

He continues, "Magnify Him truly, magnify Him well. Let us praise Him, let us magnify Him who hath wrought the very righteousness which we have; who wrought it in us, Himself. For who but He who justified us, wrought righteousness in us? For of Christ it is said, "who justifieth the ungodly." (Romans 4:5)"

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):5** But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

He continues, "...And fall down before (Adorate.) His footstool: for He is holy." What are we to fall down before? His footstool. What is under the feet is called a footstool, in Greek **ὕποπόδιον** (pronounced hoo-po-po-d-on), in Latin Scabellum or Suppedaneum. But consider, brethren, what he commandeth us to fall down before. In another passage of the Scriptures it is said, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool." (Isaiah 66:1)"

He refers to **Isaiah 66 (KJV):1** Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my

rest?

He continues, “Doth he then bid us worship the earth, since in another passage it is said, that it is God’s footstool? How then shall we worship the earth, when the Scripture saith openly, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God”? (Deuteronomy 6:13)”

He refers to **Deuteronomy 6 (KJV):13** Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

And to **Matthew 4 (KJV):10** Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

He continues, “Yet here it saith, “fall down before His footstool:” and, explaining to us what His footstool is, it saith, “The earth is My footstool.” I am in doubt; I fear to worship the earth, lest He who made the heaven and the earth condemn me; again, I fear not to worship the footstool of my Lord, because the Psalm biddeth me, “fall down before His footstool.” I ask, what is His footstool? and the Scripture telleth me, “the earth is My footstool.” **In hesitation I turn unto Christ, since I am herein seeking Himself: and I discover how the earth may be worshipped without impiety, how His footstool may be worshipped without impiety. For He took upon Him earth from earth; because flesh is from earth, and He received flesh from the flesh of Mary. And because He walked here in very flesh, and gave that very flesh to us to eat for our salvation; and no one eateth that flesh, unless he hath first worshipped: we have found out in what sense such a footstool of our Lord’s may be worshipped, and not only that we sin not in worshipping it, but that we sin in not worshipping.”**

So Augustine’s solution is that we worship the flesh of Christ. He then explains, “But doth the flesh give life? Our Lord Himself, when He was speaking in praise of this same earth, said, “It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.”...But when our Lord praised it, He was speaking of His own flesh, and He had said, “Except a man eat My flesh, he shall have no life in him. (John 6:54)”

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):54** Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

He continues, “Some disciples of His, about seventy, were offended, and said, “This is an hard saying, who can hear it?” And they went back, and walked no more with Him. It seemed unto them hard that He said, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you:” they received it foolishly, they thought of it carnally, and imagined that the Lord would cut off parts from His body, and give unto them; and they said, “This is a hard saying.” It was they who were hard, not the saying; for unless they had been hard, and not meek, they would have said unto themselves, He saith not this without reason, but there must be some latent mystery herein.”

He is referring in context to **John 6 (KJV):52** The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59 These things said he in the

synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. 60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

He continues, “They would have remained with Him, softened, not hard: and would have learnt that from Him which they who remained, when the others departed, learnt. For when twelve disciples had remained with Him, on their departure, these remaining followers suggested to Him, as if in grief for the death of the former, that they were offended by His words, and turned back. But He instructed them, and saith unto them, “It is the Spirit that quickeneth, but the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63)”

He refers in context to **John 6 (KJV):61** When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. 64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. 66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

He continues, “Understand spiritually what I have said; ye are not to eat this body which ye see; nor to drink that blood which they who will crucify Me shall pour forth. I have commended unto you a certain mystery; spiritually understood, it will quicken. Although it is needful that this be visibly celebrated, yet it must be spiritually understood.”

Augustine is correct when he says that this saying of Jesus “must be spiritually understood”. Nevertheless, he also understood that this ritual was necessary to receive eternal life. But the ritual is only a remembrance. Faith in Jesus Christ is what saves us as we read again in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

He continues in the next paragraph.

9. “Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among such as call upon His Name: these called upon the Lord, and He heard them” (ver. 6). “He spake unto them out of the cloudy pillar” (ver. 7)....Of Moses it is not there stated that he was a priest. But if he was not this, what was he? Could he be anything greater than a priest? This Psalm declareth that he also was himself a priest: “Moses and Aaron among His priests.” They therefore were the Lord’s priests. Samuel is read of later in the Book of Kings: this Samuel is in David’s times; for he anointed the holy David. Samuel from his infancy grew up in the temple....He mentioneth these: and by these desireth us to understand all the saints. Yet why hath he here named those? Because we said that we ought here to understand Christ. **Attend, holy brethren. He said above, “O magnify the Lord our God: and fall down before His footstool, for He is holy:” praising some one, that**



is, our Lord Jesus Christ; whose footstool is to be worshipped, because He assumed flesh, in which He was to appear before the human race; and wishing to show unto us that the ancient fathers also had preached of Him, because our Lord Jesus Christ is Himself the True Priest, he mentioned these, because God spake unto them out of the cloudy pillar. What meaneth, “out of the cloudy pillar”? He was speaking figuratively. For if He spoke in some cloud, those obscure words predicted some one unknown, yet to be manifest. This unknown one is no longer unknown; for He is known by us, our Lord Jesus Christ....He who first spoke out of the cloudy pillar, hath in Person spoken unto us in His footstool; that is, on earth, when He had assumed the flesh, for which reason we worship His footstool, for He is holy. He Himself used to speak out of the cloud, which was not then understood: He hath spoken in His own footstool, and the words of His cloud have been understood. “They kept His testimonies, and the law that He gave them.”...“Thou heardest them,” he saith, “O Lord our God: Thou wast forgiving to them, O God” (ver. 8). God is not said to be forgiving toward anything but sins: when He pardoneth sins, then He forgiveth. And what had He in them to punish, so that He was forgiving in pardoning them? He was forgiving in pardoning their sins, He was also forgiving in punishing them. For what followeth? “And punishedst all their own affections.” Even in punishing them Thou wast forgiving toward them: for not in remitting, but also in punishing their sins, hast Thou been forgiving. Consider, my brethren, what he hath taught us here: attend. God is angry with him whom, when he sinneth, He scourgeth not: for unto him to whom He is truly forgiving, He not only remitteth sins, that they may not injure him in a future life; but also chasteneth him, that he delight not in continual sin.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he says, ““Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among such as call upon His Name: these called upon the Lord, and He heard them” (ver. 6). “He spake unto them out of the cloudy pillar” (ver. 7)”

He refers to **Psalm 99 (KJV):6** Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the Lord, and he answered them. 7 He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.

He continues, “....Of Moses it is not there stated that he was a priest. But if he was not this, what was he? Could he be anything greater than a priest? This Psalm declareth that he also was himself a priest: “Moses and Aaron among His priests.” They therefore were the Lord’s priests. Samuel is read of later in the Book of Kings: this Samuel is in David’s times; for he anointed the holy David. Samuel from his infancy grew up in the temple....He mentioneth these: and by these desireth us to understand all the saints. Yet why hath he here named those? Because we said that we ought here to understand Christ. **Attend, holy brethren. He said above, “O magnify the Lord our God: and fall down before His footstool, for He is holy:”** praising some one, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ; whose footstool is to be worshipped, because He assumed flesh, in which He was to appear before the human race; and wishing to show unto us that the ancient fathers also had preached of Him, because our Lord Jesus Christ is Himself the True Priest, he mentioned these, because God spake unto them out of the cloudy pillar.”

And Jesus is our high priest as we read in **Hebrews 2 (KJV):17** Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

He continues, “What meaneth, “out of the cloudy pillar”? He was speaking figuratively. For if He spoke in some cloud, those obscure words predicted some one unknown, yet to be manifest. This unknown one is no longer unknown; for He is known by us, our Lord Jesus Christ....He who first spoke out of the cloudy pillar, hath in Person spoken unto us in His footstool; that is, on earth, when He had assumed the flesh, for which reason we worship His footstool, for He is holy.”

So Augustine is saying that the flesh of Jesus is His footstool, and we worship it.

He continues, “He Himself used to speak out of the cloud, which was not then understood: He hath spoken in His own footstool, and the words of His cloud have been understood. “They kept His testimonies, and the law that He gave them.”...“Thou heardest them,” he saith, “O Lord our God: Thou wast forgiving to them, O God” (ver. 8).”

He refers to **Psalm 99 (KJV):8** Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.

He continues, “God is not said to be forgiving toward anything but sins: when He pardoneth sins, then He forgiveth. And what had He in them to punish, so that He was forgiving in pardoning them? He was forgiving in pardoning their sins, He was also forgiving in punishing them. For what followeth? “And punishedst all their own affections.” Even in punishing them Thou wast forgiving toward them: for not in remitting, but also in punishing their sins, hast Thou been forgiving. Consider, my brethren, what he hath taught us here: attend. God is angry with him whom, when he sinneth, He scourgeth not: for unto him to whom He is truly forgiving, He not only remitteth sins, that they may not injure him in a future life; but also chasteneth him, that he delight not in continual sin.”

And Augustine agrees with the Scripture as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):6** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

## Summary

Justin Martyr who lived from 100 to 165 A.D. concludes, “[So] He then speaks of those Gentiles, namely us, who in every place offer sacrifices to Him, i.e., the bread of the Eucharist, and also the cup of the Eucharist, affirming both that we glorify His name, and that you profane [it].”

Justin Martyr is using Malachi 1:10-12 as a foundation to support his belief that the Eucharist was a sacrifice to be offered by the Gentiles. But this is based on a mistranslation by the Septuagint of verse 11, which should read as in **Malachi 1 (KJV):11** For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.

But Augustine inherited this from the Church in his time. So he says, “A sacrifice, therefore, is the visible sacrament or sacred sign of an invisible sacrifice.” And he says, “Accordingly, when the apostle had exhorted us to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, our reasonable service”, he meant that, “This is the sacrifice of Christians: we, being many, are one body in Christ. And this also is the sacrifice which the Church continually celebrates in the sacrament of the altar, known to the faithful, in which she teaches

that she herself is offered in the offering she makes to God.”

And he adds, “And thus He would have this meat and drink to be understood as meaning the fellowship of His own body and members, which is the holy Church in his predestinated, and called, and justified, and glorified saints and believers.”

And he says, “That's how he explained the sacrament of the Lord's table; one loaf, one body, is what we all are, many though we be.”

And he explains, “The consecration of the sacrifice of God” relates to “That bread which you can see on the altar, sanctified by the word of God,” which “is the body of Christ”, and “That cup, or rather what the cup contains, sanctified by the word of God, is the blood of Christ”.

And he concludes, “For what you see is simply bread and a cup - this is the information your eyes report. But your faith demands far subtler insight: the bread is Christ's body, the cup is Christ's blood.”

The apostle Paul testifies in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):23** For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

When we eat the bread and drink the cup, we show the Lord's death until He comes again. It is a remembrance of what He has done for us. And it must be done with reverence, in respect for the price He paid for us, as we continue in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):27** Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Concerning how we should **Adore His Footstool**, the Scripture says that all the angels shall worship Him as we read in **Hebrews 1 (KJV):6** And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

And in **Deuteronomy 32 (Septuagint):43** Rejoice, ye heavens, with him, and let all the angels of God worship him; rejoice ye Gentiles, with his people, and let all the sons of God strengthen themselves in him; for he will avenge the blood of his sons, and he will render vengeance, and recompense justice to his enemies, and will reward them that hate him; and the Lord shall purge the land of his people.

The disciples worshipped Jesus as He ascended into heaven as we read in **Luke 24 (KJV):50** And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. 51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: 53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

The wise men came to worship Him as we read in **Matthew 2 (KJV):1** Now when Jesus

was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Augustine refers to **Psalm 98 (Douay Rheims):5** Exalt ye the Lord our God, and adore his footstool, for it is holy.

But we read as in **Psalm 99 (Septuagint):5** Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.

And in **Psalm 99 (KJV):5** Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.

Augustine misunderstood Psalm 98:5. We worship at His footstool, but we don't "adore his footstool". He is holy. Augustine saw a similarity of the footstool with the earth, which to him was symbolic of the flesh of Christ. But we don't worship His flesh. We worship who He is, the Son of God. He is God blessed forever as we read in **Romans 9 (KJV):5** Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

# Angels

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XI, Chapter 9, page 209-210

Chapter 9.—What the Scriptures Teach Us to Believe Concerning the Creation of the Angels.

At present, since I have undertaken to treat of the origin of the holy city, and first of the holy angels, who constitute a large part of this city, and indeed the more blessed part, since they have never been expatriated, I will give myself to the task of explaining, by God's help, and as far as seems suitable, the Scriptures which relate to this point. Where Scripture speaks of the world's creation, it is not plainly said whether or when the angels were created; but if mention of them is made, it is implicitly under the name of "heaven," when it is said, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," or perhaps rather under the name of "light," of which presently. But that they were wholly omitted, I am unable to believe, because it is written that God on the seventh day rested from all His works which He made; and this very book itself begins, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," so that before heaven and earth God seems to have made nothing. Since, therefore, He began with the heavens and the earth,—and the earth itself, as Scripture adds, was at first invisible and formless, light not being as yet made, and darkness covering the face of the deep (that is to say, covering an undefined chaos of earth and sea, for where light is not, darkness must needs be),—and then when all things, which are recorded to have been completed in six days, were created and arranged, how should the angels be omitted, as if they were not among the works of God, from which on the seventh day He rested? Yet, though the fact that the angels are the work of God is not omitted here, it is indeed not explicitly mentioned; but elsewhere Holy Scripture asserts it in the clearest manner. For in the Hymn of the Three Children in the Furnace it was said, "O all ye works of the Lord bless ye the Lord;" and among these works mentioned afterwards in detail, the angels are named. And in the psalm it is said, "Praise ye the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the heights. Praise ye Him, all His angels; praise ye Him, all His hosts. Praise ye Him, sun and moon; praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise Him, ye heaven of heavens; and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord; for He commanded, and they were created." Here the angels are most expressly and by divine authority said to have been made by God, for of them among the other heavenly things it is said, "He commanded, and they were created." Who, then, will be bold enough to suggest that the angels were made after the six days' creation? If anyone is so foolish, his folly is disposed of by a Scripture of like authority, where God says, "When the stars were made, the angels praised me with a loud voice." The angels therefore existed before the stars; and the stars were made the fourth day. Shall we then say that they were made the third day? Far from it; for we know what was made that day. The earth was separated from the water, and each element took its own distinct form, and the earth produced all that grows on it. On the second day, then? Not even on this; for on it the firmament was made between the waters above and beneath, and was called "Heaven," in which firmament the stars were made on the fourth day. There is no question, then, that if the angels are included in the works of God during these six days, they are that light which was called "Day," and



whose unity Scripture signalizes by calling that day not the “first day,” but “one day.” For the second day, the third, and the rest are not other days; but the same “one” day is repeated to complete the number six or seven, so that there should be knowledge both of God’s works and of His rest. For when God said, “Let there be light, and there was light,” if we are justified in understanding in this light the creation of the angels, then certainly they were created partakers of the eternal light which is the unchangeable Wisdom of God, by which all things were made, and whom we call the only-begotten Son of God; so that they, being illumined by the Light that created them, might themselves become light and be called “Day,” in participation of that unchangeable Light and Day which is the Word of God, by whom both themselves and all else were made. “The true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,”—this Light lighteth also every pure angel, that he may be light not in himself, but in God; from whom if an angel turn away, he becomes impure, as are all those who are called unclean spirits, and are no longer light in the Lord, but darkness in themselves, being deprived of the participation of Light eternal. For evil has no positive nature; but the loss of good has received the name “evil.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “At present, since I have undertaken to treat of the origin of the holy city, and first of the holy angels, who constitute a large part of this city, and indeed the more blessed part, since they have never been expatriated, I will give myself to the task of explaining, by God’s help, and as far as seems suitable, the Scriptures which relate to this point. Where Scripture speaks of the world’s creation, it is not plainly said whether or when the angels were created; but if mention of them is made, it is implicitly under the name of “heaven,” when it is said, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” or perhaps rather under the name of “light,” of which presently. But that they were wholly omitted, I am unable to believe, because it is written that God on the seventh day rested from all His works which He made; and this very book itself begins, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” so that before heaven and earth God seems to have made nothing.”

He refers to **Genesis 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

He then continues, “Since, therefore, He began with the heavens and the earth,—and the earth itself, as Scripture adds, was at first invisible and formless, light not being as yet made, and darkness covering the face of the deep (that is to say, covering an undefined chaos of earth and sea, for where light is not, darkness must needs be),—and then when all things, which are recorded to have been completed in six days, were created and arranged, how should the angels be omitted, as if they were not among the works of God, from which on the seventh day He rested?”

He refers in context to **Genesis 1 (KJV):2** And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

He then explains, “Yet, though the fact that the angels are the work of God is not omitted here, it is indeed not explicitly mentioned; but elsewhere Holy Scripture asserts it in the clearest manner. For in the Hymn of the Three Children in the Furnace it was said, “O all ye works of the Lord bless ye the Lord;” and among these works mentioned afterwards in detail, the angels are named. And in the psalm it is said, “Praise ye the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the

heights. Praise ye Him, all His angels; praise ye Him, all His hosts. Praise ye Him, sun and moon; praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise Him, ye heaven of heavens; and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord; for He commanded, and they were created.””

He refers to **Psalms 148 (KJV)**: 1 Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights. 2 Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. 3 Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. 4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. 5 Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created.

He then continues, “Here the angels are most expressly and by divine authority said to have been made by God, for of them among the other heavenly things it is said, “He commanded, and they were created.” Who, then, will be bold enough to suggest that the angels were made after the six days’ creation? If anyone is so foolish, his folly is disposed of by a Scripture of like authority, where God says, “When the stars were made, the angels praised me with a loud voice.””

He most likely is referring to the Lord’s response to Job in **Job 38 (KJV)**: 4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. 5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? 6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner stone thereof; 7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

The “morning stars” refer to angels, as does the sons of God, in verse 7.

He continues, “The angels therefore existed before the stars; and the stars were made the fourth day. Shall we then say that they were made the third day? Far from it; for we know what was made that day. The earth was separated from the water, and each element took its own distinct form, and the earth produced all that grows on it. On the second day, then? Not even on this; for on it the firmament was made between the waters above and beneath, and was called “Heaven,” in which firmament the stars were made on the fourth day.”

Up to this point, he refers to **Genesis 1 (KJV)**: 6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. 9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. 10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. 11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. 12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. 13 And the evening and the morning were the third day. 14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: 15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. 16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. 17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, 18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to

divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. 19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

He then continues, “There is no question, then, that if the angels are included in the works of God during these six days, they are that light which was called “Day,” and whose unity Scripture signalizes by calling that day not the “first day,” but “one day.” For the second day, the third, and the rest are not other days; but the same “one” day is repeated to complete the number six or seven, so that there should be knowledge both of God’s works and of His rest.”

Let us read in context in **Genesis 1 (KJV)**: 1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

It is difficult to know exactly what Augustine is saying here. The words “first day” in Genesis 1:5 in Hebrew are: **יום אֶחָד** (pronounced yom ekh·äd). The Hebrew word “yom” means day. The Hebrew word “ekh·äd” (the word next to the colon) means “a numeral from H258; properly united, ie. One; or (as an ordinal) first;” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H259.**

This Hebrew word is derived from **אָחַד** (pronounced ä·khad’), “perhaps a primitive root; to unify, i.e. (figuratively) collect (one’s thoughts):--go one way or other. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H259.**

Likewise, the words “second day” in Genesis 1:8 in Hebrew are: **יום שֵׁנִי** (pronounced yom shay-nee). The Hebrew word shay-nee (the word next to the colon) means “properly double, i.e. second;” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H8145.**

Likewise, the words “third day” in Genesis 1:13 are: **יום שְׁלִישִׁי** (pronounced yom shel·ē·shē’). The word shel·ē·shē’ (the word next to the colon) in Hebrew means “third”. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H7992.**

The other days follow a similar pattern to the second and third days, meaning they should be translated as we read in the **King James Version**, fourth, fifth, and sixth.

So as we read again Augustine’s thoughts, “There is no question, then, that if the angels are included in the works of God during these six days, they are that light which was called “Day,” and whose unity Scripture signalizes by calling that day not the “first day,” but “one day”, he makes the six days a unity, or “one day”, so that, “For the second day, the third, and the rest are not other days; but the same “one” day is repeated to complete the number six or seven”. So the only reason they are itemized as days in the Scripture is “so that there should be knowledge both of God’s works and of His rest.”

Again, it is difficult to know exactly what he is saying here.

He continues, “For when God said, “Let there be light, and there was light,” if we are justified in understanding in this light the creation of the angels, then certainly they were created partakers of the eternal light which is the unchangeable Wisdom of God, by which all things were made, and whom we call the only-begotten Son of God; so that they, being illumined by the Light that created them, might themselves become light and be called “Day,” in participation of that unchangeable Light and Day which is the Word of God, by whom both

themselves and all else were made. “The true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):2** The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And to **John 1 (KJV):9** That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

He concludes, “—this Light lighteth also every pure angel, that he may be light not in himself, but in God; from whom if an angel turn away, he becomes impure, as are all those who are called unclean spirits, and are no longer light in the Lord, but darkness in themselves, being deprived of the participation of Light eternal. For evil has no positive nature; but the loss of good has received the name “evil.”

There is nothing in the Scriptures that indicates the angels were created on the first day. But we do read in **Job 38 (KJV):1** Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, 2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. 4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. 5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? 6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner stone thereof; 7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

The terms “morning stars” and “sons of God” are used here of angels, who were evidently present when God “laid the foundations of the earth”. So they were created before God said, “Let there be light”. But there is more evidence that they were created beforehand if we consider the fact that the earth was created not in vain as we read in **Isaiah 45 (KJV):18** For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.

Instead it became formless and void as we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

We will explain in the next section.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XI, Chapter 15, page 213**

Chapter 15.—How We are to Understand the Words, “The Devil Sinneth from the Beginning.”

As for what John says about the devil, “The devil sinneth from the beginning” (1 John 3:8) they (the Manichaeans) who suppose it is meant hereby that the devil was made with a sinful nature, misunderstand it; for if sin be natural, it is not sin at all. And how do they answer the prophetic proofs,—either what Isaiah says when he represents the devil under the person of the king of Babylon, “How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” (Isaiah 14:12) or what Ezekiel says, “Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering,” (Ezekiel 28:13) where it is meant that he was some time without sin; for a little after

it is still more explicitly said, “Thou wast perfect in thy ways?” And if these passages cannot well be otherwise interpreted, we must understand by this one also, “He abode not in the truth,” that he was once in the truth, but did not remain in it. And from this passage, “The devil sinneth from the beginning,” it is not to be supposed that he sinned from the beginning of his created existence, but from the beginning of his sin, when by his pride he had once commenced to sin. There is a passage, too, in the Book of Job, of which the devil is the subject: “This is the beginning of the creation of God, which He made to be a sport to His angels,” (Job 40:14 LXX) which agrees with the psalm, where it is said, “There is that dragon which Thou hast made to be a sport therein.” (Psalm 104:26) But these passages are not to lead us to suppose that the devil was originally created to be the sport of the angels, but that he was doomed to this punishment after his sin. His beginning, then, is the handiwork of God; for there is no nature, even among the least, and lowest, and last of the beasts, which was not the work of Him from whom has proceeded all measure, all form, all order, without which nothing can be planned or conceived. How much more, then, is this angelic nature, which surpasses in dignity all else that He has made, the handiwork of the Most High!

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “As for what John says about the devil, “The devil sinneth from the beginning” (1 John 3:8) they (the Manichaeans) who suppose it is meant hereby that the devil was made with a sinful nature, misunderstand it; for if sin be natural, it is not sin at all.”

He refers to **1 John 3 (KJV):8** He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

He continues, “And how do they answer the prophetic proofs,—either what Isaiah says when he represents the devil under the person of the king of Babylon, “How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” (Isaiah 14:12) or what Ezekiel says, “Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering,” (Ezekiel 28:13) where it is meant that he was some time without sin; for a little after it is still more explicitly said, “Thou wast perfect in thy ways?” And if these passages cannot well be otherwise interpreted, we must understand by this one also, “He abode not in the truth,” that he was once in the truth, but did not remain in it.”

Augustine refers first to **Isaiah 14 (KJV):12** How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

And then in context to **Ezekiel 28 (KJV):13** Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. 14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

And in context to **John 8 (KJV):44** Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.



He then continues, “And from this passage, “The devil sinneth from the beginning,” it is not to be supposed that he sinned from the beginning of his created existence, but from the beginning of his sin, when by his pride he had once commenced to sin. There is a passage, too, in the Book of Job, of which the devil is the subject: “This is the beginning of the creation of God, which He made to be a sport to His angels,” (Job 40:14 LXX) which agrees with the psalm, where it is said, “There is that dragon which Thou hast made to be a sport therein.” (Psalm 104:26)”

He refers in context to **Job 40 (Septuagint):10** But now look at the wild beasts with thee; they eat grass like oxen. 11 Behold now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. 12 He sets up his tail like a cypress; and his nerves are wrapped together. 13 His sides are sides of brass; and his backbone is as cast iron. 14 This is the chief of the creation of the Lord; made to be played with by his angels.

But we read in context in **Job 40 (KJV):15** Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. 16 Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. 17 He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. 18 His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. 19 He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.

He also refers to **Psalm 104 (Septuagint):26** There go the ships; and this dragon whom thou hast made to play in it.

And to **Psalm 104 (KJV):26** There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.

Augustine misinterprets the Scripture because of the mistranslations of the Septuagint. So Job 40:10-14 in the **Septuagint** and Job 40:15-19 in the **King James Version**, and Psalm 104:26 are not referring to Satan.

He concludes, “But these passages are not to lead us to suppose that the devil was originally created to be the sport of the angels, but that he was doomed to this punishment after his sin. His beginning, then, is the handiwork of God; for there is no nature, even among the least, and lowest, and last of the beasts, which was not the work of Him from whom has proceeded all measure, all form, all order, without which nothing can be planned or conceived. How much more, then, is this angelic nature, which surpasses in dignity all else that He has made, the handiwork of the Most High!”

What Augustine is referring to is made more clear when we read the passages in context. The passage in Isaiah 14:12 does refer to Satan as we read in context in **Isaiah 14 (KJV):12** How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

Apparently Lucifer had a throne on earth, for he purposed to “ascend into heaven”, and exalt his “throne above the stars of God”, and “ascend above the heights of the clouds”.

We continue to read in **Isaiah 14 (KJV):16** They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; 17 That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? 18 All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory,

every one in his own house. 19 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under feet. 20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned. 21 Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. 22 For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord.

So in this last statement in verse 22, we understand what Augustine said before, “**And how do they answer the prophetic proofs,—either what Isaiah says when he represents the devil under the person of the king of Babylon, “How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” (Isaiah 14:12)”**

He connects the king of Babylon with Lucifer by this passage. But if we continue, we notice that the Lord also refers to Assyria through Isaiah in **Isaiah 14 (KJV)**: 23 I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts. 24 The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand: 25 That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. 26 This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. 27 For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? And his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? 28 In the year that king Ahaz died was this burden.

Now the passage in Ezekiel is also referring to Satan, though it is not clear why this is so by his quote. But it is more understandable if we read it in context in **Ezekiel 28 (KJV)**: 12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. 13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. 14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

That this king of Tyrus, or Tyre, was a cherub, or angel, is revealed in verse 14. We continue to read in **Ezekiel 28 (KJV)**: 15 Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. 16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. 18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. 19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

So Augustine is correct in that he says that Lucifer, or Satan, was not created with sin,

as we read above in verse 15, “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee”. But when did all of this take place?

Satan was in the garden of Eden as a serpent as we know from **Revelation 12 (KJV):9** And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

And in **Revelation 20 (KJV):2** And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years...

And we read of the tempter in **Genesis 3 (KJV):1** Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. 7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Some have thought that this is where Lucifer sinned. But Lucifer’s throne was on earth. And his sin was that he wanted to ascend into heaven, and exalt his throne above the stars of God, and “be like the Most High”, as we read in Isaiah 14:13-14 above. That he had a throne on earth indicates he had a kingdom. This would necessitate a pre-Adamic race.

Now when Lucifer sinned, judgment had to follow, just as when Adam sinned. So everlasting fire was prepared for him as we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Now also, we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

The words “And the earth was without form, and void” in Hebrew are as follows, reading each word from right to left:

וְהָיָה	תְּהִי	הָיָה	וְהָאָרֶץ
void and	form without	was	earth the and
bow-hoo va	tow-hoo	hayah	'aretz ha ve

Now we read in **Psalms 33 (ESV):9** For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

And in **Isaiah 45 (KJV):18** For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.

The Hebrew word translated “without form” in Genesis 1:2 above is **תהו** (pronounced tow-hoo), from an unused root meaning to lie waste; a desolation (of surface), i.e. desert; figuratively, a worthless thing; adverbially, in vain:—confusion, empty place, without form, nothing, (thing of) nought, vain, vanity, waste, wilderness. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H8414.**

The Hebrew words translated “not in vain” in Isaiah 45:18 are as follows: **לֹא־תהו** (pronounced low tow-hoo), and mean “not without form”, or “not in vain”. The Hebrew word **לֹא** (pronounced low) means “not”.

The Hebrew word **וַבְּהוּ** (pronounced va bowhoo) in Genesis 1:2 is translated “void”, and is “from an unused root (meaning to be empty); a vacuity, i.e. (superficially) an undistinguishable ruin:—emptiness, void.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H922.**

But in Isaiah 45:18, we read that “he created it not in vain”, but “he formed it to be inhabited”. Thus Genesis 1:2 should be translated, “And the earth became without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

The earth became without form, and void when the first earth was judged because of Lucifer’s sin. This explains where the demons came from. They would have been the inhabitants of the first earth. When judgment came, they became disembodied spirits. This is why they are always seeking a body to inhabit, as we read in **Matthew 12 (KJV):43** When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. 44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. 45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

So we have a gap of unknown duration between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. This would also explain the apparent great age of the earth.

So before man came along, sin was already in the universe. God then began 6 days of reconditioning the earth.

Now we may ask, why was man given a second chance and a Savior, and Lucifer, who became Satan, was not?

We read in **Psalms 8 (KJV):4** What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him? 5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

Man was made a little lower than the angels. Because of Lucifer’s angelic nature, it was not possible for him to have a second chance. But since sin was already in the universe when man came along, God sent Jesus who became a man in order to provide salvation for man.

And this is explained in **Hebrews 2 (KJV):6** But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man that thou visitest him? 7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: 8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God

should taste death for every man. 10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. 13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. 14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

## Summary

There is no question that God made the angels, for He made all things as we read in **Proverbs 16 (KJV):4** The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

And in **John 1 (KJV):3** All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And in **Revelation 4 (KJV):11** Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

That Lucifer was on the earth before he sinned is evident from **Isaiah 14 (KJV):12** How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

It was his sin that made God judge the earth so that it became formless and void, though he did not create it that way as we read in **Isaiah 45 (KJV):18** For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.

Instead it became formless and void as we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

This explains where the demons came from because Lucifer's throne necessitates a PreAdamic race. And this is supported by **Ezekiel 28 (KJV):15** Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. 16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou



hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.

# The Trinity

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XI, Chapter 24, page 218-219

Chapter 24.—Of the Divine Trinity, and the Indications of Its Presence Scattered Everywhere Among Its Works.

We believe, we maintain, we faithfully preach, that the Father begat the Word, that is, Wisdom, by which all things were made, the only begotten Son, one as the Father is one, eternal as the Father is eternal, and, equally with the Father, supremely good; and that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit alike of Father and of Son, and is Himself consubstantial and co-eternal with both; and that this whole is a Trinity by reason of the individuality of the persons, and one God by reason of the indivisible divine substance, as also one Almighty by reason of the indivisible omnipotence; yet so that, when we inquire regarding each singly, it is said that each is God and Almighty; and, when we speak of all together, it is said that there are not three Gods, nor three Almighties, but one God Almighty; so great is the indivisible unity of these Three, which requires that it be so stated. But, whether the Holy Spirit of the Father, and of the Son, who are both good, can be with propriety called the goodness of both, because He is common to both, I do not presume to determine hastily. Nevertheless, I would have less hesitation in saying that He is the holiness of both, not as if He were a divine attribute merely, but Himself also the divine substance, and the third person in the Trinity. I am the rather emboldened to make this statement, because, though the Father is a spirit, and the Son a spirit, and the Father holy, and the Son holy, yet the third person is distinctively called the Holy Spirit, as if He were the substantial holiness consubstantial with the other two. But if the divine goodness is nothing else than the divine holiness, then certainly it is a reasonable studiousness, and not presumptuous intrusion, to inquire whether the same Trinity be not hinted at in an enigmatical mode of speech, by which our inquiry is stimulated, when it is written who made each creature, and by what means, and why. For it is the Father of the Word who said, Let there be. And that which was made when He spoke was certainly made by means of the Word. And by the words, “God saw that it was good,” it is sufficiently intimated that God made what was made not from any necessity, nor for the sake of supplying any want, but solely from His own goodness, *i.e.*, because it was good. And this is stated after the creation had taken place, that there might be no doubt that the thing made satisfied the goodness on account of which it was made. And if we are right in understanding; that this goodness is the Holy Spirit, then the whole Trinity is revealed to us in the creation. In this, too, is the origin, the enlightenment, the blessedness of the holy city which is above among the holy angels. For if we inquire whence it is, God created it; or whence its wisdom, God illumined it; or whence its blessedness, God is its bliss. It has its form by subsisting in Him; its enlightenment by contemplating Him; its joy by abiding in Him. It is; it sees; it loves. In God’s eternity is its life; in God’s truth its light; in God’s goodness its joy.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “We believe, we maintain, we faithfully

preach, that the Father begat the Word, that is, Wisdom, by which all things were made, the only begotten Son, one as the Father is one, eternal as the Father is eternal, and, equally with the Father, supremely good; and that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit alike of Father and of Son, and is Himself consubstantial and co-eternal with both; and that this whole is a Trinity by reason of the individuality of the persons, and one God by reason of the indivisible divine substance, as also one Almighty by reason of the indivisible omnipotence; yet so that, when we inquire regarding each singly, it is said that each is God and Almighty; and, when we speak of all together, it is said that there are not three Gods, nor three Almighties, but one God Almighty; so great is the indivisible unity of these Three, which requires that it be so stated.”

We see that Augustine agrees with the Scripture. He refers to **John 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** The same was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And of the Son’s equality with the Father, we read in **Philippians 2 (KJV):5** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: **6** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: **7** But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: **8** And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. **9** Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: **10** That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; **11** And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Augustine continues, as he says, “But, whether the Holy Spirit of the Father, and of the Son, who are both good, can be with propriety called the goodness of both, because He is common to both, I do not presume to determine hastily. Nevertheless, I would have less hesitation in saying that He is the holiness of both, not as if He were a divine attribute merely, but Himself also the divine substance, and the third person in the Trinity. I am the rather emboldened to make this statement, because, though the Father is a spirit, and the Son a spirit, and the Father holy, and the Son holy, yet the third person is distinctively called the Holy Spirit, as if He were the substantial holiness consubstantial with the other two. But if the divine goodness is nothing else than the divine holiness, then certainly it is a reasonable studiousness, and not presumptuous intrusion, to inquire whether the same Trinity be not hinted at in an enigmatical mode of speech, by which our inquiry is stimulated, when it is written who made each creature, and by what means, and why. For it is the Father of the Word who said, Let there be. And that which was made when He spoke was certainly made by means of the Word. And by the words, “God saw that it was good,” it is sufficiently intimated that God made what was made not from any necessity, nor for the sake of supplying any want, but solely from His own goodness, i.e., because it was good. And this is stated after the creation had taken place, that there might be no doubt that the thing made satisfied the goodness on account of which it was made. And if we are right in understanding; that this goodness is the Holy Spirit, then the whole Trinity is revealed to us in the creation. In this, too, is the origin, the enlightenment, the blessedness of the holy city which is above among the holy angels. For if we inquire whence it is, God created it; or whence its wisdom, God illumined it; or whence its blessedness, God is its bliss. It has its form by subsisting in Him; its enlightenment by contemplating Him; its joy by

abiding in Him. It is; it sees; it loves. In God's eternity is its life; in God's truth its light; in God's goodness its joy."

Now that the Holy Spirit is God, we have Peter's words in **Acts 5 (KJV)**:1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

Ananias lied to the Holy Ghost in verse 3. He lied not to men but to God in verse 4. He lied to a person.

Now the easiest way to see the trinity is in **John 14 (KJV)**:8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? 10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

The Father and the Spirit cannot be seen, but they can be seen working through the Son. The Father decides, the Son executes, the Holy Spirit brings to completion. And so it is as Augustine has said, that "this whole is a Trinity by reason of the individuality of the persons, and one God by reason of the indivisible divine substance, as also one Almighty by reason of the indivisible omnipotence; yet so that, when we inquire regarding each singly, it is said that each is God and Almighty; and, when we speak of all together, it is said that there are not three Gods, nor three Almighties, but one God Almighty".

Now man is made in the image of God as we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV)**:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

And so man is composed of three parts as we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV)**:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our spirit is where we connect with God. Our spirit gives us God consciousness. Our soul is composed of heart, which is the center of our emotions, and mind, will, and conscience. This is where we connect with our fellow man. Our soul gives us consciousness of this world. Our flesh has five senses, touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight, which is how we connect with the physical world. Man is the simplest illustration of the trinity.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XI, Chapter 32, page 223-224**

Chapter 32.—Of the Opinion that the Angels Were Created Before the World.

But if some one oppose our opinion, and say that the holy angels are not referred to when it is said, “Let there be light, and there was light;” if he suppose or teach that some material light, then first created, was meant, and that the angels were created, not only before the firmament dividing the waters and named “the heaven,” but also before the time signified in the words, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;” if he allege that this phrase, “In the beginning,” does not mean that nothing was made before (for the angels were), but that God made all things by His Wisdom or Word, who is named in Scripture “the Beginning,” as He Himself, in the gospel, replied to the Jews when they asked Him who He was, that He was the Beginning; (John 8:25, Revelation 3:14)—I will not contest the point, chiefly because it gives me the liveliest satisfaction to find the Trinity celebrated in the very beginning of the book of Genesis. For having said “In the Beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” meaning that the Father made them in the Son (as the psalm testifies where it says, “How manifold are Thy works, O Lord! in Wisdom hast Thou made them all” (Psalm 104:24)), a little afterwards mention is fitly made of the Holy Spirit also. For, when it had been told us what kind of earth God created at first, or what the mass or matter was which God, under the name of “heaven and earth,” had provided for the construction of the world, as is told in the additional words, “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep,” then, for the sake of completing the mention of the Trinity, it is immediately added, “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” Let each one, then, take it as he pleases; for it is so profound a passage, that it may well suggest, for the exercise of the reader’s tact, many opinions, and none of them widely departing from the rule of faith. At the same time, let none doubt that the holy angels in their heavenly abodes are, though not, indeed, co-eternal with God, yet secure and certain of eternal and true felicity. To their company the Lord teaches that His little ones belong; and not only says, “They shall be equal to the angels of God,” (Matthew 22:30) but shows, too, what blessed contemplation the angels themselves enjoy, saying, “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 18:10)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But if some one oppose our opinion, and say that the holy angels are not referred to when it is said, “Let there be light, and there was light;” if he suppose or teach that some material light, then first created, was meant, and that the angels were created, not only before the firmament dividing the waters and named “the heaven,” but also before the time signified in the words, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;” if he allege that this phrase, “In the beginning,” does not mean that nothing was made before (for the angels were), but that God made all things by His Wisdom or Word, who is named in Scripture “the Beginning,” as He Himself, in the gospel, replied to the Jews when they asked Him who He was, that He was the Beginning; (John 8:25, Revelation 3:14)—I will not contest the point, chiefly because it gives me the liveliest satisfaction to find the Trinity celebrated in the very beginning of the book of Genesis.”

He refers in context to **John 8 (KJV):**24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. 25 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. 26 I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I



27 They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. 28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. 29 And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.

Jesus was not saying that He was “the Beginning,” but that he was the one who was sent by the Father, the one to come as the Scripture had prophesied, as we read in **Isaiah 9 (KJV):6** For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

And in **Isaiah 11 (KJV):1** And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: 2 And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; 3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: 4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. 5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

But Jesus is the beginning of the creation of God in **Revelation 3 (KJV):14** And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

And Augustine continues, “—I will not contest the point, chiefly because it gives me the liveliest satisfaction to find the Trinity celebrated in the very beginning of the book of Genesis. For having said “In the Beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” meaning that the Father made them in the Son (as the psalm testifies where it says, “How manifold are Thy works, O Lord! In Wisdom hast Thou made them all” (Psalm 104:24)), a little afterwards mention is fitly made of the Holy Spirit also.”

He refers to **Psalms 104 (KJV):24** O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

And to **Psalms 104 (KJV):30** Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

Augustine equates the Son with the word, that is, with Wisdom, in Psalm 104:24.

He continues, “For, when it had been told us what kind of earth God created at first, or what the mass or matter was which God, under the name of “heaven and earth,” had provided for the construction of the world, as is told in the additional words, “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep,” then, for the sake of completing the mention of the Trinity, it is immediately added, “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” Let each one, then, take it as he pleases; for it is so profound a passage, that it may well suggest, for the exercise of the reader’s tact, many opinions, and none of them widely departing from the rule of faith. At the same time, let none doubt that the holy angels in their

heavenly abodes are, though not, indeed, co-eternal with God, yet secure and certain of eternal and true felicity. To their company the Lord teaches that His little ones belong; and not only says, “They shall be equal to the angels of God,” (Matthew 22:30) but shows, too, what blessed contemplation the angels themselves enjoy, saying, “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 18:10)”

He refers to **Matthew 22 (KJV):30** For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

And to **Luke 20 (KJV):36** Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

And to **Matthew 18 (KJV):10** Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XX. Chapter V. 19, paragraph 3, page 132-133**

3. But the Catholic faith has it, that the works of the Father and of the Son are not separable. This is what I wish, if possible, to speak to you, beloved; but, according to those words of the Lord, “he that is able to receive it, let him receive it.” (Matthew 19:12) But he that is not able to receive it, let him not charge it on me, but on his own dullness; and let him turn to Him that opens the heart, that He may pour in what He freely giveth. And, lastly, if any one may not have understood, because I have not declared it as I ought to have declared it, let him excuse the weakness of man, and supplicate the divine goodness. For we have within a Master, Christ. Whatever ye are not able to receive through your ear and my mouth, turn ye in your heart to Him who both teacheth me what to speak, and distributeth to you in what measure He deigns. He who knows what to give, and to whom to give, will help him that seeketh, and open to him that knocketh. And if so be that He give not, let no one call himself forsaken. For it may be that He delays to give something, but He leaves none hungry. If, indeed, He give not at the hour, He is exercising the seeker, He is not scorning the suitor. Look ye, then, and give heed to what I wish to say, even if I should not be able to say it. The Catholic faith, confirmed by the Spirit of God in His saints, has this against all heretical perverseness, that the works of the Father and of the Son are inseparable. What is this that I have said? As the Father and the Son are inseparable, so also the works of the Father and of the Son are inseparable. How are the Father and the Son inseparable, since Himself said, “I and the Father are one?” (John 10:30) **Because the Father and the Son are not two Gods, but one God, the Word and He whose the Word is, One and the Only One, Father and Son bound together by charity, One God, and the Spirit of Charity also one, so that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is made the Trinity.** Therefore, not only of the Father and Son, but also of the Holy Spirit; as there is equality and inseparability of persons, so also the works are inseparable. I will tell you yet more plainly what is meant by “the works are inseparable.” The Catholic faith does not say that God the Father made something, and the Son made some other thing; but what the Father made, that also the Son made, that also the Holy Spirit made. For all things were made by the Word; when “He spoke and they were done,” it is by the Word they were done, by Christ they were done. For “in the

beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God: all things were made by Him.” If all things were made by Him, “God said, Let there be light, and there was light; in the Word He made, by the Word He made.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But the Catholic faith has it, that the works of the Father and of the Son are not separable. This is what I wish, if possible, to speak to you, beloved; but, according to those words of the Lord, “he that is able to receive it, let him receive it.” (Matthew 19:12)”

He refers to **Matthew 19 (KJV):12** For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

He continues, “But he that is not able to receive it, let him not charge it on me, but on his own dullness; and let him turn to Him that opens the heart, that He may pour in what He freely giveth. And, lastly, if any one may not have understood, because I have not declared it as I ought to have declared it, let him excuse the weakness of man, and supplicate the divine goodness. For we have within a Master, Christ. Whatever ye are not able to receive through your ear and my mouth, turn ye in your heart to Him who both teacheth me what to speak, and distributeth to you in what measure He deigns. He who knows what to give, and to whom to give, will help him that seeketh, and open to him that knocketh. And if so be that He give not, let no one call himself forsaken. For it may be that He delays to give something, but He leaves none hungry. If, indeed, He give not at the hour, He is exercising the seeker, He is not scorning the suitor. Look ye, then, and give heed to what I wish to say, even if I should not be able to say it. The Catholic faith, confirmed by the Spirit of God in His saints, has this against all heretical perverseness, that the works of the Father and of the Son are inseparable. What is this that I have said? As the Father and the Son are inseparable, so also the works of the Father and of the Son are inseparable. How are the Father and the Son inseparable, since Himself said, “I and the Father are one?” (John 10:30)”

He refers to **John 10 (KJV):30** I and my Father are one.

He continues, “**Because the Father and the Son are not two Gods, but one God, the Word and He whose the Word is, One and the Only One, Father and Son bound together by charity, One God, and the Spirit of Charity also one, so that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is made the Trinity.** Therefore, not only of the Father and Son, but also of the Holy Spirit; as there is equality and inseparability of persons, so also the works are inseparable. I will tell you yet more plainly what is meant by “the works are inseparable.” The Catholic faith does not say that God the Father made something, and the Son made some other thing; but what the Father made, that also the Son made, that also the Holy Spirit made. For all things were made by the Word; when “He spoke and they were done,” it is by the Word they were done, by Christ they were done. For “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God: all things were made by Him.””

He refers in context to **John 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

He concludes, “If all things were made by Him, “God said, Let there be light, and there

was light; in the Word He made, by the Word He made.”

He refers to **Genesis 1 (KJV):3** And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

Jesus is also referred to as God in **Romans 9 (KJV):5** Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

And the Holy Spirit is referred to as God in **Acts 5 (KJV):3** But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

The Father decides, the Son executes, and the Spirit brings to completion. There is one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And the unity, or inseparability of the working is revealed in **John 5 (KJV):19** Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. 20 For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate XXVIII. Chapter VII. 1–13, paragraph 1, page 178-179**

1. In this chapter of the Gospel, brethren, our Lord Jesus Christ has most especially commended Himself to our faith in respect of His humanity. For indeed He always keeps in view, both in His words and deeds, that He should be believed to be God and man: God who made us, man who sought us; with the Father, always God; with us, man in time. For He would not have sought man whom He had made if Himself had not become that which He had made. But remember this, and do not let it slip from your hearts, that Christ became man in such manner that He ceased not to be God. While remaining God, He who made man took manhood. While, therefore, as man He concealed Himself, He must not be thought to have lost His power, but only to have offered an example to our infirmity. For He was detained when He willed to be, and He was put to death when he willed to be. But since there were to be His members, that is, His faithful ones, who would not have that power which He, our God, had; by His being hid, by His concealing Himself as if He would not be put to death, He indicated that His members would do this, in which members He Himself in fact was. For Christ is not simply in the head and not in the body, but Christ whole is in the head and body. What, therefore, His members are, that He is; but what He is, it does not necessarily follow that His members are. For if His members were not Himself, He would not have said, “Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (Acts 9:4) For Saul was not persecuting Himself on earth, but His members, namely, His believers. He would not, however, say, my saints, my servants, or, in short, my brethren, which is more honorable; but, me, that is, my members, whose head I am.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “In this chapter of the Gospel, brethren, our Lord Jesus Christ has most especially commended Himself to our faith in respect of His humanity.”

He refers to John, chapter 7. He continues, “For indeed He always keeps in view, both in

His words and deeds, that He should be believed to be God and man: God who made us, man who sought us; with the Father, always God; with us, man in time. For He would not have sought man whom He had made if Himself had not become that which He had made. But remember this, and do not let it slip from your hearts, that Christ became man in such manner that He ceased not to be God. While remaining God, He who made man took manhood. While, therefore, as man He concealed Himself, He must not be thought to have lost His power, but only to have offered an example to our infirmity.”

And Augustine agrees with the Scripture as we read in **Hebrews 2 (KJV):14** Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17 Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

And in **Philippians 2 (KJV):5** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Augustine is clear in his testimony that Jesus Christ is Lord.

He continues, “For He was detained when He willed to be, and He was put to death when he willed to be. But since there were to be His members, that is, His faithful ones, who would not have that power which He, our God, had; by His being hid, by His concealing Himself as if He would not be put to death, He indicated that His members would do this, in which members He Himself in fact was. For Christ is not simply in the head and not in the body, but Christ whole is in the head and body. What, therefore, His members are, that He is; but what He is, it does not necessarily follow that His members are. For if His members were not Himself, He would not have said, “Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (Acts 9:4)”

He refers in context to **Acts 9 (KJV):3** And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

He continues, “For Saul was not persecuting Himself on earth, but His members, namely, His believers. He would not, however, say, my saints, my servants, or, in short, my brethren, which is more honorable; but, me, that is, my members, whose head I am.”

And He is the head of the body, the Church.



2. Whatever, then, you have heard stated in lowly manner concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, think of that economy by which He assumed flesh; but whatever you hear, or read, stated in the Gospel concerning Him that is sublime and high above all creatures, and divine, and equal and coeternal with the Father, be sure that this which you read appertains to the form of God, not to the form of the servant. For if you hold this rule, you who can understand it (inasmuch as you are not all able to understand it, but you are all bound to trust it),—if, I say, you hold this rule, as men walking in the light, you will fight against the calumnies of heretical darkness without fear. For there have not been wanting those who, in reading the Gospel, followed only those testimonies that concern the humility of Christ, and have been deaf to those which have declared His divinity; deaf for this reason, that they may be full of evil words. There have likewise been some, who, giving heed only to those which speak of the excellency of the Lord, even though they have read of His mercy in becoming man for our sakes, have not believed the testimonies, but accounted them false and invented by men; contending that our Lord Jesus Christ was only God, not also man. Some in this way, some in that: both in error. **But the Catholic faith, holding from both the truths which each holds and preaching the truth which each believes, has both understood that Christ is God and also believed Him to be man: for each is written and each is true. Shouldst thou assert that Christ is only God, thou deniest the medicine whereby thou wast healed: shouldst thou assert that Christ is only man, thou deniest the power whereby thou wast created. Hold therefore both. O faithful soul and Catholic heart, hold both, believe both, faithfully confess both. Christ is both God and also man. How is Christ God? Equal with the Father, one with the Father. How is Christ man? Born of a virgin, taking upon Himself mortality from man, but not taking iniquity.**

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine agrees with the Scripture. Christ is both God and also man, as we read in **John 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And in **John 1 (KJV):14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XCIX. Chapter XVI. 13, paragraphs 1-2, page 380-381**

1. What is this that the Lord said of the Holy Spirit, when promising that He would come and teach His disciples all truth, or guide them into all truth: “For He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak”? For this is similar to what He said of Himself, “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge.” But when expounding that, we said that it might be taken as referring to His human nature; so that He seemed as the Son to announce beforehand that His own obedience, whereby He became obedient even unto the death of the cross, (Philippians 2:8) would have its place also in the judgment, when He shall judge the quick and the dead; for He shall do so for the very reason that He is the Son of man. Wherefore He said, “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the

Son;” for in the judgment He will appear, not in the form of God, wherein He is equal to the Father, and cannot be seen by the wicked, but in the form of man, in which He was made even a little lower than the angels; although then He will come in glory, and not in His original humility, yet in a way that will be conspicuous both to the good and to the bad. Hence He says further: “And He hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.” In these words of His own it is made clear that it is not that form that will be presented in the judgment, wherein He was when He thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but that which He assumed when He made Himself of no reputation. For He emptied Himself in assuming the form of a servant; (Philippians 2:6-7) in which, also, for the purpose of executing judgment, He seems to have commended His obedience, when He said, “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge.” For Adam, by whose disobedience, as that of one man, many were made sinners, did not judge as he heard; for he prevaricated what he heard, and of his own self did the evil that he did; for he did not the will of God, but his own: while this latter, by whose obedience, as that also of one man, many are made righteous, (Romans 5:19) was not only obedient even unto the death of the cross, in respect of which He was judged as alive from the dead; but promised also that He would be showing obedience in the very judgment itself, wherein He is yet to act as judge of the quick and the dead, when He said, “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge.” But when it is said of the Holy Spirit, “For He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak,” shall we dare to harbor the notion that it was so said in reference to any human nature of His, or the assumption of any creature form? For it was the Son alone in the Trinity who assumed the form of a servant, a form which in His case was fitted into the unity of His person, or, in other words, that the one person, Jesus Christ, should be the Son of God and the Son of man; and so that we should be kept from preaching a quaternity instead of the Trinity, which God forbid that we should do. And it is on account of this one personality as consisting of two substances, the divine and the human, that He sometimes speaks in accordance with that wherein He is God, as when He says, “I and my Father are one;” and sometimes in accordance with His manhood, as in the words, “For the Father is greater than I;” in accordance with which also we have understood those words of His that are at present under discussion, “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge.” **But in reference to the person of the Holy Spirit, a considerable difficulty arises how we are to understand the words, “For He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak,” since in it there exists not one substance of Godhead and another of humanity, or of any other creature whatsoever.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “What is this that the Lord said of the Holy Spirit, when promising that He would come and teach His disciples all truth, or guide them into all truth: “For He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak”?”

He refers to **John 16 (KJV):13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

He continues, “For this is similar to what He said of Himself, “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge.””

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):30** I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and

my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

He continues, “But when expounding that, we said that it might be taken as referring to His human nature; so that He seemed as the Son to announce beforehand that His own obedience, whereby He became obedient even unto the death of the cross, (Philippians 2:8) would have its place also in the judgment, when He shall judge the quick and the dead; for He shall do so for the very reason that He is the Son of man.”

He refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):8** And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

And to **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):1** I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

And to **1 Peter 4 (KJV):5** Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

He continues, “Wherefore He said, “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son;””

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):22** For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

He continues, “for in the judgment He will appear, not in the form of God, wherein He is equal to the Father, and cannot be seen by the wicked, but in the form of man, in which He was made even a little lower than the angels; although then He will come in glory, and not in His original humility, yet in a way that will be conspicuous both to the good and to the bad. Hence He says further: “And He hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.””

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):27** And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

He continues, “In these words of His own it is made clear that it is not that form that will be presented in the judgment, wherein He was when He thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but that which He assumed when He made Himself of no reputation. For He emptied Himself in assuming the form of a servant; (Philippians 2:6-7)”

He refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):6** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

He continues, “in which, also, for the purpose of executing judgment, He seems to have commended His obedience, when He said, “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge.” For Adam, by whose disobedience, as that of one man, many were made sinners, did not judge as he heard; for he prevaricated what he heard, and of his own self did the evil that he did; for he did not the will of God, but his own: while this latter, by whose obedience, as that also of one man, many are made righteous, (Romans 5:19) was not only obedient even unto the death of the cross, in respect of which He was judged as alive from the dead; but promised also that He would be showing obedience in the very judgment itself, wherein He is yet to act as judge of the quick and the dead, when He said, “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge.””

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):19** For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

The word “prevaricated” means “to deviate from the truth : EQUIVOCATE... generally implies that someone is deliberately using words that have more than one meaning as a way to conceal the truth”. (**Merriam Webster**)

Augustine continues, “But when it is said of the Holy Spirit, “For He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak,” shall we dare to harbor the notion that it was so said in reference to any human nature of His, or the assumption of any creature form? For it was the Son alone in the Trinity who assumed the form of a servant, a form which in His case was fitted into the unity of His person, or, in other words, that the one person, Jesus Christ, should be the Son of God and the Son of man; and so that we should be kept from preaching a quaternity instead of the Trinity, which God forbid that we should do. And it is on account of this one personality as consisting of two substances, the divine and the human, that He sometimes speaks in accordance with that wherein He is God, as when He says, “I and my Father are one;” and sometimes in accordance with His manhood, as in the words, “For the Father is greater than I;” in accordance with which also we have understood those words of His that are at present under discussion, “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge.””

He refers to **John 10 (KJV):30** I and my Father are one.

And to **John 14 (KJV):28** Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

And again to **John 5 (KJV):30** I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

He concludes, “But in reference to the person of the Holy Spirit, a considerable difficulty arises how we are to understand the words, “For He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak;” since in it there exists not one substance of Godhead and another of humanity, or of any other creature whatsoever.”

He refers again to **John 16 (KJV):13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Let us continue to read his thoughts in the next paragraph.

2. For the fact that the Holy Spirit appeared in bodily form, as a dove, (Matthew 3:16) was a sight begun and ended at the time: just as also, when He descended upon the disciples, there were seen upon them cloven tongues as of fire, which also sat upon every one of them. (Acts 2:3) Any one, therefore, who says that the dove was connected with the Holy Spirit in the unity of His person, as that it and Godhead (for the Holy Spirit is God) should go to constitute the one person of the Holy Spirit, is compelled also to affirm the same thing of that fire; and so may understand that he ought to assert neither. For those things in regard to the substance of God, which needed at any time to be represented in some outward way, and so exhibited themselves to men’s bodily senses, and then passed away, were formed for the moment by divine power from the subservient creation, and not from the dominant nature itself; which, ever abiding the same, excites into action whatever it pleases; and, itself unchangeable, changes all things else at its pleasure. In the same way also did that voice from the cloud actually strike

upon the bodily ears, and on that bodily sense which is called the hearing” (Luke 9:35) and yet in no way are we to believe that the Word of God, which is the only-begotten Son, is defined, because He is called the Word, by syllables and sounds: for when a sermon is in course of delivery, all the sounds cannot be pronounced simultaneously; but the various individual sounds come, as it were, in their own order to the birth, and succeed those which are dying away, so that all that we have to say is completed only by the last syllable. Very different from this, surely, is the way in which the Father speaketh to the Son, that is to say, God to God, His Word. But this, so far as it can be understood by man, is a matter for the understanding of those who are fitted for the reception of solid food, and not of milk. Since, therefore, the Holy Spirit became not man by any assumption of humanity, and became not an angel by any assumption of angelic nature, and as little entered into the creature-state by the assumption of any creature form whatever, how, in regard to Him, are we to understand those words of our Lord, “For He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak”? A difficult question; yea, too difficult. May the Spirit Himself be present, that, at least up to the measure of our power of thinking on such a subject, we may be able to express our thoughts, and that these, according to the little measure of my ability, may find entrance into your understanding.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “For the fact that the Holy Spirit appeared in bodily form, as a dove, (Matthew 3:16) was a sight begun and ended at the time: just as also, when He descended upon the disciples, there were seen upon them cloven tongues as of fire, which also sat upon every one of them. (Acts 2:3)”

He refers to **Matthew 3 (KJV):16** And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

And in context to **Acts 2 (KJV):3** And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

He continues, “Any one, therefore, who says that the dove was connected with the Holy Spirit in the unity of His person, as that it and Godhead (for the Holy Spirit is God) should go to constitute the one person of the Holy Spirit, is compelled also to affirm the same thing of that fire; and so may understand that he ought to assert neither.”

In Matthew 3:16 above, John the Baptist “saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him”. The Spirit of God descended “like a dove”, not an actual dove. The Holy Spirit is God as we read in **Acts 5 (KJV):3** But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

He continues, “For those things in regard to the substance of God, which needed at any time to be represented in some outward way, and so exhibited themselves to men’s bodily senses, and then passed away, were formed for the moment by divine power from the subservient creation, and not from the dominant nature itself; which, ever abiding the same, excites into action whatever it pleases; and, itself unchangeable, changes all things else at its pleasure. In the same way also did that voice from the cloud actually strike upon the bodily ears, and on that bodily sense which is called the hearing” (Luke 9:35) and yet in no way are we



to believe that the Word of God, which is the only-begotten Son, is defined, because He is called the Word, by syllables and sounds: for when a sermon is in course of delivery, all the sounds cannot be pronounced simultaneously; but the various individual sounds come, as it were, in their own order to the birth, and succeed those which are dying away, so that all that we have to say is completed only by the last syllable.”

He refers to **Luke 9 (KJV):35** And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

And to **John 1 (KJV):14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

He continues, “Very different from this, surely, is the way in which the Father speaketh to the Son, that is to say, God to God, His Word. But this, so far as it can be understood by man, is a matter for the understanding of those who are fitted for the reception of solid food, and not of milk. Since, therefore, the Holy Spirit became not man by any assumption of humanity, and became not an angel by any assumption of angelic nature, and as little entered into the creature-state by the assumption of any creature form whatever, how, in regard to Him, are we to understand those words of our Lord, “For He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak”?”

He refers to **John 16 (KJV):13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

He concludes, “A difficult question; yea, too difficult. May the Spirit Himself be present, that, at least up to the measure of our power of thinking on such a subject, we may be able to express our thoughts, and that these, according to the little measure of my ability, may find entrance into your understanding.”

A similar thing is spoken by Jesus of Himself as we read in **John 14 (KJV):10** Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate XCIX. Chapter XVI. 13, paragraph 5-7, page 383-384**

5. And be not disturbed by the fact that the verb is put in the future tense. For it is not said, whatsoever He hath heard, or, whatsoever He heareth; but, “whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak.” For such hearing is everlasting, because the knowing is everlasting. But in the case of what is eternal, without beginning and without end, in whatever tense the verb is put, whether in the past, or present, or future, there is no falsehood thereby implied. For although to that immutable and ineffable nature, there is no proper application of Was and Will be, but only Is: for that nature alone *is* in truth, because incapable of change; and to it therefore was it exclusively suited to say, “I Am That I Am,” and “Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, He Who Is hath sent me unto you:” (Exodus 3:14) yet on account of the changeableness of the times amid which our mortal and changeable life is spent, there is nothing false in our saying, both it was, and will be, and is. It was in past, it is in present, it will be in future ages. It was, because it never was wanting; it will be, because it will never be wanting; it is, because it always is. For it has not, like one who no longer survives, died with the past; nor, like one who

abideth not, is it gliding away with the present; nor, as one who had no previous existence, will it rise up with the future. Accordingly, as our human manner of speaking varies with the revolutions of time, He, who through all times was not, is not, and will not by any possibility be found wanting, may correctly be spoken of in any tense whatever of a verb. The Holy Spirit, therefore, is always hearing, because He always knows: *ergo*, He both knew, and knows, and will know; and in the same way He both heard, and hears, and will hear; for, as we have already said, to Him hearing is one with knowing, and knowing with Him is one with being. From Him, therefore, He heard, and hears, and will hear, of whom He is; and of Him He is, from whom He proceeds.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “And be not disturbed by the fact that the verb is put in the future tense. For it is not said, whatsoever He hath heard, or, whatsoever He heareth; but, “whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak.” For such hearing is everlasting, because the knowing is everlasting.”

He refers to **John 16 (KJV):13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

He continues, “But in the case of what is eternal, without beginning and without end, in whatever tense the verb is put, whether in the past, or present, or future, there is no falsehood thereby implied. For although to that immutable and ineffable nature, there is no proper application of Was and Will be, but only Is: for that nature alone is in truth, because incapable of change; and to it therefore was it exclusively suited to say, “I Am That I Am,” and “Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, He Who Is hath sent me unto you:” (Exodus 3:14) yet on account of the changeableness of the times amid which our mortal and changeable life is spent, there is nothing false in our saying, both it was, and will be, and is.”

He refers to **Exodus 3 (KJV):14** And God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you.

He continues, “It was in past, it is in present, it will be in future ages. It was, because it never was wanting; it will be, because it will never be wanting; it is, because it always is. For it has not, like one who no longer survives, died with the past; nor, like one who abideth not, is it gliding away with the present; nor, as one who had no previous existence, will it rise up with the future. Accordingly, as our human manner of speaking varies with the revolutions of time, He, who through all times was not, is not, and will not by any possibility be found wanting, may correctly be spoken of in any tense whatever of a verb. The Holy Spirit, therefore, is always hearing, because He always knows: *ergo*, He both knew, and knows, and will know; and in the same way He both heard, and hears, and will hear; for, as we have already said, to Him hearing is one with knowing, and knowing with Him is one with being. From Him, therefore, He heard, and hears, and will hear, of whom He is; and of Him He is, from whom He proceeds.”

So the Holy Spirit is eternal as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):14** How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

The Father decides, the Son executes the Father’s decision, and the Holy Spirit brings it to completion.

Let us continue reading in the next paragraph.

6. Some one may here inquire whether the Holy Spirit proceedeth also from the Son. For the Son is Son of the Father alone, and the Father is Father of the Son alone; but the Holy Spirit is not the Spirit of one of them, but of both. You have the Lord Himself saying, “For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you;” (Matthew 10:20) and you have the apostle, “God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts.” (Galatians 4:6) Are there, then, two, the one of the Father, the other of the Son? Certainly not. For there is “one body,” he said, when referring to the Church; and presently added, “and one Spirit.” And mark how he there makes up the Trinity. “As ye are called,” he says, “in one hope of your calling.” “One Lord,” where he certainly meant Christ to be understood; but it remained that he should also name the Father: and accordingly there follows, “One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Ephesians 4:4-6) And since, then, just as there is one Father, and one Lord, namely, the Son, so also there is one Spirit; He is doubtless of both: especially as Christ Jesus Himself saith, “The Spirit of your Father that dwelleth in you;” and the apostle declares, “God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.” You have the same apostle saying in another place, “But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you,” where he certainly intended the Spirit of the Father to be understood; of whom, however, he says in another place, “But if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” (Romans 8:11,9) And many other testimonies there are, which plainly show that He, who in the Trinity is styled the Holy Spirit, is the Spirit both of the Father and of the Son.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Some one may here inquire whether the Holy Spirit proceedeth also from the Son. For the Son is Son of the Father alone, and the Father is Father of the Son alone; but the Holy Spirit is not the Spirit of one of them, but of both. You have the Lord Himself saying, “For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you;” (Matthew 10:20) and you have the apostle, “God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts.” (Galatians 4:6)”

He refers to **Matthew 10 (KJV):20** For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

And to **Galatians 4 (KJV):6** And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

He continues, “Are there, then, two, the one of the Father, the other of the Son? Certainly not. For there is “one body,” he said, when referring to the Church; and presently added, “and one Spirit.” And mark how he there makes up the Trinity. “As ye are called,” he says, “in one hope of your calling.” “One Lord,” where he certainly meant Christ to be understood; but it remained that he should also name the Father: and accordingly there follows, “One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Ephesians 4:4-6)”

He refers to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):4** There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; **5** One Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

He continues, “And since, then, just as there is one Father, and one Lord, namely, the Son, so also there is one Spirit; He is doubtless of both: especially as Christ Jesus Himself saith,

“The Spirit of your Father that dwelleth in you;” and the apostle declares, “God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.” You have the same apostle saying in another place, “But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you,” where he certainly intended the Spirit of the Father to be understood; of whom, however, he says in another place, “But if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” (Romans 8:11,9)”

He refers in context to **Romans 8 (KJV):9** But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

He continues, “And many other testimonies there are, which plainly show that He, who in the Trinity is styled the Holy Spirit, is the Spirit both of the Father and of the Son.”

Augustine has done well to explain the Trinity here. Let us continue to read in the next paragraph.

7. And for no other reason, I suppose, is He called in a peculiar way the Spirit; since though asked concerning each person in His turn, we cannot but admit that the Father and the Son are each of them a Spirit; for God is a Spirit, (John 4:24) that is, God is not carnal, but spiritual. By the name, therefore, which they each also hold in common, it was requisite that He should be distinctly called, who is not the one nor the other of them, but in whom what is common to both becomes apparent. Why, then, should we not believe that the Holy Spirit proceedeth also from the Son, seeing that He is likewise the Spirit of the Son? For did He not so proceed, He could not, when showing Himself to His disciples after the resurrection, have breathed upon them, and said, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit.” (John 20:22) For what else was signified by such a breathing upon them, but that from Him also the Holy Spirit proceedeth? And of the same character also are His words regarding the woman that suffered from the bloody flux: “Some one hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.” (Luke 8:46) For that the Holy Spirit is also designated by the name of virtue, is both clear from the passage where the angel, in reply to Mary’s question, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” said, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power [virtue] of the highest shall overshadow thee;” (Luke 1:34-35) and our Lord Himself when giving His disciples the promise of the Spirit, said, “But tarry ye in the city, until ye be endued with power [virtue] from on high;” (Luke 24:49) and on another occasion, “Ye shall receive the power [virtue] of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me.” (Acts 1:8) It is of this virtue that we are to believe, that the evangelist says, “Virtue went out of Him, and healed them all.” (Luke 6:19)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “And for no other reason, I suppose, is He called in a peculiar way the Spirit; since though asked concerning each person in His turn, we cannot but admit that the Father and the Son are each of them a Spirit; for God is a Spirit, (John 4:24) that is, God is not carnal, but spiritual.”

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):24** God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

He continues, “By the name, therefore, which they each also hold in common, it was requisite that He should be distinctly called, who is not the one nor the other of them, but in whom what is common to both becomes apparent. Why, then, should we not believe that the Holy Spirit proceedeth also from the Son, seeing that He is likewise the Spirit of the Son? For did He not so proceed, He could not, when showing Himself to His disciples after the resurrection, have breathed upon them, and said, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit.” (John 20:22)”

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):22** And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

He continues, “For what else was signified by such a breathing upon them, but that from Him also the Holy Spirit proceedeth? And of the same character also are His words regarding the woman that suffered from the bloody flux: “Some one hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.” (Luke 8:46)”

He refers to **Luke 8 (KJV):46** And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

He continues, “For that the Holy Spirit is also designated by the name of virtue, is both clear from the passage where the angel, in reply to Mary’s question, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” said, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power [virtue] of the highest shall overshadow thee;” (Luke 1:34-35) and our Lord Himself when giving His disciples the promise of the Spirit, said, “But tarry ye in the city, until ye be endued with power [virtue] from on high;” (Luke 24:49) and on another occasion, “Ye shall receive the power [virtue] of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me.” (Acts 1:8) It is of this virtue that we are to believe, that the evangelist says, “Virtue went out of Him, and healed them all.” (Luke 6:19)”

He refers to **Luke 1 (KJV):34** Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

And to **Luke 24 (KJV):49** And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

And to **Acts 1 (KJV):8** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

And to **Luke 6 (KJV):19** And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

The word “virtue” in the Greek is **δύναμις** (pronounced dü'-nä-mēs), and is “from G1410; force (literally or figuratively); specially, miraculous power (usually by implication, a miracle itself):—ability, abundance, meaning, might(-ily, -y, -y deed), (worker of) miracle(-s), power, strength, violence, mighty (wonderful) work.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1411.**

The **King James Version** translates **Strong’s** G1411 in the following manner: power (77x), mighty work (11x), strength (7x), miracle (7x), might (4x), virtue (3x), mighty (2x), miscellaneous (9x).

Clearly Augustine was influenced here by the **Latin Vulgate** translation of Jerome, for in all of the verses above, Jerome translates the Greek word **δύναμις** (pronounced dü'-nä-mēs) by



the Latin word, **virtus (virtue)**.

The Greek word **δύναμις** (pronounced dü'-nä-mēs) comes from the Greek word **δύναμαι** (pronounced dü'-nä-mī), which is “of uncertain affinity; to be able or possible:—be able, can (do, + -not), could, may, might, be possible, be of power.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1410.**

The **New American Standard Bible** translates the Greek word **δύναμις** (pronounced dü'-nä-mēs) as “power” in **Luke 6 (NASB):19** And all the people were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all.

And there is another Greek word, **ἀρετή** (pronounced ä-re-tā') that is translated “virtue” in 2 Peter 1:3, and means “from the same as G730; properly, manliness (valor), i.e. excellence (intrinsic or attributed):—praise, virtue.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G703.**

And we read this as in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):3** According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate CII. Chapter XVI. 23–28, paragraph 6, page 391**

6. “And ye have believed,” He adds, “that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father.” Clearly we have believed. For surely it ought not to be accounted a thing incredible because of this, that in coming to the world He came forth in such a sense from the Father that He did not leave the Father behind; and that, on leaving the world, He goes to the Father in such a sense that He does not actually forsake the world. For He came forth from the Father because He is of the Father; and He came into the world, in showing to the world His bodily form, which He had received of the Virgin. He left the world by a bodily withdrawal, He proceeded to the Father by His ascension as man, but He forsook not the world in the ruling activity of His presence.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““And ye have believed,” He adds, “that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father.””

He refers to **John 16 (KJV):27** For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. 28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

He continues, “Clearly we have believed. For surely it ought not to be accounted a thing incredible because of this, that in coming to the world He came forth in such a sense from the Father that He did not leave the Father behind; and that, on leaving the world, He goes to the Father in such a sense that He does not actually forsake the world. For He came forth from the Father because He is of the Father; and He came into the world, in showing to the world His bodily form, which He had received of the Virgin. He left the world by a bodily withdrawal, He proceeded to the Father by His ascension as man, but He forsook not the world in the ruling activity of His presence.”

And His ascension is noted in **Acts 1 (KJV):9** And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Augustine is clear in his understanding of the Trinity, and he is very helpful to our understanding in his writing.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine  
On the Psalms, Psalm LXIX, paragraph 5, page 301-302**

5. God is a sort of substance: for that which is no substance, is nothing at all. To be a substance then is to be something. Whence also in the Catholic Faith against the poisons of certain heretics thus we are builded up, so that we say, Father and Son and Holy Spirit are of one substance. What is, of one substance? For example, if gold is the Father, gold is also the Son, gold also the Holy Spirit. Whatever the Father is because He is God, the same is the Son, the same the Holy Spirit. But when He is the Father, this is not what He is. For Father He is called not in reference to Himself, but in reference to the Son: but in reference to Himself God He is called. Therefore in that He is God, by the same He is a substance. And because of the same substance the Son is, without doubt the Son also is God. But yet in that He is Father, because it is not the name of the substance, but is referred to the Son; we do not say that the Son is Father in the same manner as we say the Son is God. Thou askest what the Father is; we answer, God. Thou askest what is the Father and the Son: we answer, God. If questioned of the Father alone, answer thou God: if questioned of both, not Gods, but God, answer thou. We do not reply as in the case of men, when thou inquirest what is father Abraham, we answer a man; the substance of him serveth for answer: thou inquirest what is his son Isaac, we answer, a man; of the same substance are Abraham and Isaac: thou inquirest what is Abraham and Isaac, we answer not man, but men. Not so in things divine. For so great in this case is the fellowship of substance, that of equality it alloweth, plurality alloweth not. If then it shall have been said to thee, when thou tellest me that the Son is the same as the Father, in fact the Son also is the Father; answer thou, according to the substance I have told thee that the Son is the same as the Father, not according to that term which is used in reference to something else. For in reference to Himself He is called God, in reference to the Father is called Son. And again, the Father in reference to Himself is called God, in reference to the Son He is called Father. The Father as He is called in reference to the Son, is not the Son: the Son as He is called in reference to the Father, is not the Father: what the Father is called in reference to Himself and the Son in reference to Himself, the same is Father and Son, that is, God. What is then, “there is no substance”? After this interpretation of substance, how shall we be able to understand this passage of the Psalm, “Fixed I am in the clay of the deep, and there is no substance”? God made man, (Genesis 1:27) He made substance; and O that he had continued in that which God made Him! If man had continued in that which God made him, in him would not have been *fixed* He whom God begot. But moreover because through iniquity man fell from the substance wherein he was made (Genesis 3:6) (for iniquity itself is no substance; for iniquity is not a nature which

God formed, but a perverseness which man made); the Son of God came to the clay of the deep, and was fixed; and that was no substance wherein He was fixed, because in the iniquity of them He was fixed. "All things by Him were made, and without Him there was made nothing." (John 1:3) All natures by Him were made, iniquity by Him was not made, because iniquity was not made. Those substances by Him were made, which praise Him. The whole creation praising God is commemorated by the three children in the furnace, (Daniel 3) and from things earthly to things heavenly, or from things heavenly to things earthly reacheth the hymn of them praising God. Not that all these things have sense to praise; but because all things being well meditated upon, do beget praise, and the heart by considering creation is fulfilled to overflowing with a hymn to the Creator. All things do praise God, but only the things which God hath made. Do ye observe in that hymn that covetousness praiseth God? There even the serpent praiseth God, covetousness praiseth not. For all creeping things are there named in the praise of God: there are named all creeping things; but there are not there named any vices. For vices out of ourselves and out of our own will we have: and vices are not a substance. In these was fixed the Lord, when He suffered persecution: in the vice of the Jews, not in the substance of men which by Him was made.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "God is a sort of substance: for that which is no substance, is nothing at all. To be a substance then is to be something. Whence also in the Catholic Faith against the poisons of certain heretics thus we are builded up, so that we say, Father and Son and Holy Spirit are of one substance. What is, of one substance? For example, if gold is the Father, gold is also the Son, gold also the Holy Spirit. Whatever the Father is because He is God, the same is the Son, the same the Holy Spirit. But when He is the Father, this is not what He is. For Father He is called not in reference to Himself, but in reference to the Son: but in reference to Himself God He is called. Therefore in that He is God, by the same He is a substance. And because of the same substance the Son is, without doubt the Son also is God. But yet in that He is Father, because it is not the name of the substance, but is referred to the Son; we do not say that the Son is Father in the same manner as we say the Son is God. Thou askest what the Father is; we answer, God. Thou askest what is the Father and the Son: we answer, God. If questioned of the Father alone, answer thou God: if questioned of both, not Gods, but God, answer thou."

Augustine is trying to explain the trinity. What he means is that there are three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in one God.

He continues, "We do not reply as in the case of men, when thou inquirest what is father Abraham, we answer a man; the substance of him serveth for answer: thou inquirest what is his son Isaac, we answer, a man; of the same substance are Abraham and Isaac: thou inquirest what is Abraham and Isaac, we answer not man, but men. Not so in things divine. For so great in this case is the fellowship of substance, that of equality it alloweth, plurality alloweth not. If then it shall have been said to thee, when thou tellest me that the Son is the same as the Father, in fact the Son also is the Father; answer thou, according to the substance I have told thee that the Son is the same as the Father, not according to that term which is used in reference to something else. For in reference to Himself He is called God, in reference to the Father is called Son. And again, the Father in reference to Himself is called God, in reference to the Son He is called Father. The Father as He is called in reference to the Son, is not the Son: the Son as He is called

in reference to the Father, is not the Father: what the Father is called in reference to Himself and the Son in reference to Himself, the same is Father and Son, that is, God. What is then, “there is no substance”? After this interpretation of substance, how shall we be able to understand this passage of the Psalm, “Fixed I am in the clay of the deep, and there is no substance”? God made man, (Genesis 1:27)”

He may refer to **Psalm 138 (Douay Rheims):15** My bone is not hidden from thee, which thou hast made in secret: and my substance in the lower parts of the earth.

And to **Genesis 1 (KJV):27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

He continues, “He made substance; and O that he had continued in that which God made Him! If man had continued in that which God made him, in him would not have been fixed He whom God begot. But moreover because through iniquity man fell from the substance wherein he was made (Genesis 3:6) (for iniquity itself is no substance; for iniquity is not a nature which God formed, but a perverseness which man made); the Son of God came to the clay of the deep, and was fixed; and that was no substance wherein He was fixed, because in the iniquity of them He was fixed.”

He refers to **Genesis 3 (KJV):6** And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

He continues, ““All things by Him were made, and without Him there was made nothing.” (John 1:3)”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):3** All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

He continues, “All natures by Him were made, iniquity by Him was not made, because iniquity was not made. Those substances by Him were made, which praise Him. The whole creation praising God is commemorated by the three children in the furnace, (Daniel 3) and from things earthly to things heavenly, or from things heavenly to things earthly reacheth the hymn of them praising God. Not that all these things have sense to praise; but because all things being well meditated upon, do beget praise, and the heart by considering creation is fulfilled to overflowing with a hymn to the Creator. All things do praise God, but only the things which God hath made. Do ye observe in that hymn that covetousness praiseth God? There even the serpent praiseth God, covetousness praiseth not. For all creeping things are there named in the praise of God: there are named all creeping things; but there are not there named any vices. For vices out of ourselves and out of our own will we have: and vices are not a substance. In these was fixed the Lord, when He suffered persecution: in the vice of the Jews, not in the substance of men which by Him was made.”

We could say that Augustine has a good understanding of the trinity. But it would have been easier for him if he would have understood more clearly the triunity of man. Man is body, soul, and spirit as we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And man is made in the image of God as we read again in **Genesis 1 (KJV):27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Jesus explains in **John 14 (KJV)**: 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. 7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. 8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? 10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

The Father is seen working through Jesus, the Son. The Holy Spirit is also seen in the works that He does through Jesus. The Father decides, the Son executes, and the Holy Spirit brings to completion.



# The Soul

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XIII, Chapter 24, page 259-260

Chapter 24.—How We Must Understand that Breathing of God by Which “The First Man Was Made a Living Soul,” And that Also by Which the Lord Conveyed His Spirit to His Disciples When He Said, “Receive Ye the Holy Ghost.”

Some have hastily supposed from the words, “God breathed into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7)” that a soul was not then first given to man, but that the soul already given was quickened by the Holy Ghost. They are encouraged in this supposition by the fact that the Lord Jesus after His resurrection breathed on His disciples, and said, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit.” (John 20:22) From this they suppose that the same thing was effected in either case, as if the evangelist had gone on to say, And they became living souls. **But if he had made this addition, we should only understand that the Spirit is in some way the life of souls,** and that without Him reasonable souls must be accounted dead, though their bodies seem to live before our eyes. But that this was not what happened when man was created, the very words of the narrative sufficiently show: “And God made man dust of the earth;” which some have thought to render more clearly by the words, “And God formed man of the clay of the earth.” For it had before been said that “there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground,” (Genesis 2:6) in order that the reference to clay, formed of this moisture and dust, might be understood. For on this verse there immediately follows the announcement, “And God created man dust of the earth;” so those Greek manuscripts have it from which this passage has been translated into Latin. But whether one prefers to read “created” or “formed,” where the Greek reads *ἔπλασεν* (pronounced ep-lasen), is of little importance; yet “formed” is the better rendering. But those who preferred “created” thought they thus avoided the ambiguity arising from the fact, that in the Latin language the usage obtains that those are said to form a thing who frame some feigned and fictitious thing. This man, then, who was created of the dust of the earth, or of the moistened dust or clay,—this “dust of the earth” (that I may use the express words of Scripture) was made, as the apostle teaches, an animated body when he received a soul. This man, he says, “was made a living soul;” that is, this fashioned dust was made a living soul.”

They say, Already he had a soul, else he would not be called a man; for man is not a body alone, nor a soul alone, but a being composed of both. This, indeed, is true, that the soul is not the whole man, but the better part of man; the body not the whole, but the inferior part of man; and that then, when both are joined, they receive the name of man, which, however, they do not severally lose even when we speak of them singly. For who is prohibited from saying, in colloquial usage, “That man is dead, and is now at rest or in torment,” though this can be spoken only of the soul; or “He is buried in such and such a place,” though this refers only to the body? Will they say that Scripture follows no such usage? **On the contrary, it so thoroughly adopts it, that even while a man is alive, and body and soul are united, it calls each of them singly by the name “man,” speaking of the soul as the “inward man,” and of the body as the**

“outward man,” (2 Corinthians 4:16) as if there were two men, though both together are indeed but one. But we must understand in what sense man is said to be in the image of God, and is yet dust, and to return to the dust. The former is spoken of the rational soul, which God by His breathing, or, to speak more appropriately, by His inspiration, conveyed to man, that is, to his body; but the latter refers to his body, which God formed of the dust, and to which a soul was given, that it might become a living body, that is, that man might become a living soul.

Wherefore, when our Lord breathed on His disciples, and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” He certainly wished it to be understood that the Holy Ghost was not only the Spirit of the Father, but of the only begotten Son Himself. For the same Spirit is, indeed, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, making with them the trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit, not a creature, but the Creator. For neither was that material breath which proceeded from the mouth of His flesh the very substance and nature of the Holy Spirit, but rather the intimation, as I said, that the Holy Spirit was common to the Father and to the Son; for they have not each a separate Spirit, but both one and the same. Now this Spirit is always spoken of in sacred Scripture by the Greek word **πνεῦμα** (pronounced pnoo-ma), as the Lord, too, named Him in the place cited when He gave Him to His disciples, and intimated the gift by the breathing of His lips; and there does not occur to me any place in the whole Scriptures where He is otherwise named. But in this passage where it is said, “And the Lord formed man dust of the earth, and breathed, or inspired, into his face the breath of life;” the Greek has not **πνεῦμα**, the usual word for the Holy Spirit, but **πνοή** (pronounced pno-eh), a word more frequently used of the creature than of the Creator; and for this reason some Latin interpreters have preferred to render it by “breath” rather than “spirit.” For this word occurs also in the Greek in Isaiah chapter vii, verse 16 where God says, “I have made all breath,” meaning, doubtless, all souls. Accordingly, this word **πνοή** is sometimes rendered “breath,” sometimes “spirit,” sometimes “inspiration,” sometimes “aspiration,” sometimes “soul,” even when it is used of God. **Πνεῦμα**, on the other hand, is uniformly rendered “spirit,” whether of man, of whom the apostle says, “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?” (1 Corinthians 2:11) or of beast, as in the book of Solomon, “Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?” (Ecclesiastes 3:21) or of that physical spirit which is called wind, for so the Psalmist calls it: “Fire and hail; snow and vapors; stormy wind;” (Psalm 148:8) or of the uncreated Creator Spirit, of whom the Lord said in the gospel, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” indicating the gift by the breathing of His mouth; and when He says, “Go ye and baptize all nations in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” (Matthew 28:19) words which very expressly and excellently commend the Trinity; and where it is said, “God is a Spirit;” (John 4:24) and in very many other places of the sacred writings. In all these quotations from Scripture we do not find in the Greek the word **πνοή** used, but **πνεῦμα**, and in the Latin, not *flatus*, but *spiritus*. Wherefore, referring again to that place where it is written, “He inspired,” or to speak more properly, “breathed into his face the breath of life,” even though the Greek had not used **πνοή** (as it has) but **πνεῦμα**, it would not on that account necessarily follow that the Creator Spirit, who in the Trinity is distinctively called the Holy Ghost, was meant, since, as has been said, it is plain that **πνεῦμα** is used not only of the Creator, but also of the creature.

But, say they, when the Scripture used the word “spirit,” (breath) it would not have added “of life” unless it meant us to understand the Holy Spirit; nor, when it said, “Man became a

soul,” would it also have inserted the word “living” unless that life of the soul were signified which is imparted to it from above by the gift of God. For, seeing that the soul by itself has a proper life of its own, what need, they ask, was there of adding living, save only to show that the life which is given it by the Holy Spirit was meant? What is this but to fight strenuously for their own conjectures, while they carelessly neglect the teaching of Scripture? Without troubling themselves much, they might have found in a preceding page of this very book of Genesis the words, “Let the earth bring forth the living soul,” (Genesis 1:24) when all the terrestrial animals were created. Then at a slight interval, but still in the same book, was it impossible for them to notice this verse, “All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died,” by which it was signified that all the animals which lived on the earth had perished in the deluge? **If, then, we find that Scripture is accustomed to speak both of the “living soul” and the “spirit of life” even in reference to beasts; and if in this place, where it is said, “All things which have the spirit of life,” the word  $\pi\nu\omicron\eta$ , not  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ , is used; why may we not say, What need was there to add “living,” since the soul cannot exist without being alive? or, What need to add “of life” after the word spirit?** But we understand that Scripture used these expressions in its ordinary style so long as it speaks of animals, that is, animated bodies, in which the soul serves as the residence of sensation; but when man is spoken of, we forget the ordinary and established usage of Scripture, whereby it signifies that man received a rational soul, which was not produced out of the waters and the earth like the other living creatures, but was created by the breath of God. Yet this creation was ordered that the human soul should live in an animal body, like those other animals of which the Scripture said, “Let the earth produce every living soul,” and regarding which it again says that in them is the breath of life, where the word  $\pi\nu\omicron\eta$  and not  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$  is used in the Greek, and where certainly not the Holy Spirit, but their spirit, is signified under that name.

**But, again, they object that breath is understood to have been emitted from the mouth of God; and if we believe that is the soul, we must consequently acknowledge it to be of the same substance, and equal to that wisdom, which says, “I come out of the mouth of the Most High.” (Ecclesiasticus 24:3) Wisdom, indeed, does not say it was breathed out of the mouth of God, but proceeded out of it.** But as we are able, when we breathe, to make a breath, not of our own human nature, but of the surrounding air, which we inhale and exhale as we draw our breath and breathe again, so almighty God was able to make breath, not of His own nature, nor of the creature beneath Him, but even of nothing; and this breath, when He communicated it to man’s body, He is most appropriately said to have breathed or inspired,—the Immaterial breathing it also immaterial, but the Immutable not also the immutable; for it was created, He uncreated. Yet that these persons who are forward to quote Scripture, and yet know not the usages of its language, may know that not only what is equal and consubstantial with God is said to proceed out of His mouth, let them hear or read what God says: “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.” (Revelation 3:16)

There is no ground, then, for our objecting, when the apostle so expressly distinguishes the animal body from the spiritual—that is to say, the body in which we now are from that in which we are to be. He says, “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the

earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” (1 Corinthians 15:44-49) Of all which words of his we have previously spoken. The animal body, accordingly, in which the apostle says that the first man Adam was made, was not so made that it could not die at all, but so that it should not die unless he should have sinned. **That body, indeed, which shall be made spiritual and immortal by the quickening Spirit shall not be able to die at all; as the soul has been created immortal, and therefore, although by sin it may be said to die, and does lose a certain life of its own, namely, the Spirit of God, by whom it was enabled to live wisely and blessedly, yet it does not cease living a kind of life, though a miserable, because it is immortal by creation.** So, too, the rebellious angels, though by sinning they did in a sense die, because they forsook God, the Fountain of life, which while they drank they were able to live wisely and well, yet they could not so die as to utterly cease living and feeling, for they are immortals by creation. And so, after the final judgment, they shall be hurled into the second death, and not even there be deprived of life or of sensation, but shall suffer torment. But those men who have been embraced by God’s grace, and are become the fellow-citizens of the holy angels who have continued in bliss, shall never more either sin or die, being endued with spiritual bodies; yet, being clothed with immortality, such as the angels enjoy, of which they cannot be divested even by sinning, the nature of their flesh shall continue the same, but all carnal corruption and unwieldiness shall be removed.

**There remains a question which must be discussed, and, by the help of the Lord God of truth, solved: If the motion of concupiscence in the unruly members of our first parents arose out of their sin, and only when the divine grace deserted them; and if it was on that occasion that their eyes were opened to see, or, more exactly, notice their nakedness, and that they covered their shame because the shameless motion of their members was not subject to their will,—how, then, would they have begotten children had they remained sinless as they were created? But as this book must be concluded, and so large a question cannot be summarily disposed of, we may relegate it to the following book, in which it will be more conveniently treated.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Some have hastily supposed from the words, “God breathed into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7)” that a soul was not then first given to man, but that the soul already given was quickened by the Holy Ghost. They are encouraged in this supposition by the fact that the Lord Jesus after His resurrection breathed on His disciples, and said, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit.” (John 20:22) From this they suppose that the same thing was effected in either case, as if the evangelist had gone on to say, And they became living souls. **But if he had made this addition, we should only understand that the Spirit is in some way the life of souls,** and that without Him reasonable souls must be accounted dead, though their bodies seem to live before our eyes. But that this was not what happened when man was created, the very words of the narrative sufficiently show: “And God made man dust of the earth;” which some have thought to render more clearly by the words, “And God formed man of the clay of the earth.”

He refers first to **Genesis 2 (KJV):7** And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

And then in context to **John 20 (KJV):21** Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

The disciples were already born again, for Jesus had said they were all clean but one in **John 13 (KJV):10** Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

So in John 20:21, Jesus is confirming His words previously spoken that He would send the Holy Spirit who would empower them. And after these words, He also confirmed His promise just before He ascended in **Acts 1 (KJV):4** And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

And what is it to be baptized, but to be immersed. So the disciples had been born of the Spirit of God, and had the Spirit as the life principle of their spirits because of their faith. But they were then also to be baptized with the Spirit a little later at Pentecost. So at the baptism with the Holy Spirit, they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Augustine continues, “For it had before been said that “there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground,” (Genesis 2:6) in order that the reference to clay, formed of this moisture and dust, might be understood. For on this verse there immediately follows the announcement, “And God created man dust of the earth;” so those Greek manuscripts have it from which this passage has been translated into Latin. But whether one prefers to read “created” or “formed,” where the Greek reads *ἐπλασεν*, is of little importance; yet “formed” is the better rendering.”

He refers in context to **Genesis 2 (KJV):6** But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground 7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Now the verse was originally written in Hebrew, and the word “formed” in Hebrew is *יָצַר* (pronounced yā·tsar’), “probably identical with H3334 (through the squeezing into shape); (compare H3331); to mould into a form; especially as a potter; figuratively, to determine (i.e. form a resolution):—× earthen, fashion, form, frame, make(-r), potter, purpose.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H3335.**

So however the Greek or the Latin have translated it is of no importance. The original was written in Hebrew. But he is correct as he says, “yet “formed” is the better rendering.”

He continues, “But those who preferred “created” thought they thus avoided the ambiguity arising from the fact, that in the Latin language the usage obtains that those are said to form a thing who frame some feigned and fictitious thing. This man, then, who was created of the dust of the earth, or of the moistened dust or clay,—this “dust of the earth” (that I may use the express words of Scripture) was made, as the apostle teaches, an animated body when he received a soul. This man, he says, “was made a living soul;” that is, this fashioned dust was made a living soul.”

We read again in **Genesis 2 (KJV):7** And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Man had no life before God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”. So man then “became a living soul”. The uniting of man’s spirit with his body makes man a living soul.



Augustine continues, “They say, Already he had a soul, else he would not be called a man; for man is not a body alone, nor a soul alone, but a being composed of both.”

Actually man is composed of body, soul, and spirit, as we shall see. Augustine continues, “This, indeed, is true, that the soul is not the whole man, but the better part of man; the body not the whole, but the inferior part of man; and that then, when both are joined, they receive the name of man, which, however, they do not severally lose even when we speak of them singly. For who is prohibited from saying, in colloquial usage, “That man is dead, and is now at rest or in torment,” though this can be spoken only of the soul; or “He is buried in such and such a place,” though this refers only to the body? Will they say that Scripture follows no such usage? **On the contrary, it so thoroughly adopts it, that even while a man is alive, and body and soul are united, it calls each of them singly by the name “man,” speaking of the soul as the “inward man,” and of the body as the “outward man,” (2 Corinthians 4:16) as if there were two men, though both together are indeed but one.**”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):16** For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

The inward man is the soul and the spirit of man. The outward man is the body of flesh. We will explain more later.

He continues, “But we must understand in what sense man is said to be in the image of God, and is yet dust, and to return to the dust. The former is spoken of the rational soul, which God by His breathing, or, to speak more appropriately, by His inspiration, conveyed to man, that is, to his body; but the latter refers to his body, which God formed of the dust, and to which a soul was given, that it might become a living body, that is, that man might become a living soul.”

He left out the spirit of man, but we will let him continue, **“Wherefore, when our Lord breathed on His disciples, and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” He certainly wished it to be understood that the Holy Ghost was not only the Spirit of the Father, but of the only begotten Son Himself. For the same Spirit is, indeed, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, making with them the trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit, not a creature, but the Creator.”**

We can agree with Augustine here.

He continues, “For neither was that material breath which proceeded from the mouth of His flesh the very substance and nature of the Holy Spirit, but rather the intimation, as I said, that the Holy Spirit was common to the Father and to the Son; for they have not each a separate Spirit, but both one and the same. Now this Spirit is always spoken of in sacred Scripture by the Greek word **πνεῦμα**, as the Lord, too, named Him in the place cited when He gave Him to His disciples, and intimated the gift by the breathing of His lips; and there does not occur to me any place in the whole Scriptures where He is otherwise named. But in this passage where it is said, “And the Lord formed man dust of the earth, and breathed, or inspired, into his face the breath of life;” the Greek has not **πνεῦμα**, the usual word for the Holy Spirit, but **πνοή**, a word more frequently used of the creature than of the Creator; and for this reason some Latin interpreters have preferred to render it by “breath” rather than “spirit.””

Again we must look to the Hebrew because it is the original language of the Old Testament. So in the Hebrew, the word “breathed” is **נָפַח** (pronounced *nâphach*, *naw-fakh*); a primitive root; to puff, in various applications (literally, to inflate, blow hard, scatter, kindle,

expire; figuratively, to disesteem):—blow, breath, give up, cause to lose (life), seething, snuff.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H5301.**

Augustine continues, “For this word occurs also in the Greek in Isaiah chapter vii, verse 16 where God says, “I have made all breath,” meaning, doubtless, all souls. Accordingly, this word **πνοή** is sometimes rendered “breath,” sometimes “spirit,” sometimes “inspiration,” sometimes “aspiration,” sometimes “soul,” even when it is used of God. **Πνεῦμα**, on the other hand, is uniformly rendered “spirit,” whether of man, of whom the apostle says, “For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?” (1 Corinthians 2:11)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):11** For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

He continues, “or of beast, as in the book of Solomon, “Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?” (Ecclesiastes 3:21)”

He refers to **Ecclesiastes 3 (KJV):21** Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

The word for “spirit” in Hebrew is **רוּחַ** (pronounced roo'-akh); from H7306; wind; by resemblance breath, i.e. a sensible (or even violent) exhalation; figuratively, life, anger, unsubstantiality; by extension, a region of the sky; by resemblance spirit, but only of a rational being (including its expression and functions):—air, anger, blast, breath, × cool, courage, mind, × quarter, × side, spirit(-ual), tempest, × vain, (whirl-) wind(-y). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H7307.**

He continues, “or of that physical spirit which is called wind, for so the Psalmist calls it: “Fire and hail; snow and vapors; stormy wind;” (Psalm 148:8)”

He refers to **Psalms 148 (KJV):8** Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word:

And the Hebrew word for “wind” here is **רוּחַ** (pronounced roo'-akh), the same Hebrew word in Ecclesiastes 3:21 translated “spirit”.

He continues, “or of the uncreated Creator Spirit, of whom the Lord said in the gospel, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” indicating the gift by the breathing of His mouth; and when He says, “Go ye and baptize all nations in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” (Matthew 28:19) words which very expressly and excellently commend the Trinity; and where it is said, “God is a Spirit;” (John 4:24) and in very many other places of the sacred writings.”

He refers to **Matthew 28 (KJV):19** Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

And to **John 4 (KJV):24** God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

He continues, “In all these quotations from Scripture we do not find in the Greek the word **πνοή** used, but **πνεῦμα**, and in the Latin, not *flatus*, but *spiritus*. Wherefore, referring again to that place where it is written, “He inspired,” or to speak more properly, “breathed into his face the breath of life,” even though the Greek had not used **πνοή** (as it has) but **πνεῦμα**, it would not on that account necessarily follow that the Creator Spirit, who in the Trinity is distinctively called the Holy Ghost, was meant, since, as has been said, it is plain that **πνεῦμα**

is used not only of the Creator, but also of the creature.”

The Greek word **πνοή** (pronounced pn-oh-eh), means breath, respiration, Acts 17:25; wind, a blast of wind, breeze, Acts 2:2”. **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, 1978 Edition, Harold K. Moulton, Page 331.**

The definition refers to the following verses:

**Acts 17 (KJV):25** Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

**Acts 2 (KJV):2** And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

The Greek word **πνεῦμα** (pronounced pneuma) means “wind, air in motion, John 3:8; breath, 2 Thessalonians 2:8; the substance spirit, John 3:6; a spirit, spiritual being, John 4:24, Acts 23:8-9... **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, 1978 Edition, Harold K. Moulton, Page 331.**

The definition refers to the following verses:

**John 3 (KJV):8** The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

**2 Thessalonians 2 (NASB):8** Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;

**John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

**John 4 (KJV):24** God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

**Acts 23 (KJV):8** For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. 9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

Both Greek words come from **πνέω** (pronounce pne'-ō), which means “to breathe; to blow, as the wind, Matthew 7:25,27, et al.” **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised, 1978 Edition, Harold K. Moulton, Page 331.**

Augustine continues, “But, say they, when the Scripture used the word “spirit,” (breath) it would not have added “of life” unless it meant us to understand the Holy Spirit; nor, when it said, “Man became a soul,” would it also have inserted the word “living” unless that life of the soul were signified which is imparted to it from above by the gift of God. For, seeing that the soul by itself has a proper life of its own, what need, they ask, was there of adding living, save only to show that the life which is given it by the Holy Spirit was meant? What is this but to fight strenuously for their own conjectures, while they carelessly neglect the teaching of Scripture? Without troubling themselves much, they might have found in a preceding page of this very book of Genesis the words, “Let the earth bring forth the living soul,” (Genesis 1:24) when all the terrestrial animals were created.”

He refers to **Genesis 1 (KJV):24** And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

The word “creature” in Hebrew is **נֶפֶשׁ** (pronounced neh'-fesh), properly, a breathing

creature, i.e. animal of (abstractly) vitality; **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 5315.**

The **King James Version** translates the Hebrew word, נֶפֶשׁ (pronounced nephesh, neh'-fesh), in the following manner:

soul (475x), life (117x), person (29x), mind (15x), heart (15x), creature (9x), body (8x), himself (8x), yourselves (6x), dead (5x), will (4x), desire (4x), man (3x), themselves (3x), any (3x), appetite (2x), miscellaneous (47x).

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H5315&t=KJV>

So the Hebrew word, נֶפֶשׁ (pronounced nephesh, neh'-fesh), is also translated as “soul”. And the soul is also said to live as in **Genesis 12 (KJV):13** Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

And in **Psalms 119 (KJV):175** Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me.

Augustine continues, “Then at a slight interval, but still in the same book, was it impossible for them to notice this verse, “All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died,” by which it was signified that all the animals which lived on the earth had perished in the deluge? If, then, we find that Scripture is accustomed to speak both of the “living soul” and the “spirit of life” even in reference to beasts; and if in this place, where it is said, “All things which have the spirit of life,” the word πνοή, not πνεῦμα, is used; why may we not say, What need was there to add “living,” since the soul cannot exist without being alive? or, What need to add “of life” after the word spirit?”

But the soul does exist after death as we read in **Psalms 16 (KJV):10** For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

The word “hell” in Hebrew is שְׁאוֹל (pronounced sheh·ōle'). And the Hebrew word, נֶפֶשׁ (pronounced neh'-fesh), is also translated here as “soul”.

We will explain what this word, Sheol, means shortly. Augustine continues, “But we understand that Scripture used these expressions in its ordinary style so long as it speaks of animals, that is, animated bodies, in which the soul serves as the residence of sensation; but when man is spoken of, we forget the ordinary and established usage of Scripture, whereby it signifies that man received a rational soul, which was not produced out of the waters and the earth like the other living creatures, but was created by the breath of God. Yet this creation was ordered that the human soul should live in an animal body, like those other animals of which the Scripture said, “Let the earth produce every living soul,” and regarding which it again says that in them is the breath of life, where the word πνοή and not πνεῦμα is used in the Greek, and where certainly not the Holy Spirit, but their spirit, is signified under that name.”

Man has a spirit, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Augustine continues, “But, again, they object that breath is understood to have been emitted from the mouth of God; and if we believe that is the soul, we must consequently acknowledge it to be of the same substance, and equal to that wisdom, which says, “I come out of the mouth of the Most High.” (Ecclesiasticus 24:3)”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 24 (KJV):3** I came out of the mouth of the most High, and covered the earth as a cloud.

He continues, “**Wisdom, indeed, does not say it was breathed out of the mouth of God, but proceeded out of it.** But as we are able, when we breathe, to make a breath, not of our own human nature, but of the surrounding air, which we inhale and exhale as we draw our breath and breathe again, so almighty God was able to make breath, not of His own nature, nor of the creature beneath Him, but even of nothing; and this breath, when He communicated it to man’s body, He is most appropriately said to have breathed or inspired,—the Immaterial breathing it also immaterial, but the Immutable not also the immutable; for it was created, He uncreated. Yet that these persons who are forward to quote Scripture, and yet know not the usages of its language, may know that not only what is equal and consubstantial with God is said to proceed out of His mouth, let them hear or read what God says: “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.” (Revelation 3:16)”

He refers to **Revelation 3 (KJV):16** So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Augustine continues, “There is no ground, then, for our objecting, when the apostle so expressly distinguishes the animal body from the spiritual—that is to say, the body in which we now are from that in which we are to be. He says, “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” (1 Corinthians 15:44-49)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):44** It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. 46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. 47 The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

He continues, “Of all which words of his we have previously spoken. The animal body, accordingly, in which the apostle says that the first man Adam was made, was not so made that it could not die at all, but so that it should not die unless he should have sinned. **That body, indeed, which shall be made spiritual and immortal by the quickening Spirit shall not be able to die at all; as the soul has been created immortal, and therefore, although by sin it may be said to die, and does lose a certain life of its own, namely, the Spirit of God, by whom it was enabled to live wisely and blessedly, yet it does not cease living a kind of life, though a miserable, because it is immortal by creation.** So, too, the rebellious angels, though by sinning they did in a sense die, because they forsook God, the Fountain of life, which while they drank they were able to live wisely and well, yet they could not so die as to utterly cease living and feeling, for they are immortals by creation. And so, after the final judgment, they shall be hurled into the second death, and not even there be deprived of life or of sensation, but shall suffer torment. **But those men who have been embraced by God’s grace, and are become the fellow-citizens of the holy**



angels who have continued in bliss, shall never more either sin or die, being endued with spiritual bodies; yet, being clothed with immortality, such as the angels enjoy, of which they cannot be divested even by sinning, the nature of their flesh shall continue the same, but all carnal corruption and unwieldiness shall be removed.”

Augustine is correct according to Scripture. The bodies of believers shall be changed to become “**spiritual bodies**” at the resurrection, so that they are like the glorious body of Jesus as we read in **Philippians 3 (KJV):20** For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

Being changed, we “**shall never more either sin or die**”, neither shall we be able to ever more sin or die, for we shall be “like Him” as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Augustine then concludes, “**There remains a question which must be discussed, and, by the help of the Lord God of truth, solved: If the motion of concupiscence in the unruly members of our first parents arose out of their sin, and only when the divine grace deserted them; and if it was on that occasion that their eyes were opened to see, or, more exactly, notice their nakedness, and that they covered their shame because the shameless motion of their members was not subject to their will,—how, then, would they have begotten children had they remained sinless as they were created? But as this book must be concluded, and so large a question cannot be summarily disposed of, we may relegate it to the following book, in which it will be more conveniently treated.**”

Augustine seems to have thought that “**the motion of concupiscence**”, that is all sexual relations, even in marriage, was lustful. We will discuss this more in the next chapter on **Marriage**.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XIV, Chapters 1-2, page 262-263**

Chapter 1.—That the Disobedience of the First Man Would Have Plunged All Men into the Endless Misery of the Second Death, Had Not the Grace of God Rescued Many.

We have already stated in the preceding books that God, desiring not only that the human race might be able by their similarity of nature to associate with one another, but also that they might be bound together in harmony and peace by the ties of relationship, was pleased to derive all men from one individual, and created man with such a nature that the members of the race should not have died, had not the two first (of whom the one was created out of nothing, and the other out of him) merited this by their disobedience; **for by them so great a sin was committed, that by it the human nature was altered for the worse, and was transmitted also to their posterity, liable to sin and subject to death. And the kingdom of death so reigned over men, that the deserved penalty of sin would have hurled all headlong even into the second death, of which there is no end, had not the undeserved grace of God saved some therefrom.** And thus it has come to pass, that though there are very many and great nations all over the earth, whose rites

and customs, speech, arms, and dress, are distinguished by marked differences, yet there are no more than two kinds of human society, which we may justly call two cities, according to the language of our Scriptures. The one consists of those who wish to live after the flesh, the other of those who wish to live after the spirit; and when they severally achieve what they wish, they live in peace, each after their kind.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “We have already stated in the preceding books that God, desiring not only that the human race might be able by their similarity of nature to associate with one another, but also that they might be bound together in harmony and peace by the ties of relationship, was pleased to derive all men from one individual, and created man with such a nature that the members of the race should not have died, had not the two first (of whom the one was created out of nothing, and the other out of him) merited this by their disobedience;

Augustine agrees with the Scripture as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):16** And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

He continues, “for by them so great a sin was committed, that by it the human nature was altered for the worse, and was transmitted also to their posterity, liable to sin and subject to death. And the kingdom of death so reigned over men, that the deserved penalty of sin would have hurled all headlong even into the second death, of which there is no end, had not the undeserved grace of God saved some therefrom.”

And we know this is true from **Ephesians 2 (KJV):1** And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

And **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

He continues, “And thus it has come to pass, that though there are very many and great nations all over the earth, whose rites and customs, speech, arms, and dress, are distinguished by marked differences, yet there are no more than two kinds of human society, which we may justly call two cities, according to the language of our Scriptures”.

And he concludes, “The one consists of those who wish to live after the flesh, the other of those who wish to live after the spirit; and when they severally achieve what they wish, they live in peace, each after their kind.”

But we may add that those who live after the flesh suffer the consequences of their bad choices.

## Chapter 2.—Of Carnal Life, Which is to Be Understood Not Only of Living in Bodily Indulgence, But Also of Living in the Vices of the Inner Man.

First, we must see what it is to live after the flesh, and what to live after the spirit. For any one who either does not recollect, or does not sufficiently weigh, the language of sacred Scripture, may, on first hearing what we have said, suppose that the Epicurean philosophers live after the flesh, because they place man’s highest good in bodily pleasure; and that those others do so who have been of opinion that in some form or other bodily good is man’s supreme good; and that the mass of men do so who, without dogmatizing or philosophizing on the subject, are

so prone to lust that they cannot delight in any pleasure save such as they receive from bodily sensations: and he may suppose that the Stoics, who place the supreme good of men in the soul, live after the spirit; **for what is man's soul, if not spirit?** But in the sense of the divine Scripture both are proved to live after the flesh. For by flesh it means not only the body of a terrestrial and mortal animal, as when it says, "All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, another of birds," (1 Corinthians 15:39) but it uses this word in many other significations; and among these various usages, a frequent one is to use flesh for man himself, the nature of man taking the part for the whole, as in the words, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified;" (Romans 3:20) for what does he mean here by "no flesh" but "no man?" And this, indeed, he shortly after says more plainly: "No man shall be justified by the law;" (Galatians 3:11) and in the Epistle to the Galatians, "Knowing that man is not justified by the works of the law." And so we understand the words, "And the Word was made flesh," (John 1:14)—that is, man, which some not accepting in its right sense, have supposed that Christ had not a human soul. (the Apolinarians) For as the whole is used for the part in the words of Mary Magdalene in the Gospel, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him," (John 20:13) by which she meant only the flesh of Christ, which she supposed had been taken from the tomb where it had been buried, so the part is used for the whole, flesh being named, while man is referred to, as in the quotations above cited.

Since, then, Scripture uses the word flesh in many ways, which there is not time to collect and investigate, if we are to ascertain what it is to live after the flesh (which is certainly evil, though the nature of flesh is not itself evil), we must carefully examine that passage of the epistle which the Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, in which he says, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21) This whole passage of the apostolic epistle being considered, so far as it bears on the matter in hand, will be sufficient to answer the question, what it is to live after the flesh. **For among the works of the flesh which he said were manifest, and which he cited for condemnation, we find not only those which concern the pleasure of the flesh, as fornications, uncleanness, lasciviousness, drunkenness, revellings, but also those which, though they be remote from fleshly pleasure, reveal the vices of the soul. For who does not see that idolatries, witchcrafts, hatreds, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, heresies, envyings, are vices rather of the soul than of the flesh? For it is quite possible for a man to abstain from fleshly pleasures for the sake of idolatry or some heretical error; and yet, even when he does so, he is proved by this apostolic authority to be living after the flesh; and in abstaining from fleshly pleasure, he is proved to be practicing damnable works of the flesh. Who that has enmity has it not in his soul? or who would say to his enemy, or to the man he thinks his enemy, You have a bad flesh towards me, and not rather, You have a bad spirit towards me? In fine, if any one heard of what I may call "carnalities," he would not fail to attribute them to the carnal part of man; so no one doubts that "animosities" belong to the soul of man. Why then does the doctor of the Gentiles in faith and verity call all these and similar things works of the flesh, unless because, by that mode of speech whereby the part is used for the whole, he means us to understand by the word flesh**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “First, we must see what it is to live after the flesh, and what to live after the spirit. For any one who either does not recollect, or does not sufficiently weigh, the language of sacred Scripture, may, on first hearing what we have said, suppose that the Epicurean philosophers live after the flesh, because they place man’s highest good in bodily pleasure; and that those others do so who have been of opinion that in some form or other bodily good is man’s supreme good; and that the mass of men do so who, without dogmatizing or philosophizing on the subject, are so prone to lust that they cannot delight in any pleasure save such as they receive from bodily sensations: and he may suppose that the Stoics, who place the supreme good of men in the soul, live after the spirit; **for what is man’s soul, if not spirit?**”

So here Augustine equates man’s soul to spirit. He then continues, “But in the sense of the divine Scripture both are proved to live after the flesh. For by flesh it means not only the body of a terrestrial and mortal animal, as when it says, “All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, another of birds,” (1 Corinthians 15:39) but it uses this word in many other significations;

He refers first to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):39** All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.

He then continues, “and among these various usages, a frequent one is to use flesh for man himself, the nature of man taking the part for the whole, as in the words, “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified;” (Romans 3:20) for what does he mean here by “no flesh” but “no man?””

And yes, by “no flesh” he means “no man”, as we read in context in **Romans 3 (KJV):19** Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

He continues, “And this, indeed, he shortly after says more plainly: “No man shall be justified by the law;” (Galatians 3:11) and in the Epistle to the Galatians, “Knowing that man is not justified by the works of the law.””

He refers to **Galatians 3 (KJV):11** But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

And to **Galatians 2 (KJV):16** Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Augustine maintains the context of the word of God here. He then continues, “And so we understand the words, “And the Word was made flesh,” (John 1:14)”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

He continues, “—that is, man, which some not accepting in its right sense, have supposed that Christ had not a human soul. (the Apolinarians) For as the whole is used for the part in the words of Mary Magdalene in the Gospel, “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not

where they have laid Him,” (John 20:13) by which she meant only the flesh of Christ, which she supposed had been taken from the tomb where it had been buried, so the part is used for the whole, flesh being named, while man is referred to, as in the quotations above cited.”

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):13** And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

Augustine continues, “Since, then, Scripture uses the word flesh in many ways, which there is not time to collect and investigate, if we are to ascertain what it is to live after the flesh (which is certainly evil, though the nature of flesh is not itself evil), we must carefully examine that passage of the epistle which the Apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, in which he says, “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5:19-21) This whole passage of the apostolic epistle being considered, so far as it bears on the matter in hand, will be sufficient to answer the question, what it is to live after the flesh.”

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):19** Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

He then continues, “For among the works of the flesh which he said were manifest, and which he cited for condemnation, we find not only those which concern the pleasure of the flesh, as fornications, uncleanness, lasciviousness, drunkenness, revellings, but also those which, though they be remote from fleshly pleasure, reveal the vices of the soul. For who does not see that idolatries, witchcrafts, hatreds, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, heresies, envyings, are vices rather of the soul than of the flesh? For it is quite possible for a man to abstain from fleshly pleasures for the sake of idolatry or some heretical error; and yet, even when he does so, he is proved by this apostolic authority to be living after the flesh; and in abstaining from fleshly pleasure, he is proved to be practicing damnable works of the flesh. Who that has enmity has it not in his soul? Or who would say to his enemy, or to the man he thinks his enemy, You have a bad flesh towards me, and not rather, You have a bad spirit towards me? In fine, if any one heard of what I may call “carnalities,” he would not fail to attribute them to the carnal part of man; so no one doubts that “animosities” belong to the soul of man. Why then does the doctor of the Gentiles in faith and verity call all these and similar things works of the flesh, unless because, by that mode of speech whereby the part is used for the whole, he means us to understand by the word flesh the man himself?”

Augustine seems to argue well, but we must understand that the word “flesh” in Galatians 5:19 refers to the nature of the flesh. To understand this we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):5** For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

This is describing a sin nature in our flesh as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how



to perform that which is good I find not.

We continue to read in **Romans 7 (KJV):** 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Before we were born again, “the law of sin which is in my members”, that is, in my flesh, was in control, as in verse 23 above. This made us a “wretched man” ruled by “the body of this death”. After we are born again, our spirit is made new by being born from above, or born of the Spirit of God. We now have a new nature in our spirits. This is why we delight in the law of God after the inward man, as in verse 22 above.

Our soul is our heart, which is the center of our emotions or feelings, our will, our mind, and our conscience. Our soul is pulled by our flesh to sin. So the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19 are just that. They are works incited by the sin nature in our flesh. Whether they bring more satisfaction to our souls than our flesh is of no importance. The works of the flesh are all incited by the sinful nature in our flesh. But thanks be to God, in Christ, we have been set free from this law of sin in our flesh, which we inherited from Adam.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XIV, Chapter 6, page 266**

Chapter 6.—Of the Character of the Human Will Which Makes the Affections of the Soul Right or Wrong.

But the character of the human will is of moment; because, if it is wrong, these motions of the soul will be wrong, but if it is right, they will be not merely blameless, but even praiseworthy. For the will is in them all; yea, none of them is anything else than will. For what are desire and joy but a volition of consent to the things we wish? And what are fear and sadness but a volition of aversion from the things which we do not wish? But when consent takes the form of seeking to possess the things we wish, this is called desire; and when consent takes the form of enjoying the things we wish, this is called joy. In like manner, when we turn with aversion from that which we do not wish to happen, this volition is termed fear; and when we turn away from that which has happened against our will, this act of will is called sorrow. And generally in respect of all that we seek or shun, as a man's will is attracted or repelled, so it is changed and turned into these different affections. Wherefore the man who lives according to God, and not according to man, ought to be a lover of good, and therefore a hater of evil. **And since no one is evil by nature, but whoever is evil is evil by vice, he who lives according to God ought to cherish towards evil men a perfect hatred, so that he shall neither hate the man because of his vice, nor love the vice because of the man, but hate the vice and love the man. For the vice being cursed, all that ought to be loved, and nothing that ought to be hated, will remain.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But the character of the human will is of moment; because, if it is wrong, these motions of the soul will be wrong, but if it is right, they will be not merely blameless, but even praiseworthy. For the will is in them all; yea, none of them is anything else than will. For what are desire and joy but a volition of consent to the things we wish? And what are fear and sadness but a volition of aversion from the things which we do not wish?”

This sounds logical. But let us read in **Romans 7 (KJV):15** For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Paul had a “volition of consent to the things” he wished, but instead of doing what he wished, he did what he did not wish.

Augustine continues, “But when consent takes the form of seeking to possess the things we wish, this is called desire; and when consent takes the form of enjoying the things we wish, this is called joy. In like manner, when we turn with aversion from that which we do not wish to happen, this volition is termed fear; and when we turn away from that which has happened against our will, this act of will is called sorrow. And generally in respect of all that we seek or shun, as a man’s will is attracted or repelled, so it is changed and turned into these different affections. Wherefore the man who lives according to God, and not according to man, ought to be a lover of good, and therefore a hater of evil.”

Paul was a “lover of good, and therefore a hater of evil”. But he still struggled with his flesh, as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Augustine continues, “**And since no one is evil by nature, but whoever is evil is evil by vice, he who lives according to God ought to cherish towards evil men a perfect hatred, so that he shall neither hate the man because of his vice, nor love the vice because of the man, but hate the vice and love the man. For the vice being cursed, all that ought to be loved, and nothing that ought to be hated, will remain.**”

But Paul then explains in **Romans 7 (KJV):18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

In his flesh, he says, “dwelleth no good thing”. There was a change in the nature of our flesh when Adam sinned, and our flesh became mortal. Paul continues in **Romans 7 (KJV):19** For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

Paul found that even when he would do good, he did evil. He then explains why in **Romans 7 (KJV):20** Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

Why did he delight in the law of God after the inward man? Because this is the part of him that was born of the Spirit of God. He continues in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Paul explains that there is a “law of sin which is in” his members. That is, there is a nature to sin in the members of our flesh. He continues in **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched

man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Augustine did not understand this law of sin that is in our members. Our will is still an integral part in our doing good. But it is not just a matter of willing to do something good. It is a surrender to His will in our inner man that empowers us to do good.

And our will is a part of our soul. Our spirit is where we are born again. Our soul is our mind, will, heart, which is the center of our feelings or emotions, and conscience. This is where we are progressively sanctified after we are born again. So in this process of sanctification, I must choose to present myself a living sacrifice to God as in **Romans 12 (KJV)**:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

This is a process of continually saying “yes” to God.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3, On Faith and The Creed, paragraph 23, page 331-332**

Chapter 10.—Of the Catholic Church, the Remissions of Sins, And the Resurrection of the Flesh, paragraph 23

23. And inasmuch as there are three things of which man consists,—namely, spirit, soul, and body,—which again are spoken of as two, because frequently the soul is named along with the spirit; for a certain rational portion of the same, of which beasts are devoid, is called spirit: the principal part in us is the spirit; next, the life whereby we are united with the body is called the soul; finally, the body itself, as it is visible, is the last part in us. This “whole creation” (creatura), however, “groaneth and travaileth until now.” (Romans 8:22) Nevertheless, He has given it the first-fruits of the Spirit, in that it has believed God, and is now of a good will. This spirit is also called the mind, regarding which an apostle speaks thus: “With the mind I serve the law of God.” (Romans 7:25) Which apostle likewise expresses himself thus in another passage: “For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit.” (Romans 1:9) Moreover, the soul, when as yet it lusts after carnal good things, is called the flesh. For a certain part thereof resists the Spirit, not in virtue of nature, but in virtue of the custom of sins; whence it is said, “With the mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.” And this custom has been turned into a nature, according to mortal generation, by the sin of the first man. Consequently it is also written in this wise, “And we were sometime by nature the children of wrath,” (Ephesians 2:3) that is, of vengeance, through which it has come to pass that we serve the law of sin. The nature of the soul, however, is perfect when it is made subject to its own spirit, and when it follows that spirit as the same follows God. Therefore “the animal man receiveth not the things which are of the Spirit of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:14) But the soul is not so speedily subdued to the spirit unto good action, as is the spirit to God unto true faith and goodwill; but sometimes its impetus, whereby it moves downwards into things carnal and temporal, is more tardily bridled. But inasmuch as this same soul is also made pure, and receives the stability of its own nature,

under the dominance of the spirit, which is the head for it, which head of the said soul has again its own head in Christ, we ought not to despair of the restoration of the body also to its own proper nature. But this certainly will not be effected so speedily as is the case with the soul; just as the soul too, is not restored so speedily as the spirit. Yet it will take place in the appropriate season, at the last trump, when “the dead shall rise uncorrupted, and we shall be changed.” (1 Corinthians 15:52) And accordingly we believe also in The Resurrection of the Flesh, to wit, not merely that that soul, which at present by reason of carnal affections is called the flesh, is restored; but that it shall be so likewise with this visible flesh, which is the flesh according to nature, the name of which has been received by the soul, not in virtue of nature, but in reference to carnal affections: this visible flesh, then, I say, which is the flesh properly so called, must without doubt be believed to be destined to rise again. For the Apostle Paul appears to point to this, as it were, with his finger, when he says, “This corruptible must put on incorruption.” (1 Corinthians 15:53) For when he says this, he, as it were, directs his finger toward it. Now it is that which is visible that admits of being pointed out with the finger; since the soul might also have been called corruptible, for it is itself corrupted by vices of manners. And when it is read, “and this mortal [must] put on immortality,” the same visible flesh is signified, inasmuch as at it ever and anon the finger is thus as it were pointed. For the soul also may thus in like manner be called mortal, even as it is designated corruptible in reference to vices of manners. For assuredly it is “the death of the soul to apostatize from God;” (Ecclesiasticus 10:14 Vulgate) which is its first sin in Paradise, as it is contained in the sacred writings.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “And inasmuch as there are three things of which man consists,—namely, spirit, soul, and body,—which again are spoken of as two, because frequently the soul is named along with the spirit;”

First of all he refers to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And it is true that the spirit and the soul are sometimes used interchangeably, as we read in **Genesis 35 (KJV):18** And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin. 19 And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.

And in **Luke 8 (KJV):52** And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. 53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. 54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. 55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. 56 And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

But the soul and spirit are different parts of man’s being as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The spirit is where we connect with God. The faculties of the spirit are faith, hope, prayer, and worship.

The soul is where we connect with our fellow man. The faculties of the soul are reason, memory, imagination, affections or feelings or emotions, choice, and conscience.

Augustine continues, “for a certain rational portion of the same, of which beasts are devoid, is called spirit:”

So he thinks that, “a certain rational portion of the same”, which is actually of the soul, “is called spirit”.

He continues, “the principal part in us is the spirit; next, the life whereby we are united with the body is called the soul; finally, the body itself, as it is visible, is the last part in us. This “whole creation” (creatura), however, “groaneth and travaileth until now.” (Romans 8:22)”

Augustine equates the “rational portion” with spirit, which is actually part of the soul, and “the principal part in us is the spirit”, and “the life whereby we are united with the body is called the soul;” But this doesn’t tell us much about each part.

He then refers in context to **Romans 8 (KJV):22** For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Augustine continues, “Nevertheless, He has given it the first-fruits of the Spirit, in that it has believed God, and is now of a good will. This spirit is also called the mind, regarding which an apostle speaks thus: “With the mind I serve the law of God.” (Romans 7:25)”

Being born of the Spirit of God, we delight in the law of God as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

But Augustine equates our spirit with our mind, as he says, “This spirit is also called the mind”, and he then refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):25** I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

And we do read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):11** For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

But we also read as in **Psalms 139 (KJV):14** I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

Our soul has a mind.

Augustine continues, “Which apostle likewise expresses himself thus in another passage: “For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit.” (Romans 1:9)”

He refers to **Romans 1 (KJV):9** For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

He continues, “Moreover, the soul, when as yet it lusts after carnal good things, is called the flesh. For a certain part thereof resists the Spirit, not in virtue of nature, but in virtue of the custom of sins; whence it is said, “With the mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”

He refers again to **Romans 7 (KJV):25** I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

But he misunderstands the nature of the flesh. Paul says that sin dwells in him in **Romans 7 (KJV):17** Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

And in his flesh, he says, “dwelleth no good thing”. But the soul is impacted by the sins of our past. This is why our minds must be renewed as in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you



therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We are not to be conformed to this world in our thinking. We must process our feelings so that we find resolution of our past hurts. This takes time. This is a progressive sanctification that God does in our soul area after we are born again. But in our spirit, we have a new divine nature. As we put on this new man, and we put off the old man, we walk in the Spirit.

Now Augustine then says, “**And this custom has been turned into a nature, according to mortal generation, by the sin of the first man. Consequently it is also written in this wise, “And we were sometime by nature the children of wrath,” (Ephesians 2:3) that is, of vengeance, through which it has come to pass that we serve the law of sin.**”

He refers to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Augustine is correct. However, he misplaces this nature in the soul area, when it is actually in our flesh, as he continues, “**The nature of the soul, however, is perfect when it is made subject to its own spirit, and when it follows that spirit as the same follows God. Therefore “the animal man receiveth not the things which are of the Spirit of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:14)**”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The word “natural” in the Greek is **ψυχικός** (pronounced psü-khē-ko's), “from G5590 **ψυχή** (pronounced psü-khā'); sensitive, i.e. animate (in distinction on the one hand from G4152 **πνευματικός** (pronounced pnyü-mā-tē-ko's), which is the higher or renovated nature; and on the other from G5446 **φυσικός** (pronounced fü-sē-ko's) which is the lower or bestial nature):—natural, sensual.” **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5591.**

The soul, that is our mind, our will, our emotions and heart, and our conscience will not be “**perfect when it is made subject to its own spirit, and when it follows that spirit as the same follows God**”, but it is being changed, or transformed, by the renewing of our minds. The sanctification of our souls is a progressive work of God in which we are being changed from glory to glory as in **2 Corinthians 3 (KJV):18** But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

And this sanctification in our soul will be complete when we see Him as in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Augustine continues, “**But the soul is not so speedily subdued to the spirit unto good action, as is the spirit to God unto true faith and goodwill; but sometimes its impetus, whereby it moves downwards into things carnal and temporal, is more tardily bridled.**”

The reason the spirit of man is more “**speedily subdued to the spirit unto good action**” is because our spirit is now a new creation, and a partaker of the divine nature as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by

these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The reason this is so is because our spirit is born of the Holy Spirit when we are born again. But our soul has all of the baggage of our past, and this is where we are being cleansed as we are renewed in our minds, and we receive the knowledge of the word of God.

Augustine continues, “But inasmuch as this same soul is also made pure, and receives the stability of its own nature, under the dominance of the spirit, which is the head for it, which head of the said soul has again its own head in Christ, we ought not to despair of the restoration of the body also to its own proper nature. But this certainly will not be effected so speedily as is the case with the soul; just as the soul too, is not restored so speedily as the spirit. Yet it will take place in the appropriate season, at the last trump, when “the dead shall rise uncorrupted, and we shall be changed.” (1 Corinthians 15:52)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):52** In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

This relates to the redemption of our body in **Romans 8 (KJV):23** And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Augustine continues, “And accordingly we believe also in The Resurrection of the Flesh, to wit, not merely that that soul, which at present by reason of carnal affections is called the flesh, is restored; but that it shall be so likewise with this visible flesh, which is the flesh according to nature, the name of which has been received by the soul, not in virtue of nature, but in reference to carnal affections: this visible flesh, then, I say, which is the flesh properly so called, must without doubt be believed to be destined to rise again. For the Apostle Paul appears to point to this, as it were, with his finger, when he says, “This corruptible must put on incorruption.” (1 Corinthians 15:53)”

He now refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):53** For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

And when He says that the “soul, which at present by reason of carnal affections is called the flesh”, we must understand that the soul is not the flesh. But the Scriptures refer to one who is carnal in character, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

In other words, the soul is not “called the flesh” as Augustine says, but carnal, that is, fleshly, or controlled by the sinful nature in the flesh. This would refer to one who was walking as a mere man, without the Spirit of God. This is not to say that the Corinthians did not have the Spirit of God, but that they had not put off their old ways as yet. They were “as babes in Christ” as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

Augustine continues, “For when he says this, he, as it were, directs his finger toward it. Now it is that which is visible that admits of being pointed out with the finger; since the soul might also have been called corruptible, for it is itself corrupted by vices of manners. And when

it is read, “and this mortal [must] put on immortality,” the same visible flesh is signified, inasmuch as at it ever and anon the finger is thus as it were pointed. For the soul also may thus in like manner be called mortal, even as it is designated corruptible in reference to vices of manners. For assuredly it is “the death of the soul to apostatize from God;” (Ecclesiasticus 10:14 Vulgate) which is its first sin in Paradise, as it is contained in the sacred writings.”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 10 (Douay Rheims):14** initium superbiae hominis apostatare a Deo (The beginning of the pride of man, is to fall off from God:)

And Jesus spoke as in **Matthew 10 (KJV):28** And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Our flesh will be changed and glorified at the resurrection. Our soul will also be completely free of past hurts, and uncleanness, for when we see Him we will be like Him as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Soul and Its Origin, Book I, Chapter 28, page 327**

Chapter 28.—A Natural Figure of Speech Must Not Be Literally Pressed.

He goes on to remark: “But the apostle, by saying, ‘And He Himself giveth life and spirit to all,’ and then by adding the words, ‘And hath made the whole race of men of one blood,’ (Acts 17:25) has referred this soul and spirit to the Creator in respect of their origin, and the body to propagation.” Now, certainly any one who does not wish to deny at random the propagation of souls, before ascertaining clearly whether the opinion is correct or not, has ground for understanding, from the apostle’s words, that he meant the expression, of one blood, to be equivalent to of one man, by the figure of speech which understands the whole from its part. Well, then, if it be allowable for this man to take the whole from a part in the passage, “And man became a living soul,” (Genesis 2:7) as if the spirit also was understood to be implied, about which the Scripture there said nothing, why is it not allowable to others to attribute an equally comprehensive sense to the expression, of one blood, so that the soul and spirit may be considered as included in it, on the ground that the human being who is signified by the term “blood” consists not of body alone, but also of soul and spirit? For just as the controversialist who maintains the propagation of souls, ought not, on the one hand, to press this man too hard, because the Scripture says concerning the first man, “In whom all have sinned” (Romans 5:12) (for the expression is not, In whom the flesh of all has sinned, but “all,” that is, “all men,” seeing that man is not flesh only);—as, I repeat, he ought not to be too hard pressed himself, because it happens to be written “all men,” in such a way that they might be understood simply in respect of the flesh; so, on the other hand, he ought not to bear too hard on those who hold the propagation of souls, on the ground of the phrase, “The whole race of men of one blood,” as if this passage proved that flesh alone was transmitted by propagation. For if it is true, as they assert, that soul does not descend from soul, but flesh only from flesh, then the expression, “*of one blood*,” does not signify the entire human being, on the principle of a part

for the whole, but merely the flesh of one person alone; while that other expression, “In whom all have sinned,” must be so understood as to indicate merely the flesh of all men, which has been handed on from the first man, the Scripture signifying a part by the whole. *If, on the other hand, it is true that the entire human being is propagated of each man, himself also entire, consisting of body, soul, and spirit, then the passage, “In whom all have sinned,” must be taken in its proper literal sense; and the other phrase, “of one blood,” is used metaphorically, the whole being signified by a part, that is to say, the whole man who consists of soul and flesh; or rather (as this person is fond of putting it) of soul, and spirit, and flesh. For both modes of expression the Holy Scriptures are in the habit of employing, putting both a part for the whole and the whole for a part.* A part, for instance, implies the whole, in the place where it is said, “Unto Thee shall all flesh come;” (Psalm 65:2) the whole man being understood by the term flesh. And the whole sometimes implies a part, as when it is said that Christ was buried, whereas it was only His flesh that was buried. Now as regards the statement which is made in the apostle’s testimony, to the effect that “He giveth life and spirit to all,” I suppose that nobody, after the foregoing discussion, will be moved by it. No doubt “He giveth;” the fact is not in dispute; our question is, How does He give it? By fresh inbreathing in every instance, or by propagation? For with perfect propriety is He said to give the substance of the flesh to the human being, though at the same time it is not denied that He gives it by means of propagation.

**Commentary:** Augustine is quoting one Vicentius Victor, who disapproved of Augustine’s opinion touching the nature of the soul, and of his hesitation in respect of its origin. Vicentius Victor thought that human souls are not derived by propagation, but are breathed by God afresh into each man at birth.

Augustine then begins as he says, “He goes on to remark: “But the apostle, by saying, ‘And He Himself giveth life and spirit to all,’ and then by adding the words, ‘And hath made the whole race of men of one blood,’ (Acts 17:25) has referred this soul and spirit to the Creator in respect of their origin, and the body to propagation.””

He refers to **Acts 17 (KJV):25** Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

He then argues, “Now, certainly any one who does not wish to deny at random the propagation of souls, before ascertaining clearly whether the opinion is correct or not, has ground for understanding, from the apostle’s words, that he meant the expression, of one blood, to be equivalent to of one man, by the figure of speech which understands the whole from its part.”

So all men have the same blood, and it is all red.

He continues, “Well, then, if it be allowable for this man to take the whole from a part in the passage, “And man became a living soul,” (Genesis 2:7) as if the spirit also was understood to be implied, about which the Scripture there said nothing, why is it not allowable to others to attribute an equally comprehensive sense to the expression, of one blood, so that the soul and spirit may be considered as included in it, on the ground that the human being who is signified by the term “blood” consists not of body alone, but also of soul and spirit?”

So Augustine is arguing that the soul is propagated when a child is conceived.

He continues, “For just as the controversialist who maintains the propagation of souls, ought not, on the one hand, to press this man too hard, because the Scripture says concerning the first man, “In whom all have sinned” (Romans 5:12) (for the expression is not, In whom the flesh of all has sinned, but “all,” that is, “all men,” seeing that man is not flesh only);—as, I repeat, he ought not to be too hard pressed himself, because it happens to be written “all men,” in such a way that they might be understood simply in respect of the flesh; so, on the other hand, he ought not to bear too hard on those who hold the propagation of souls, on the ground of the phrase, “The whole race of men of one blood,” as if this passage proved that flesh alone was transmitted by propagation.”

There is no basis in the Scripture to believe that the souls are not derived by propagation, but are breathed by God afresh into each man at birth. Augustine is correct in his stand against this error.

He continues, “For if it is true, as they assert, that soul does not descend from soul, but flesh only from flesh, then the expression, “of one blood,” does not signify the entire human being, on the principle of a part for the whole, but merely the flesh of one person alone; while that other expression, “In whom all have sinned,” must be so understood as to indicate merely the flesh of all men, which has been handed on from the first man, the Scripture signifying a part by the whole.”

Augustine then argues correctly, “If, on the other hand, it is true that the entire human being is propagated of each man, himself also entire, consisting of body, soul, and spirit, then the passage, “In whom all have sinned,” must be taken in its proper literal sense; and the other phrase, “of one blood,” is used metaphorically, the whole being signified by a part, that is to say, the whole man who consists of soul and flesh; or rather (as this person is fond of putting it) of soul, and spirit, and flesh. For both modes of expression the Holy Scriptures are in the habit of employing, putting both a part for the whole and the whole for a part.”

Now Augustine acknowledges the three parts of man, but he does not seem to understand the difference between the soul and the spirit. He rather seems to treat them as one part, and spirit as a part of soul.

He continues, “A part, for instance, implies the whole, in the place where it is said, “Unto Thee shall all flesh come;” (Psalm 65:2) the whole man being understood by the term flesh.

He refers to **Psalm 65 (KJV):2** O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.

He continues, “And the whole sometimes implies a part, as when it is said that Christ was buried, whereas it was only His flesh that was buried. Now as regards the statement which is made in the apostle’s testimony, to the effect that “He giveth life and spirit to all,” I suppose that nobody, after the foregoing discussion, will be moved by it. No doubt “He giveth,” the fact is not in dispute; our question is, How does He give it? By fresh inbreathing in every instance, or by propagation? For with perfect propriety is He said to give the substance of the flesh to the human being, though at the same time it is not denied that He gives it by means of propagation.”

There is no basis in Scripture to believe otherwise.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On the Soul and Its Origin, Book II, Chapter 2, page 331-332**



## Chapter 2 [II.]—He Asks What the Great Knowledge is that Victor Imparts.

Therefore, brother greatly beloved, I desire to know what you learned of him, in order that, if I have already possessed the knowledge, I may participate in your joy; but if I happen to be ignorant, I may be instructed by you. Did you not then understand that there are two somethings, soul and spirit, according as it is said in Scripture, “Thou wilt separate my soul from my spirit”? (Job 7:15 LXX) And that both of them pertain to man’s nature, so that the whole man consists of spirit, and soul, and body? Sometimes, however, these two are combined together under the designation of *soul*; for instance, in the passage, “And man became a living soul.” (Genesis 2:7) Now, in this place the *spirit* is implied. Similarly in sundry passages the two are described under the name of spirit, as when it is written, “And He bowed His head and gave up the spirit;” (John 19:30) in which passage it is the soul that must also be understood. And that the two are of one and the same substance? I suppose that you already knew all this. But if you did not, then you may as well know that you have not acquired any great knowledge, the ignorance of which would be attended with much danger. And if there must be any more subtle discussion on such points it would be better to carry on the controversy with himself, whose wordy qualities we have already discovered. The questions we might consider are: whether, when mention is made of the soul, the spirit is also implied in the term in such a way that the two comprise the soul, the spirit being, as it were, some part of it,—whether, in fact (as this person seemed to think), under the designation *soul*, the whole is so designated from only a part; or else, whether the two together make up the spirit, that which is properly called soul being a part thereof; whether again, in fact, the whole is not called from only a part, when the term *spirit* is used in such a wide sense as to comprehend the soul also, as this man supposes. These, however, are but subtle distinctions, and ignorance about them certainly is not attended with any great danger.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, as he addresses the Presbyter Peter concerning Vicentius Victor, “Therefore, brother greatly beloved, I desire to know what you learned of him, in order that, if I have already possessed the knowledge, I may participate in your joy; but if I happen to be ignorant, I may be instructed by you. Did you not then understand that there are two somethings, soul and spirit, according as it is said in Scripture, “Thou wilt separate my soul from my spirit”? (Job 7:15 LXX)”

He refers to **Job 7 (LXX):15** Thou wilt separate life from my spirit; and yet keep my bones from death.

The word for “life” in the Greek Septuagint is **ψυχή** (pronounced psü-khā'), and is, “from G5594; breath.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 5590.**

The **King James Version** translates this word as soul, 58 times, life, 40 times, mind, 3 times, heart 1 time.

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G5590&t=LXX>

But that there is a division between soul and spirit is clear from **Hebrew 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Augustine then continues, “And that both of them pertain to man’s nature, so that the whole man consists of spirit, and soul, and body? Sometimes, however, these two are combined together under the designation of soul; for instance, in the passage, “And man became a living soul.” (Genesis 2:7)”

He refers again to **Genesis 2 (KJV):7** And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Man became a living soul after God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. The breath of life refers to his spirit. The uniting of man’s spirit to the body brings about the creation of the soul. It is evident that Augustine did not understand this.

He then continues, “Now, in this place the spirit is implied. Similarly in sundry passages the two are described under the name of spirit, as when it is written, “And He bowed His head and gave up the spirit;” (John 19:30) in which passage it is the soul that must also be understood. And that the two are of one and the same substance?”

He refers to **John 19 (KJV):30** When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

The word “ghost” in the Greek is **πνεῦμα** (pronounced *pneuma*), and means spirit. Soul and spirit are both unseen, but they are two different parts of man’s being, and as such, they are sometimes used interchangeably when referring to death or resurrection.

Augustine then continues, “I suppose that you already knew all this. But if you did not, then you may as well know that you have not acquired any great knowledge, the ignorance of which would be attended with much danger. And if there must be any more subtle discussion on such points it would be better to carry on the controversy with himself, whose wordy qualities we have already discovered.”

He continues, “The questions we might consider are:”

- 1.) “whether, when mention is made of the soul, the spirit is also implied in the term in such a way that the two comprise the soul, the spirit being, as it were, some part of it,
- 2.) —whether, in fact (as this person seemed to think), under the designation soul, the whole is so designated from only a part;
- 3.) or else, whether the two together make up the spirit, that which is properly called soul being a part thereof; whether again, in fact, the whole is not called from only a part, when the term spirit is used in such a wide sense as to comprehend the soul also, as this man supposes. These, however, are but subtle distinctions, and ignorance about them certainly is not attended with any great danger.”

Augustine seems to agree with the first, that is, “when mention is made of the soul, the spirit is also implied in the term in such a way that the two comprise the soul, the spirit being, as it were, some part of it”.

However, the soul and spirit are different parts of man’s being. The spirit is where we have contact with God. The soul is where we have contact with others. The flesh is where we have contact with the physical world.

Before we are born again, we have no awareness of the spiritual. We are dead in our trespasses and sins, we are just “natural” men and women. When we are born again, our spirit is made alive to God, and we now have fellowship with the Lord in our spirit, and with others through our soul. Our spirit is now able to communicate spiritual things through our soul to

others.

So it helps in our understanding of our progressive sanctification if we know the difference between soul and spirit.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On the Soul and Its Origin, Book IV, Chapter 3, page 354-355**

**Chapter 3.—How Much Do We Know of the Nature of the Body?**

Well, now, this extremely lucid and eloquent castigation which you have inflicted on our ignorance lays you so strictly under the necessity of knowing every possible thing which appertains to the nature of man, that, should you unhappily be ignorant of any particular, you must (and remember it is not I, but you, that have made the necessity) be compared with “the cattle.” For although you appear to aim your censure at us more especially, when you quote the passage, “Man, although he was in honour, understood not,” inasmuch as we (unlike yourself) hold an honourable place in the Church; yet even you occupy too honourable a rank in nature, not to be preferred above the cattle, with which according to your own judgment you will have to be compared, if you should happen to be ignorant on any of the points which manifestly appertain to your nature. For you have not merely aspersed with your censure those who are affected with the same ignorance as I am myself labouring under, that is to say, concerning the origin of the human soul (although I am not indeed absolutely ignorant even on this point, for I know that God breathed into the face of the first man, and that “man then became a living soul,” (Genesis 2:7)—a truth, however, which I could never have known by myself, unless I had read of it in the Scripture); but you asked in so many words, “What difference is there between a man and a brute beast, if he knows not how to discuss and determine his own quality and nature?” And you seem to have entertained your opinion so distinctly, as to have thought that a man ought to be able to discuss and determine the facts of his own entire quality and nature so clearly, that nothing concerning himself should escape his observation. Now, if this is really the truth of the matter, I must now compare you to “the cattle,” if you cannot tell me the precise number of the hairs of your head. But if, however far we may advance in this life, you allow us to be ignorant of sundry facts appertaining to our nature, I then want to know how far your concession extends, lest, perchance, it may include the very point we are now raising, that we do not by any means know the origin of our soul; although we know,—a thing which belongs to faith,—beyond all doubt, that the soul is a gift to man from God, and that it still is not of the same nature as God Himself. Do you, moreover, think that each person’s ignorance of his own nature must be exactly on the same level as your ignorance of it? Must everybody’s knowledge, too, of the subject be equal to what you have been able to attain to? So that if he is so unfortunate as to possess a slightly larger amount of ignorance than yourself, you must compare him with cattle; and on the same principle, if any one shall be ever so little wiser than yourself on this subject, he will have the pleasure of comparing you with equal justice to the aforesaid cattle. I must therefore request you to tell me, to what extent you permit us to be ignorant of our nature so as to save our distance from the formidable cattle; and I beg you besides duly to reflect, whether he is not further removed from cattle who knows his ignorance of any part of the subject, than he is who thinks he knows what in fact he knows not. **The entire nature of man**

is certainly spirit, soul, and body; therefore, whoever would alienate the body from man's nature, is unwise. Those medical men, however, who are called anatomists have investigated with careful scrutiny, by dissecting processes, even living men, so far as men have been able to retain any life in the hands of the examiners; their researches have penetrated limbs, veins, nerves, bones, marrow, the internal vitals; and all to discover the nature of the body. But none of these men have ever thought of comparing us with the cattle, because of our ignorance of their subject. But perhaps you will say that it is those who are ignorant of the nature of the soul, not of the body, who are to be compared with the brute beasts. Then you ought not to have expressed yourself at starting in the way you have done. Your words are not, "For what difference is there between a man and cattle, if he is ignorant of the nature and quality of the soul;" but you say, "if he knows not how to discuss and determine his own nature and quality." Of course our quality and our nature must be taken account of together with the body, but at the same time the investigation of the several elements of which we are composed is conducted in each case separately. For my own part, indeed, if I wished to display how far it was in my power to treat scientifically and intelligently the entire field of man's nature, I should have to fill many volumes; not to mention how many topics there are which I must confess my ignorance of.

**Commentary:** In summary, this is addressed to Vicentius Victor. Augustine would, even if he filled many volumes, still be ignorant of much of the teaching in the word of God concerning soul and spirit, but he would still know more than Vicentius Victor. I think Augustine's ignorance was more a result of the teaching of the Catholic Church in his time that hindered his study. But one thing he did know, as he states above, and that was that, "The entire nature of man is certainly spirit, soul, and body; therefore, whoever would alienate the body from man's nature, is unwise."

And this is certainly according to the Scripture in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Soul and Its Origin, Book IV, Chapter 12, page 359**

Chapter 12 [VIII.]—The Apostle Paul Could Know the Third Heaven and Paradise, But Not Whether He Was in the Body or Not.

See therefore how many facts of our nature, not of the past but of the present time, and not pertaining to the body only, but also to our inner man, we know nothing about, without deserving to be compared with the brute beasts. And yet this is the opprobrious comparison which you have thought me worthy of, because I have not complete knowledge of the past origin of my soul—although I am not wholly ignorant of it, inasmuch as I know that it was given me by God, and yet that it is not out of God. But when can I enumerate all the particulars relating to the nature of our spirit and our soul of which we are ignorant? Whereas we ought rather to utter that exclamation before God, which the Psalmist uttered: "The knowledge of Thee is too wonderful for me; it is very difficult, I cannot attain to it." (Psalm 139:6) Now why

did he add the words for me, except because he conjectured how incomprehensible was the knowledge of God for himself, inasmuch as he was unable to comprehend even his own self? The apostle was caught up into the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter; and whether this had happened to him in the body or out of the body, he declares himself unable to say; (2 Corinthians 12:4) but yet he has no fear of encountering from you comparison with the cattle. His spirit knew that it was in the third heaven, in paradise; but knew not whether it was in the body. **The third heaven, of course, and paradise were not the Apostle Paul himself; but his body and soul and spirit were himself.** Behold, then, the curious fact: he knew the great things—lofty and divine—which were not himself; but that which appertained to his own nature he was ignorant of. Who in the vast knowledge of such occult things can help being astonished at his great ignorance of his own existence? Who, in short, would believe it possible, if one who errs not had not told us, that “we know not what we should pray for as we ought”? (Romans 8:26) **Where, then, ought our bent and purpose mainly to be—to “reach forth to those things which are before”? And yet you compare me to cattle, if among the things which are behind I have forgotten anything concerning my own origin—although you hear the same apostle say: “Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:13-14)**

**Commentary:** In summary, this is also addressed to Vicentius Victor. Augustine refers in context to **Psalms 139 (KJV):** 1 O lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. 2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. 3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. 5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.

Indeed such knowledge is too wonderful for me. Yet the Psalmist continues as we read further in **Psalms 139 (KJV):** 7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. 12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

God is omniscient, that is, He is all knowing. Augustine then refers in context to **2 Corinthians (KJV):** 1 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.

And Augustine again mentions the three parts of man, as he says, **“The third heaven, of course, and paradise were not the Apostle Paul himself; but his body and soul and spirit were himself.”**



He then acknowledges his own weaknesses, as he refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):26** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

But he concludes, “Where, then, ought our bent and purpose mainly to be—to “reach forth to those things which are before”? And yet you compare me to cattle, if among the things which are behind I have forgotten anything concerning my own origin—although you hear the same apostle say: “Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:13-14)”

And he refers to **Philippians 3 (KJV):13** Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

And this was a high goal for Augustine, as it is for us.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Soul and Its Origin, Book IV, Chapters 19-22, page 362-364**

Chapter 19 [XIII.]—Whether the Soul is a Spirit.

But again, why you would have the soul to be a body, and refuse to deem it a spirit, I cannot see. For if it is not a spirit, on the ground that the apostle named it with distinction from the spirit, when he said, “I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved,” (1 Thessalonians 5:23) the same is a good reason why it is not a body, inasmuch as he named the body, too, as distinct from it. If you affirm that the soul is a body, although they are both distinctly named; you should allow it to be a spirit, although these are also distinctly named. Indeed, the soul has a much greater claim to be regarded by you as a spirit than a body; because you acknowledge the spirit and the soul to be of one substance, but deny the soul and the body to be of one substance. On what principle, then, is the soul a body, when its nature is different from that of a body; and not a spirit, although its nature and a spirit’s is one and the same? Why, according to your argument, must you not confess that even the spirit is a body? For otherwise, if the spirit is not a body, and the soul is a body, the soul and the spirit are not of one and the same substance. You, however, allow them both (although believing them to be two separate things) to have one substance. Therefore, if the soul is a body, the spirit is a body also; for under no other condition can they be regarded as being of one and the same nature. On your own principles, therefore, the statement of the apostle, who mentions, “Your spirit, and soul, and body,” must imply three bodies; yet the body, which has likewise the name of flesh, is of a different nature. And of these three bodies, as you would call them, of which one is of a different, and the other two of one and the same substance, the entire human being is composed—one thing and one existence. Now, although you assert this, yet you will not allow that the two which are of one and the same substance, that is, the soul and the spirit, should have the one designation of spirit; whilst the two things which are not of one and the same substance ought, as you suppose, to have the one name of body.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine is writing to Vicentius Victor. Augustine acknowledges the three parts of man, that is, body, soul, and spirit. But he does not understand how they function together.

## Chapter 20 [XIV.]—The Body Does Not Receive God's Image.

But I pass by all this, lest the discussion between us should degenerate into one of names rather than things. Let us, then, see whether the inner man be the soul, or the spirit, or both. I observe, however, that you have expressed your opinion on the point in writing, calling the inner man the soul; for of this you spoke when you said: "And as the substance congealed, which was incapable of comprehension, it would produce another body within the body rounded and amassed by the force and twirl of its own nature, and thus an inner man would begin to appear, who, being moulded in a corporeal sheath would in its lineaments be shaped after the likeness of its outer man." And from this you draw the following inference: "God's breath, therefore, made the soul; yea, that breath from God was made the soul, an image, substantial, corporeal according to its own nature, like its own body, and conformed to its image." After this you proceed to speak of the spirit, and say: "This soul which had its origin from the breath of God could not exist without an innermost sense and intellect of its own; and such is the spirit." **As I, then, understand your statement, you mean the inner man to be the soul, and the inmost one to be the spirit; as if the latter were inferior to the soul, as this is to the body. Whence it comes to pass, that just as the body receives another body pervading its own inner cavity, which (as you suppose) is the soul; so in its turn must the soul be regarded as having its interior emptiness also, where it could receive the third body, even the spirit; and thus the whole man consists of three, the outer, the inner, and the inmost.** Now, do you not yet perceive what great absurdities follow in your wake, when you attempt the asseveration that the soul is corporeal? Tell me, I pray you, which of the two is it that is to be renewed in the knowledge of God, after the image of Him that created him? (Colossians 3:10) The inner, or the inmost? For my own part, indeed, I do not see that the apostle, besides the inner and the outer man, knows anything of another man inside the inner one, that is, of an inmost man. But you must decide which it is you would have to be renewed after the image of God. How is he to receive this, who has already got the image of the outer man? For if the inner man has run throughout the limbs of the outward one, and congealed (for this is the term you have used; as if a molten shape were formed out of soft clay, which was thickened out of the dust), how, if this same figure which has been impressed upon it, or rather expressed out of a body, is to retain its place, could it be refashioned after the image of God? Is it to have two images—God's from above, that of the body from below—as is said in the case of money, "Heads and Tails"? (Caput et Navia, literally "head and ship," the piece of money having a head of Janus on one side, and a ship on the other. See the matter illustrated in Macrobius, Saturnalia, i. 7, Aur. Vict. Orig. 3.) Will you perhaps say, that the soul received the bodily image, and that the spirit takes God's image, as if the former were contiguous to the body, and the latter to God; and that, therefore, it is really the inmost man which is refashioned after the image of God, and not the inner man? Well, but this pretense is useless. For if the inmost man is as entirely diffused through all the members of the soul, as the inner man of the soul is through the limbs of the body; even it has now, through the soul, received the image of the body, as the soul moulded the same; and thus it

results that it has no means whereby to receive God's image, while the aforementioned image of the body remains impressed upon it; except as in the case of the money which I have just quoted, where there is one form on the upper surface, and another on the lower one. These are the absurd lengths to which you are driven, whether you will or no, when you apply to the consideration of the soul the material ideas of bodily substances. But, as even you yourself with perfect propriety confess, God is not a body. How, then, could a body receive His image? "I beseech you, brother, that you be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind; (Romans 12:1-2) and cherish not "the carnal mind, which is death." (Romans 8:6)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "But I pass by all this, lest the discussion between us should degenerate into one of names rather than things. Let us, then, see whether the inner man be the soul, or the spirit, or both. I observe, however, that you have expressed your opinion on the point in writing, calling the inner man the soul; for of this you spoke when you said: "And as the substance congealed, which was incapable of comprehension, it would produce another body within the body rounded and amassed by the force and twirl of its own nature, and thus an inner man would begin to appear, who, being moulded in a corporeal sheath would in its lineaments be shaped after the likeness of its outer man.""

Augustine is quoting Vicentius Victor here.

Augustine then continues, "And from this you draw the following inference: "God's breath, therefore, made the soul; yea, that breath from God was made the soul, an image, substantial, corporeal according to its own nature, like its own body, and conformed to its image."

Augustine continues, "After this you proceed to speak of the spirit, and say: "This soul which had its origin from the breath of God could not exist without an innermost sense and intellect of its own; and such is the spirit."

Augustine then summarizes, as he says, "As I, then, understand your statement, you mean the inner man to be the soul, and the inmost one to be the spirit; as if the latter were inferior to the soul, as this is to the body. Whence it comes to pass, that just as the body receives another body pervading its own inner cavity, which (as you suppose) is the soul; so in its turn must the soul be regarded as having its interior emptiness also, where it could receive the third body, even the spirit; and thus the whole man consists of three, the outer, the inner, and the inmost."

Augustine then argues against this as he then says, "Now, do you not yet perceive what great absurdities follow in your wake, when you attempt the asseveration that the soul is corporeal? Tell me, I pray you, which of the two is it that is to be renewed in the knowledge of God, after the image of Him that created him? (Colossians 3:10) The inner, or the inmost? For my own part, indeed, I do not see that the apostle, besides the inner and the outer man, knows anything of another man inside the inner one, that is, of an inmost man."

The word "asseveration" means "to affirm or declare positively or earnestly". (**Merriam Webster**)

Augustine refers to **Colossians 3 (KJV):10** And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

He continues, "But you must decide which it is you would have to be renewed after the image of God. How is he to receive this, who has already got the image of the outer man? For if

the inner man has run throughout the limbs of the outward one, and congealed (for this is the term you have used; as if a molten shape were formed out of soft clay, which was thickened out of the dust), how, if this same figure which has been impressed upon it, or rather expressed out of a body, is to retain its place, could it be refashioned after the image of God? Is it to have two images—God’s from above, that of the body from below—as is said in the case of money, “Heads and Tails”? (Caput et Navia, literally “head and ship,” the piece of money having a head of Janus on one side, and a ship on the other. See the matter illustrated in Macrobius, Saturnalia, i. 7, Aur. Vict. Orig. 3.) Will you perhaps say, that the soul received the bodily image, and that the spirit takes God’s image, as if the former were contiguous to the body, and the latter to God; and that, therefore, it is really the inmost man which is refashioned after the image of God, and not the inner man? Well, but this pretense is useless. For if the inmost man is as entirely diffused through all the members of the soul, as the inner man of the soul is through the limbs of the body; even it has now, through the soul, received the image of the body, as the soul moulded the same; and thus it results that it has no means whereby to receive God’s image, while the aforementioned image of the body remains impressed upon it; except as in the case of the money which I have just quoted, where there is one form on the upper surface, and another on the lower one. These are the absurd lengths to which you are driven, whether you will or no, when you apply to the consideration of the soul the material ideas of bodily substances. But, as even you yourself with perfect propriety confess, God is not a body. How, then, could a body receive His image? “I beseech you, brother, that you be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind; (Romans 12:1-2) and cherish not “the carnal mind, which is death.” (Romans 8:6)

He refers to **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

And to **Romans 8 (KJV):6** For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

We know from the teaching of Jesus that when we are born again, our spirit is born from above as we read in **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

That which is born of the Spirit is spirit He says in verse 6. So our spirit is made new when we are born of the Spirit. Our spirit was dead in trespasses and sins, but is now made alive as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our

transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

That we are body, soul, and spirit is revealed in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now being body, soul, and spirit, we are created in the image of God as we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV):26** And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

And as there are three persons in one God, so the three parts of our being reflect the trinity of persons in the Godhead. The Father and the Spirit will never be seen, but the evidence of their presence can be seen through Jesus, the Son of God as we read in **John 14 (KJV):8** Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? 10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. 12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

So we see the Father expressing Himself through Jesus, and the Spirit of God doing the works, relating to the miracles.

Now the soul is composed of the will, the mind, the emotions, or feelings, the heart, and the conscience.

That the will is in the soul, we read in **Job 6 (KJV):7** The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.

And in **Job 7 (KJV):15** So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.

That the soul also is composed of the mind, we read in **Psalms 139 (KJV):14** I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

The soul also includes our emotions, or feelings, as we read in **1 Samuel 1 (KJV):9** So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord. 10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.

And the heart is the center of our emotions, or feelings, as in **Exodus 4 (KJV):14** And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.



And in **Leviticus 26 (KJV):16** I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.

The heart is also the center of our being, and what God wants most as we read in **Deuteronomy 6 (KJV):5** And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Before Christ, our mind and conscience are defiled as we read in **Titus 1 (KJV):15** Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

The soul is how we relate to our fellow man. As our minds are renewed, we begin to see clearly the things of God. We become spiritual, as opposed to carnal, as we grow in grace and knowledge. Knowledge of the word of God gives us right standards by which our conscience may judge by. Knowledge of the word of God also sets us free of the hurts in our past. All of the hurt feelings can be resolved and healed as we walk in the light of the word of God.

So the inner man is really composed of soul and spirit. It is in our spirit that we have fellowship with God. Our spirit connects with God, and with our fellow man through our soul. When we are dead in sin, we have no connection with God, but we can still relate to our fellow man through our soul. But being dead in sin, we have no awareness of spiritual things, as we read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

But our soul is not corporeal, as Vicentius Victor asserts. And our soul and spirit compose our inner man. Before Christ, our spirit is dead in trespasses and sins. Our soul is still aware of this world, but has no awareness of the spiritual. When we receive Christ and we are born of the Spirit, our spirit now has the divine nature of the Holy Spirit who gives birth to our spirit. But our soul must be renewed. As we grow in grace and knowledge of the word of God, this renewal takes place.

Chapter 21 [XV.]—Recognition and Form Belong to Souls as Well as Bodies.

But you say: “If the soul is incorporeal, what was it that the rich man saw in hell? He certainly recognized Lazarus; he did [not (Luke 16:19-31 Non noverat Abraham. But some mss. omit non; rightly, one would think. The meaning then is: “He recognised Abraham.”] **know Abraham. Whence arose to him the knowledge of Abraham, who had died so long before?**” By using these words, I suppose that you do not think a man can be recognized and known without his bodily form. To know yourself, therefore, I imagine that you often stand before your looking glass, lest by forgetting your features you should be unable to recognize yourself. But let me ask you, what man does anybody know more than himself; and whose face can he see less than his own? But who could possibly know God, whom even you do not doubt to be incorporeal, if knowledge could not (as you suppose) accrue without bodily shape; that is, if bodies alone can be recognized? What Christian, however, when discussing subjects of such magnitude and difficulty, can give such little heed to the inspired word as to say, “If the soul be incorporeal, it must of necessity lack form”? Have you forgotten that in that word you have read of “a form of doctrine”? (Romans 6:17) Have you forgotten, too, that it is written concerning Christ Jesus,

previous to His clothing Himself with humanity, that He was “in the form of God”? (Philippians 2:6) **How, then, can you say, “If the soul is incorporeal, it must of necessity lack form;” when you hear of “the form of God,” whom you acknowledge to be incorporeal; and so express yourself, as if form could not possibly exist except in bodies?**

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine argues well here against Vicentius Victor.

He refers to **Luke 16 (KJV):** 19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

And to **Romans 6 (KJV):** 17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

And to **Philippians 2 (KJV):** 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

Though unseen by our physical eyes, yet spirit and soul have identity, and thus form.

Chapter 22.—Names Do Not Imply Corporeity.

**You also say, that “names cease to be given, when form is not distinguished; and that, where there is no designation of persons, there is no giving of names.” Your aim is to prove that Abraham’s soul was corporeal, inasmuch as he could be addressed as “Father Abraham.” Now, we have already said, that there is form even where there is no body.** If, however, you think that where there are not bodies there is no assigning of names, I must beg of you to count the names which occur in this passage of Scripture, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,” (Galatians 5:22-23) and tell me whether you do not recognize the very things of which these are the names; or whether you recognize them so as to descry some outlines of bodies. Come, tell me, to mention only love, for instance, what are its members, its figure, its colour? For if you are not yourself empty-headed, these appurtenances cannot possibly be regarded by you as an empty thing. Then you go on to say: “The look and form must, of course, be corporeal of him whose help is implored.”

Well, let men hear what you say; and let no one implore God's help, because no one can possibly see anything corporeal in Him.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine continues his writing to Vicentius Victor. He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):** 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

His point is that everything has an identity according to its attributes, and so it can have a name.

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On the Soul and Its Origin, Book IV, Chapter 27, page 366**

**Chapter 27.—Is the Soul Wounded When the Body is Wounded?**

What, then, if some such thing is exhibited among the departed; and souls recognize themselves among them, not, indeed, by bodies, but by the semblances of bodies? Now, when we suffer pain, if only in our dreams, although it is only the similitude of bodily limbs which is in action, and not the bodily limbs themselves, still the pain is not merely in semblance, but in reality; as is also the case in the instance of joyous sensations. Inasmuch, however, as St. Perpetua was not yet dead, you probably are unwilling to lay down a precise rule for yourself from that circumstance (although it bears strongly on the question), as to what nature you will suppose those semblances of bodies to partake of, which we have in our dreams. If you allow them to be like bodies, but not bodies actually, then the entire question would be settled. But her brother Dinocrates was dead; she saw him with the wound which he received while alive, and which caused his death. Where is the ground for the earnest contention to which you devoted your efforts, when you laboured to show, that when a limb is cut off, the soul must not be supposed as suffering a like amount of loss by amputation? Observe, the wound was inflicted on the soul of Dinocrates, expelling it by its force from his body, when it was inhabiting that body. How, then, can your opinion be correct, that “when the limbs of the body are cut off, the soul withdraws itself from the stroke, and after condensation retires to other parts, so that no portion of it is amputated with the wound inflicted on the body,” even if the person be asleep and unconscious when the loss of limb is suffered? So great is the vigilance which you have ascribed to the soul, that even should the stroke fall on any part of the flesh without its knowledge, when it is absorbed in the visions of dreams, it would instantly, and by a providential instinct, withdraw itself, and so render it impossible for any blow, or injury, or mutilation to be inflicted upon it. However, you may, as much as you will, ransack your ingenuity for an answer to the natural question, how the soul withdraws the portions of its own existence, and retreats within itself, so that, whenever a limb of the body is cut off or broken, it does not suffer any amputation or fracture in itself; but I cannot help asking you to look at the case of Dinocrates, and to explain to me why his soul did not withdraw from that part of his body which received the mortal wound, and so escape from suffering in itself what was plainly enough seen in his face, even after his body was dead? Is it, perchance, your good pleasure that we should suppose the phenomena in question to be rather the semblances of bodies than the reality; so that as that which is really no wound seems to be a wound, so that which is no body

at all wears the appearance of corporeity? If, indeed, the soul can be wounded by those who wound the body, should we not have good reason to fear that it can be killed also by those who kill the body? This, however, is a fate which the Lord Himself most plainly declares it to be impossible to happen. (Matthew 10:28) And the soul of Dinocrates could not at any rate have died.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine continues his writing to Vicentius Victor. Augustine argues that the soul is not “wounded by those who wound the body”. But our emotions, that is, our feelings, can be hurt and feel pain. We read in **Proverbs 27 (KJV):6** Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

This is not speaking of physical wounds, but words of a friend that speak truth so that change for the better in the life of the friend is caused to take place. And who would not remember a wound in the body?

Our souls can feel bitterness, discouragement, grief for a loss, anger, and more. As we give ourselves permission to feel what we feel, we can process these hurts and be released from the pain and hurt, just as the wound in the body takes time to heal.

Augustine concludes, as he says, “If, indeed, the soul can be wounded by those who wound the body, should we not have good reason to fear that it can be killed also by those who kill the body? This, however, is a fate which the Lord Himself most plainly declares it to be impossible to happen. (Matthew 10:28) And the soul of Dinocrates could not at any rate have died.”

He refers to **Matthew 10 (KJV):28** And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

And as we saw with the rich man in Luke 16:24, he was tormented in the flame, but he did not die.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Soul and Its Origin, Book IV, Chapter 32, page 366-368**

#### **Chapter 32.—Inconsistency of Giving the Soul All the Parts of Sex and Yet No Sex.**

For that form of the soul, whether masculine or feminine, which has the distinction of members characteristic of man and woman, being no semblance merely of body, but actual body, is either a male or a female, whether you will or no, precisely as it appears to be a man or a woman. But if your opinion be correct, and the soul is a body, even a living body, then it both possesses swelling and pendent breasts, and lacks a beard, it has a womb, and all the generative organs of a woman, yet is not a woman after all. Will not mine, then, be a statement more consistent with truth: the soul, indeed, has an eye and has a tongue, has a finger, and all other members which resemble those of the body, and yet the whole is the semblance of a body, not a body really? My statement is open to a general test; everybody can prove it in himself, when he brings home to his mind the image of absent friends; he can prove it with certainty when he recalls the figures both of himself and other persons, which have occurred to him in his dreams. On your part, however, no example can throughout nature be produced of such a monstrosity as you have imagined, where there is a woman's real and living body, but not a woman's sex.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine continues to argue again here, speaking to Vicentius Victor. We can agree with Augustine that the soul does not have a physical body. But it has form, as we read of Samuel in **1 Samuel 28 (KJV):3** Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

Samuel was dead, yet he appeared to Saul in **1 Samuel 28 (KJV):11** Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. 12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? For thou art Saul. 13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. 14 And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. 15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. 16 Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? 17 And the Lord hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David: 18 Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day. 19 Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

Saul saw this in a vision, but Samuel spoke to Saul in the vision, and Saul “perceived that it was Samuel” in verse 14. But beyond this the Scripture does not add any more details about the soul.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Soul and Its Origin, Book IV, Chapters 36-38, page 369-371**

Chapter 36 [XXII.]—He Passes on to the Second Question **About the Soul, Whether It is Called Spirit.**

It now remains for me to show how it is that while the designation spirit is rightly predicated of a part of the soul, not the whole of it,—even as the apostle says, “Your whole spirit, and soul, and body;” (1 Thessalonians 5:23) or, according to the much more expressive statement in the Book of Job, “Thou wilt separate my soul from my spirit,” (Job 7:15)—yet the whole soul is also called by this name; although this question seems to be much more a question of names than of things. For since it is certainly a fact that there is a something in the soul which is properly called “spirit,” while (this being left out of question) it is also designated with equal propriety “soul,” our present contention is not about the things themselves; [Compare On the City of God, xiv. 2, 6, and On the Trinity, x. 11, 18. Augustin denied the trichotomy of the Greek Fathers before Appollinaris, and held that the soul and spirit constituted a single



substantial unity, and this one spiritual essence was “soul” (anima) so far as it was the informing and vivifying principle of the body, and “spirit” (spiritus) so far as it was the power of rational thought.—W.] **mainly because I on my side certainly admit, and you on your part say the same, that that is properly called spirit by which we reason and understand, and yet that these things are distinguishingly designated, as the apostle says “your whole spirit, and soul, and body.” This spirit, however, the same apostle appears also to describe as *mind*; as when he says, “So then with the mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.” (Romans 7:25)** Now the meaning of this is precisely what he expresses in another passage thus: “For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.” (Galatians 5:17) What he designates mind in the former place, he must be understood to call spirit in the latter passage. Not as you interpret the statement, “The whole mind is meant, which consists of soul and spirit,”—a view which I know not where you obtained. By our “mind,” indeed, we usually understand nothing but our rational and intellectual faculty; and thus, when the apostle says, “Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind,” (Ephesians 4:23) what else does he mean than, Be ye renewed in your mind? “The spirit of the mind” is, accordingly, nothing else than the mind, just as “the body of the flesh” is nothing but the flesh; thus it is written, “In putting off the body of the flesh,” (Colossians 2:11) where the apostle calls the flesh “the body of the flesh.” He designates it, indeed, in another point of view as the spirit of man, which he quite distinguishes from the mind: “If,” says he, “I pray with the tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my mind is unfruitful.” (1 Corinthians 14:14) We are not now, however, speaking of that spirit which is distinct from the mind; and this involves a question relating to itself which is really a difficult one. For in many ways and in divers senses the Holy Scriptures make mention of the spirit; but with respect to that we are now speaking of, by which we exercise reason, intelligence, and wisdom, we are both agreed that it is called (and indeed rightly called) “spirit,” in such a sense as not to include the entire soul, but a part of it. If, however, you contend that the soul is not the spirit, on the ground that the understanding is distinctly called “spirit,” you may as well deny that the whole seed of Jacob is called Israel, since, apart from Judah, the same appellation was distinctly and separately borne by the ten tribes which were then organized in Samaria. But why need we linger any longer here on this subject?

**Commentary:** Again, Augustine continues to argue here, speaking to Vicentius Victor. And Augustine begins as he says, **“It now remains for me to show how it is that while the designation spirit is rightly predicated of a part of the soul, not the whole of it,—even as the apostle says, “Your whole spirit, and soul, and body;” (1 Thessalonians 5:23) or, according to the much more expressive statement in the Book of Job, “Thou wilt separate my soul from my spirit,” (Job 7:15)—yet the whole soul is also called by this name; although this question seems to be much more a question of names than of things.”**

He refers to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And in context to **Job 7 (Septuagint):15** Thou wilt separate life from my spirit; and yet keep my bones from death. 16 For I shall not live for ever, that I should patiently endure: depart from me, for my life is vain.

And in context to **Job 7 (Douay Rheims):15** So that my soul rather chooseth hanging, and my bones death. 16 I have done with hope, I shall now live no longer: spare me, for my days are nothing.

And in context to **Job 7 (KJV):15** So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life. 16 I loathe it; I would not live alway: let me alone; for my days are vanity.

Augustine is relying on the Septuagint here.

He continues, “For since it is certainly a fact that there is a something in the soul which is properly called “spirit,” while (this being left out of question) it is also designated with equal propriety “soul,” our present contention is not about the things themselves; mainly because I on my side certainly admit, and you on your part say the same, that that is properly called spirit by which we reason and understand, and yet that these things are distinguishingly designated, as the apostle says “your whole spirit, and soul, and body.” This spirit, however, the same apostle appears also to describe as mind; as when he says, “So then with the mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.” (Romans 7:25)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):25** I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

But we read of mind and the soul in **Psalms 139 (KJV):14** I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

And also as a faculty of our spirit in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):11** For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

The spirit of man, that has been born again, perceives with the mind spiritual things, the things of God. The mind of our soul perceives the things of this world.

Augustine continues, “Now the meaning of this is precisely what he expresses in another passage thus: “For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.” (Galatians 5:17)”

He refers here to **Galatians 5 (KJV):17** For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

He then argues, “What he designates mind in the former place, he must be understood to call spirit in the latter passage.”

But the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:17 is the presence of the Holy Spirit in our spirits which have been born of the Spirit. It speaks of the new divine nature in our spirits that is opposed to the sinful nature in our flesh.

Augustine continues, “Not as you interpret the statement, “The whole mind is meant, which consists of soul and spirit,”—a view which I know not where you obtained. By our “mind,” indeed, we usually understand nothing but our rational and intellectual faculty; and thus, when the apostle says, “Be ye renewed in the spirit of your mind,” (Ephesians 4:23) what else does he mean than, Be ye renewed in your mind?”

He refers in context to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):20** But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Being “renewed in the spirit of your mind” is speaking of a renewal that takes place in our minds, when we reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin as in **Romans 6 (KJV):11** Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is the truth in the word of God that cleanses us, and renews our minds. As we agree with the word of God, our minds are renewed. This is something that happens in our soul, by means of our spirit which is controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Augustine continues, ““The spirit of the mind” is, accordingly, nothing else than the mind, just as “the body of the flesh” is nothing but the flesh; thus it is written, “In putting off the body of the flesh,” (Colossians 2:11) where the apostle calls the flesh “the body of the flesh.””

He refers to **Colossians 2 (Douay Rheims):11** In whom also you are circumcised with circumcision not made by hand in despoiling of the body of the flesh: but in the circumcision of Christ.

And to **Colossians 2 (KJV):11** In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

But the words “of the sins” are not in the best Greek manuscripts, so the verse should read as in **Colossians 2 (NASB):11** and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;

Augustine then argues, “He designates it, indeed, in another point of view as the spirit of man, which he quite distinguishes from the mind: “If,” says he, “I pray with the tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my mind is unfruitful.” (1 Corinthians 14:14)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):14** For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

But if our spirit prays and our mind is unfruitful when I pray with my spirit, it is evident that our mind is in our soul.

He then concludes, “We are not now, however, speaking of that spirit which is distinct from the mind; and this involves a question relating to itself which is really a difficult one. For in many ways and in divers senses the Holy Scriptures make mention of the spirit; but with respect to that we are now speaking of, by which we exercise reason, intelligence, and wisdom, we are both agreed that it is called (and indeed rightly called) “spirit,” in such a sense as not to include the entire soul, but a part of it. If, however, you contend that the soul is not the spirit, on the ground that the understanding is distinctly called “spirit,” you may as well deny that the whole seed of Jacob is called Israel, since, apart from Judah, the same appellation was distinctly and separately borne by the ten tribes which were then organized in Samaria. But why need we linger any longer here on this subject?”

But the Scriptures teach that spirit has a mind as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):27** And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

And Paul speaks of the spiritual mind in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

So he says that they that are after the Spirit do mind, or think on, the things of the Spirit, and in so doing we become spiritually minded, which is life and peace.

Paul explains in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):6** Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

The word “perfect” in the Greek is τέλειος (pronounced téléios, tel'-i-os;) from G5056; complete (in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc.); neuter (as noun, with G3588) completeness:—of full age, man, perfect. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5046.**

So in context, we read that “we speak wisdom among them that are of full age, or maturity” in Christ. We then read as in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):7** But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: 8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

So the spirit has a mind. We continue to read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

We have the mind of Christ. A spiritual mind is able to discern spiritual things. We become spiritually minded as we fill ourselves with the word of God, rightly divided.

So when Paul speaks of being renewed in the spirit of your mind in Ephesians 4:23, he is saying to think upon spiritual things, that is as we read in **Philippians 4 (KJV):8** Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

This will renew our mind. And this has a specific purpose as we read in context again in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):20** But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

We must choose with our will to put off the former conversation the old man, and be renewed in the spirit of our mind, and put on the new man, which is our spirit now that it has been born again, and “created in righteousness and true holiness”.

This putting off looks like what we continue to read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):25** Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of

another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

There is a difference between soul and spirit as we read again in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Spirit is not just mind, as Augustine asserts.

### Chapter 37 [XXIII.]—Wide and Narrow Sense of the Word “Spirit.”

But now, with a view to our easier elucidation, I beg you to observe that what is the soul is also designated spirit in the Scripture which narrates an incident in our Lord's death, thus, “He bowed His head and gave up the spirit.” (John 19:30) Now, when you hear or read these words, you wish to understand them as if the whole were signified by a part, and not because that which is the soul may also be called spirit. But I shall, for the purpose of being able the more readily to prove what I say, actually summon yourself with all promptitude and convenience as my witness. For you have defined spirit in such terms that cattle appear not to have a spirit, but a soul. Irrational animals are so called, because they have not the power of intelligence and reason. Accordingly, when you admonished man himself to know his own nature, you spoke as follows: “Now, inasmuch as the good God has made nothing without a purpose, He has produced man himself as a rational animal, capable of intelligence, endowed with reason, and enlivened by sensibility, so as to be able to distribute in a wise arrangement all things that are void of reason.” In these words of yours you have plainly asserted what is certainly most true, that man is endowed with reason and capable of intelligence, which, of course, animals void of reason are not. And you have, in accordance with this view, quoted a passage of Scripture, and, adopting its language, have compared men of no understanding to the cattle, which, of course, have not intellect. (Psalm 49:20) A statement the like to which occurs in another passage of Scripture: “Be ye not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding.” (Psalm 32:9) This being the case, I want you also to observe in what terms you have defined and described the spirit when trying to distinguish it from the soul: “This soul,” you say, “which has its origin from the breath of God, could not have possibly been without an inner sense and intellect of its own; and this is the spirit.” A little afterwards you add: “And although the soul animates the body, yet inasmuch as it possesses sense, and wisdom, and vigour, there must needs be a spirit.” And then somewhat further on you say: “The soul is one thing, and the spirit—which is the soul's wisdom and sense—is another.” In these words you plainly enough indicate what you take the spirit of man to mean; that it is even our rational faculty, whereby the soul exercises sense and intelligence,—not, indeed, the sensation which is



felt by the bodily senses, but the operation of that innermost sense from which arises the term sentiment. Owing to this it is, no doubt, that we are placed above brute animals, since these are unendowed with reason. These animals therefore have not spirit,—that is to say, intellect and a sense of reason and wisdom,—but only soul. For it is of these that it was spoken, “Let the waters bring forth the creeping creatures that have a living soul; (Genesis 1:20) and again, “Let the earth bring forth the living soul.” (Genesis 1:24) In order, indeed, that you may have the fullest and clearest assurance that what is the soul is in the usage of the Holy Scriptures also called spirit, the soul of a brute animal has the designation of spirit. And of course cattle have not that spirit which you, my beloved brother, have defined as being distinct from the soul. It is therefore quite evident that the soul of a brute animal could be rightly called “spirit” in a general sense of the term; as we read in the Book of Ecclesiastes, “Who knoweth the spirit of the sons of men, whether it goeth upward; and the spirit of the beast, whether it goeth downward into the earth?” (Ecclesiastes 3:21) In like manner, touching the devastation of the deluge, the Scripture testifies, “All flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: and all things which have the spirit of life.” (Genesis 7:21-22) **Here, if we remove all the windings of doubtful disputation, we understand the term spirit to be synonymous with soul in its general sense.** Of so wide a signification is this term, that even God is called “a spirit;” (John 4:24) and a stormy blast of the air, although it has material substance, is called by the psalmist the “spirit” of a tempest. (Psalm 55:8) **For all these reasons, therefore, you will no longer deny that what is the soul is called also spirit; I have, I think, adduced enough from the pages of Holy Scripture to secure your assent in passages where the soul of the very brute beast, which has no understanding, is designated spirit. If, then, you take and wisely consider what has been advanced in our discussion about the incorporeity of the soul, there is no further reason why you should take offence at my having said that I was sure the soul was not body, but spirit,—both because it is proved to be not corporeal, and because in its general sense it is denominated spirit.**

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, speaking to Vicentius Victor. He begins as he says, “But now, with a view to our easier elucidation, I beg you to observe that what is the soul is also designated spirit in the Scripture which narrates an incident in our Lord’s death, thus, “He bowed His head and gave up the spirit.” (John 19:30)”

Augustine refers to **John 19 (KJV):30** When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

He continues, “Now, when you hear or read these words, you wish to understand them as if the whole were signified by a part, and not because that which is the soul may also be called spirit. But I shall, for the purpose of being able the more readily to prove what I say, actually summon yourself with all promptitude and convenience as my witness. For you have defined spirit in such terms that cattle appear not to have a spirit, but a soul. Irrational animals are so called, because they have not the power of intelligence and reason. Accordingly, when you admonished man himself to know his own nature, you spoke as follows: “Now, inasmuch as the good God has made nothing without a purpose, He has produced man himself as a rational animal, capable of intelligence, endowed with reason, and enlivened by sensibility, so as to be able to distribute in a wise arrangement all things that are void of reason.” In these words of

yours you have plainly asserted what is certainly most true, that man is endowed with reason and capable of intelligence, which, of course, animals void of reason are not. And you have, in accordance with this view, quoted a passage of Scripture, and, adopting its language, have compared men of no understanding to the cattle, which, of course, have not intellect. (Psalm 49:20)”

So man is different from the animals in that he is “endowed with reason and capable of intelligence, which, of course, animals void of reason are not”.

And he refers to **Psalm 49 (KJV):20** Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.

He continues, “A statement the like to which occurs in another passage of Scripture: “Be ye not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding.” (Psalm 32:9)”

He refers to **Psalm 32 (KJV):9** Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

He continues, “This being the case, I want you also to observe in what terms you have defined and described the spirit when trying to distinguish it from the soul:”

- 1.) “This soul,” you say, “which has its origin from the breath of God, could not have possibly been without an inner sense and intellect of its own; and this is the spirit.”
- 2.) A little afterwards you add: “And although the soul animates the body, yet inasmuch as it possesses sense, and wisdom, and vigour, there must needs be a spirit.”
- 3.) And then somewhat further on you say: “The soul is one thing, and the spirit—which is the soul’s wisdom and sense—is another.””

He continues, as he summarizes, “In these words you plainly enough indicate what you take the spirit of man to mean; that it is even our rational faculty, whereby the soul exercises sense and intelligence,—not, indeed, the sensation which is felt by the bodily senses, but the operation of that innermost sense from which arises the term sentiment. Owing to this it is, no doubt, that we are placed above brute animals, since these are unendowed with reason. These animals therefore have not spirit,—that is to say, intellect and a sense of reason and wisdom,—but only soul. For it is of these that it was spoken, “Let the waters bring forth the creeping creatures that have a living soul; (Genesis 1:20) and again, “Let the earth bring forth the living soul.” (Genesis 1:24)

He refers to **Genesis 1 (KJV):20** And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

And to **Genesis 1 (KJV):24** And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

Augustine continues, “In order, indeed, that you may have the fullest and clearest assurance that what is the soul is in the usage of the Holy Scriptures also called spirit, the soul of a brute animal has the designation of spirit. And of course cattle have not that spirit which you, my beloved brother, have defined as being distinct from the soul. It is therefore quite evident that the soul of a brute animal could be rightly called “spirit” in a general sense of the term; as we read in the Book of Ecclesiastes, “Who knoweth the spirit of the sons of men, whether it goeth upward; and the spirit of the beast, whether it goeth downward into the earth?” (Ecclesiastes 3:21)”

He refers to **Ecclesiastes 3 (KJV):21** Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

Augustine argues well, and according to Vicentius Victor, that since “cattle have not that spirit which you, my beloved brother, have defined as being distinct from the soul”, “It is therefore quite evident that the soul of a brute animal could be rightly called “spirit” in a general sense of the term”.

But Augustine is using Victor’s words to prove his own belief that agrees in part with Victor, that is, that “the soul is in the usage of the Holy Scriptures also called spirit”, and that “the soul of a brute animal has the designation of spirit”.

He continues, “In like manner, touching the devastation of the deluge, the Scripture testifies, “All flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: and all things which have the spirit of life.” (Genesis 7:21-22)”

He refers to **Genesis 7 (KJV):21** And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: 22 All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.

And Augustine then asserts, “**Here, if we remove all the windings of doubtful disputation, we understand the term spirit to be synonymous with soul in its general sense.**”

He continues, “Of so wide a signification is this term, that even God is called “a spirit;” (John 4:24) and a stormy blast of the air, although it has material substance, is called by the psalmist the “spirit” of a tempest. (Psalm 55:8)”

He refers to **John 4 (KJV):24** God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

And to **Psalms 55 (KJV):8** I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.

The word for “windy” in Hebrew is רוּחַ (pronounced rū·akh), from H7306; wind; by resemblance breath, i.e. a sensible (or even violent) exhalation; figuratively, life, anger, unsubstantiality; by extension, a region of the sky; by resemblance spirit, but only of a rational being (including its expression and functions):—air, anger, blast, breath, × cool, courage, mind, ×quarter, ×side, spirit(-ual), tempest, ×vain, (whirl-) wind(-y). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H7307.**

This Hebrew word is translated in the King James version as Spirit or spirit (232x), wind (92x), breath (27x), side (6x), mind (5x), blast (4x), vain (2x), air (1x), anger(1x), cool (1x), courage (1x), miscellaneous (6x).

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=H7307&t=KJV>

Augustine concludes, “**For all these reasons, therefore, you will no longer deny that what is the soul is called also spirit; I have, I think, adduced enough from the pages of Holy Scripture to secure your assent in passages where the soul of the very brute beast, which has no understanding, is designated spirit. If, then, you take and wisely consider what has been advanced in our discussion about the incorporeity of the soul, there is no further reason why you should take offence at my having said that I was sure the soul was not body, but spirit,—both because it is proved to be not corporeal, and because in its general sense it is denominated spirit.**”

The soul is not corporeal, just as spirit is not corporeal, as Augustine concludes. However, the soul is not spirit as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is

quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

As there is a difference between the joints and marrow, and the thoughts and intents of the heart, so there is a “dividing asunder of soul and spirit”.

#### Chapter 38 [XXIV.]—Victor’s Chief Errors Again Pointed Out.

Wherefore if you take these books, which I have with a sincere and affectionate interest written in answer to your opinions, and read them with a reciprocal love for me; if you attend to what you have yourself declared in the beginning of your first book, and “are anxious not to insist on any opinion of your own, if it be found an improbable one,” then I beseech you to beware especially of those eleven errors which I warned you of in the preceding book of this treatise. Do not say, that “the soul is of God in such a sense that He created it not out of no, nor out of another, but out of His own nature;” or that, “as God who gives is Himself ever existent, so is He ever giving souls through infinite time;” or that “the soul lost some merit through the flesh, which it had previous to the flesh;” or that “the soul by means of the flesh repairs its ancient condition, and is born again through the very same flesh, by which it had deserved to be polluted;” or that “the soul deserved to be sinful even prior to sin;” or that “infants who die without the regeneration of baptism, may yet attain to forgiveness of their original sins;” or that “they whom the Lord has predestinated to be baptized can be taken away from His predestination, or die before that has been accomplished in them which the Almighty had predetermined;” or that “it is of those who expire before they are baptized that the Scripture says, ‘Speedily was he taken away, lest wickedness should alter his understanding,’”—with the remainder of the passage to the same effect; or that “there are some mansions outside the kingdom of God, belonging to the ‘many,’ which the Lord said were in His Father’s house;” or that “the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ ought to be offered in behalf of those who have departed out of the body without being baptized;” or that “any of those persons who die without Christ’s baptism, are received for a while into paradise, and afterwards attain even to the blessedness of the kingdom of heaven.” Above all things, beware of these opinions, my son, and, as you wish to be the vanquisher of error, do not rejoice in the surname of “Vincentius.” And when you are ignorant on any subject, do not think that you know it; but in order to get real knowledge, learn how to be ignorant. For we commit a sin by affecting to be ignorant of nothing among “the secret things of God;” by constructing random theories about unknown things, and taking them for known; and by producing and defending errors as if they were truth. As for my own ignorance on the question whether the souls of men are created afresh at every birth, or are transmitted by the parents (an ignorance which is, however, modified by my belief, which it would be impious to falter in, that they are certainly made by the Divine Creator, though not of His own substance), I think that your loving self will by this time be persuaded that it either ought not to be censured at all, or, if it ought, that it should be done by a man who is capable by his learning of removing it altogether; and so also with respect to my other opinions, that while souls have in them the incorporeal semblances of bodies, they are not themselves bodies; **and that, without impairing the natural distinction between soul and spirit, the soul is in a general sense actually designated spirit.** If, indeed, I have unfortunately failed to

persuade you, I must leave it rather to my readers to determine whether what I have advanced ought not to have convinced you.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues his writing to Vicentius Victor, as he says, “Wherefore if you take these books, which I have with a sincere and affectionate interest written in answer to your opinions, and read them with a reciprocal love for me; if you attend to what you have yourself declared in the beginning of your first book, and “are anxious not to insist on any opinion of your own, if it be found an improbable one,” then I beseech you to beware especially of those eleven errors which I warned you of in the preceding book of this treatise.”

He then lists the errors:

- 1.) “Do not say, that “the soul is of God in such a sense that He created it not out of no, nor out of another, but out of His own nature;”
- 2.) or that, “as God who gives is Himself ever existent, so is He ever giving souls through infinite time;”
- 3.) or that “the soul lost some merit through the flesh, which it had previous to the flesh;”
- 4.) or that “the soul by means of the flesh repairs its ancient condition, and is born again through the very same flesh, by which it had deserved to be polluted;”
- 5.) or that “the soul deserved to be sinful even prior to sin;”
- 6.) or that “infants who die without the regeneration of baptism, may yet attain to forgiveness of their original sins;”
- 7.) or that “they whom the Lord has predestinated to be baptized can be taken away from His predestination, or die before that has been accomplished in them which the Almighty had predetermined;”
- 8.) or that “it is of those who expire before they are baptized that the Scripture says, ‘Speedily was he taken away, lest wickedness should alter his understanding,’”—with the remainder of the passage to the same effect;
- 9.) or that “there are some mansions outside the kingdom of God, belonging to the ‘many,’ which the Lord said were in His Father’s house;”
- 10.) or that “the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ ought to be offered in behalf of those who have departed out of the body without being baptized;”
- 11.) or that “any of those persons who die without Christ’s baptism, are received for a while into paradise, and afterwards attain even to the blessedness of the kingdom of heaven.””

He continues, as he admonishes, “Above all things, beware of these opinions, my son, and, as you wish to be the vanquisher of error, do not rejoice in the surname of “Vincentius.” And when you are ignorant on any subject, do not think that you know it; but in order to get real knowledge, learn how to be ignorant. For we commit a sin by affecting to be ignorant of nothing among “the secret things of God;” by constructing random theories about unknown things, and taking them for known; and by producing and defending errors as if they were truth.”

He then admits, “As for my own ignorance on the question whether the souls of men are created afresh at every birth, or are transmitted by the parents (an ignorance which is, however, modified by my belief, which it would be impious to falter in, that they are certainly made by the Divine Creator, though not of His own substance), I think that your loving self will by this



time be persuaded that it either ought not to be censured at all, or, if it ought, that it should be done by a man who is capable by his learning of removing it altogether; and so also with respect to my other opinions, that while souls have in them the incorporeal semblances of bodies, they are not themselves bodies; **and that, without impairing the natural distinction between soul and spirit, the soul is in a general sense actually designated spirit.** If, indeed, I have unfortunately failed to persuade you, I must leave it rather to my readers to determine whether what I have advanced ought not to have convinced you.”

Augustine has concluded, **“that, without impairing the natural distinction between soul and spirit, the soul is in a general sense actually designated spirit”.**

To see the **Threefold Nature of Man**, click here:

<http://www.theriskofchrist.com/charts/images/threefoldnature.jpeg>

Beasts have a spirit and a soul. The difference is that their minds are of very low cognitive ability, in comparison to man. And they are not able to have fellowship with their creator, as man is able to have fellowship.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermons on New Testament Lessons, Sermon XII. [LXII. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel, Matthew 8:8, “I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof,” etc., and of the words of the apostle, 1 Corinthians 8:10, “For if a man see thee who hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol’s temple,” etc., paragraph 2, page 298-299**

2. For so, as we may understand from the words of the Lord Himself, did He call back from His discipleship a certain proud man, who of his own accord was desirous to go with Him. “Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.” (Luke 9:57) And the Lord seeing in his heart what was invisible, said, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head.” (Matthew 8:20) That is, in thee, guile like the fox doth dwell, and pride as the birds of heaven. But the Son of Man simple as opposed to guile, lowly as opposed to pride, hath not where to lay His Head; and this very laying, not the raising up of the head, teaches humility. Therefore doth He call back this one who was desirous to go, and another who refused He draweth onward. For in the same place He saith to a certain man, “Follow Me.” And he said, “I will follow Thee, Lord, but let me first go and bury my father.” (Luke 9:59) His excuse was indeed a dutiful one: and therefore was he the more worthy to have his excuse removed, and his calling confirmed. What he wished to do was an act of dutifulness; but the Master taught him what he ought to prefer. For He wished him to be a preacher of the living word, to make others live. But there were others by whom that first necessary office might be fulfilled. “Let the dead,” He saith, “bury their dead.” **When unbelievers bury a dead body, the dead bury the dead. The body of the one hath lost its soul, the soul of the others hath lost God. For as the soul is the life of the body; so is God the life of the soul. As the body expires when it loses the soul, so doth the soul expire when it loses God. The loss of God is the death of the soul: the loss of the soul the death of the body. The death of the body is necessary; the death of the soul voluntary.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “For so, as we may understand from the words of the Lord Himself, did He call back from His discipleship a certain proud man, who of his

own accord was desirous to go with Him. “Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.” (Luke 9:57)”

He refers to **Luke 9 (KJV):57** And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

Augustine continues, “And the Lord seeing in his heart what was invisible, said, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head.” (Luke 9:58)”

He refers to **Luke 9 (KJV):58** And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

He continues, “That is, in thee, guile like the fox doth dwell, and pride as the birds of heaven. But the Son of Man simple as opposed to guile, lowly as opposed to pride, hath not where to lay His Head; and this very laying, not the raising up of the head, teaches humility. Therefore doth He call back this one who was desirous to go, and another who refused He draweth onward. For in the same place He saith to a certain man, “Follow Me.” And he said, “I will follow Thee, Lord, but let me first go and bury my father.” (Luke 9:59)”

He refers to **Luke 9 (KJV):59** And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

He concludes, “His excuse was indeed a dutiful one: and therefore was he the more worthy to have his excuse removed, and his calling confirmed. What he wished to do was an act of dutifulness; but the Master taught him what he ought to prefer. For He wished him to be a preacher of the living word, to make others live. But there were others by whom that first necessary office might be fulfilled. “Let the dead,” He saith, “bury their dead.””

He refers in context to **Luke 9 (KJV):60** Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. 61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. 62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

He continues, “When unbelievers bury a dead body, the dead bury the dead. The body of the one hath lost its soul, the soul of the others hath lost God. For as the soul is the life of the body; so is God the life of the soul. As the body expires when it loses the soul, so doth the soul expire when it loses God. The loss of God is the death of the soul: the loss of the soul the death of the body. The death of the body is necessary; the death of the soul voluntary.”

Soul and spirit are used interchangeably at times in referring to death, as we read in **Genesis 35 (KJV):18** And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.

And in **1 Kings 17 (KJV):21** And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. 22 And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

And in **Acts 7 (KJV):59** And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

And in **Luke 8 (KJV):54** And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. 55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

But Augustine did not understand the difference between the soul and the spirit of man. The spirit of the man who is unsaved is dead, in trespasses and sins, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

That is, the unsaved have no relationship with God. This is why we must be born again as Jesus revealed in **John 3 (ESV):1** Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” 3 Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 4 Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” 5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Whatever is born of the spirit is spirit, Jesus says in verse 6. When we are born of the Spirit of God, our spirit now has eternal life, with a new divine nature. This is why our inner man cannot sin as the apostle John says in **1 John 3 (KJV):9** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

But our soul is composed of our mind, our will, our heart which is the center of our emotions or feelings, and our conscience. Before we are saved, our mind and conscience are defiled as we read in **Titus 1 (KJV):15** Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

Our heart was desperately wicked as we read in **Jeremiah 17 (KJV):9** The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

But the new birth is as described in **Ezekiel 36 (KJV):26** A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

When we are born again, we have a “new spirit”, being born again of the Spirit of God. Now, having a new spirit, we have a new nature as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

This new divine nature in our spirits is “the law of the Spirit of life” mentioned in **Romans 8 (KJV):2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Now, we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):7** And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

The “breath of life” relates to the spirit of man. When the spirit of man is united with the body, it becomes a “living soul”. When we are born again, our soul begins a journey of a

progressive sanctification. Our mind must be renewed and cleansed of all our old ways of thinking. Our hearts must be healed of all of our hurt feelings from the past. Our will is now free to make wise choices. Our conscience must be cleansed, and given right standards by which to judge by, which we receive when our minds are renewed by the knowledge of the word of God. This progressive sanctification will not be complete until we see Him, as in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine  
Sermons on New Testament Lessons, Sermon XXXVIII. [LXXXVIII. Ben.] On the words  
of the Gospel, Matt. xx. 30, about the two blind men sitting by the way side,  
and crying out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Thou Son of David.”, paragraph 3, page 379**

3. These things then the Lord did to invite us to the faith. This faith reigneth now in the Church, which is spread throughout the whole world. And now He worketh greater cures, on account of which He disdained not then to exhibit those lesser ones. For as the soul is better than the body, so is the saving health of the soul better than the health of the body. The blind body doth not now open its eyes by a miracle of the Lord, but the blinded heart openeth its eyes to the word of the Lord. The mortal corpse doth not now rise again, but the soul doth rise again which lay dead in a living body. The deaf ears of the body are not now opened; but how many have the ears of their heart closed, which yet fly open at the penetrating word of God, so that they believe who did not believe, and they live well, who did live evilly, and they obey, who did not obey; and we say, “Such a man is become a believer;” and we wonder when we hear of them whom once we had known as hardened. Why then dost thou marvel at one who now believes, who is living innocently, and serving God; but because thou dost behold him seeing, whom thou hadst known to be blind; dost behold him living, whom thou hadst known to be dead; dost behold him hearing, whom thou hadst known to be deaf? For consider that there are who are dead in another than the ordinary sense, of whom the Lord spake to a certain man who delayed to follow the Lord, because he wished to bury his father; “Let the dead,” said He, “bury their dead.” (Matthew 8:22) Surely these dead buriers are not dead in body; for if this were so, they could not bury dead bodies. Yet doth he call them dead; where, but in the soul within? For as we may often see in a household, itself sound and well, the master of the same house lying dead; so in a sound body do many carry a dead soul within; and these the Apostle arouses thus, “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” (Ephesians 5:14) It is the Same who giveth light to the blind, that awakeneth the dead. For it is with His voice that the cry is made by the Apostle to the dead, “Awake, thou that sleepest.” And the blind will be enlightened with light, when he shall have risen again. And how many deaf men did the Lord see before His eyes, when He said, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” (Matthew 11:15) For who was standing before Him without his bodily ears? What other ears then did He seek for, but those of the inner man?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “These things then the Lord did to invite us to the faith. This faith reigneth now in the Church, which is spread throughout the whole world. And now He worketh greater cures, on account of which He disdained not then to exhibit those

lesser ones. For as the soul is better than the body, so is the saving health of the soul better than the health of the body. The blind body doth not now open its eyes by a miracle of the Lord, but the blinded heart openeth its eyes to the word of the Lord.”

The Lord opened Lydia’s heart in **Acts 16 (NASB):14** A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

It was Augustine’s testimony that, in his time, “The blind body doth not now open its eyes by a miracle of the Lord”, but he adds, “the blinded heart openeth its eyes to the word of the Lord”, which is also a miracle.

And Jesus spoke as in **Matthew 13 (KJV):13** Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

Augustine continues, “The mortal corpse doth not now rise again, but the soul doth rise again which lay dead in a living body.”

Again, It was Augustine’s testimony that, in his time, “The mortal corpse doth not now rise again”, but he adds, “the soul doth rise again which lay dead in a living body.”

Before we accept Christ we are dead in trespasses and sins as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Augustine attributes spiritual death to the soul, which he thought was composed of spirit. But Jesus revealed that the Spirit gives birth to spirit as we read in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Augustine continues, “The deaf ears of the body are not now opened; but how many have the ears of their heart closed, which yet fly open at the penetrating word of God, so that they believe who did not believe, and they live well, who did live evilly, and they obey, who did not obey; and we say, “Such a man is become a believer;” and we wonder when we hear of them whom once we had known as hardened.”

Again, it was Augustine’s testimony that, in his time, “The deaf ears of the body are not now opened”, but he then asks, “how many have the ears of their heart closed, which yet fly open at the penetrating word of God, so that they believe who did not believe...”

The soul includes our heart, which is the center of our emotions, and our mind, our will, and our conscience. Before we accept Christ, we are just natural men and women, as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit



of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Our soul is still alive in a natural sense. We are able to perceive things with our mind, and feel things with our heart. When the Gospel is preached, our minds are enlightened as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):18** The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints...

Augustine continues, “Why then dost thou marvel at one who now believes, who is living innocently, and serving God; but because thou dost behold him seeing, whom thou hadst known to be blind; dost behold him living, whom thou hadst known to be dead; dost behold him hearing, whom thou hadst known to be deaf? For consider that there are who are dead in another than the ordinary sense, of whom the Lord spake to a certain man who delayed to follow the Lord, because he wished to bury his father; “Let the dead,” said He, “bury their dead.” (Matthew 8:22)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 8 (KJV):21** And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. 22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

He continues, “Surely these dead buriers are not dead in body; for if this were so, they could not bury dead bodies. Yet doth he call them dead; where, but in the soul within? For as we may often see in a household, itself sound and well, the master of the same house lying dead; so in a sound body do many carry a dead soul within; and these the Apostle arouses thus, “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” (Ephesians 5:14)”

He refers to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):14** Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

It is our spirit that is dead in the sense that it has no contact or relationship with God. And when we are born again, our spirit is given birth by the Spirit of God, and we now experience the love of God in our soul.

Augustine continues, “It is the Same who giveth light to the blind, that awakeneth the dead. For it is with His voice that the cry is made by the Apostle to the dead, “Awake, thou that sleepest.” And the blind will be enlightened with light, when he shall have risen again. And how many deaf men did the Lord see before His eyes, when He said, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” (Matthew 11:15)”

He refers to **Matthew 11 (KJV):15** He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

He concludes, “For who was standing before Him without his bodily ears? What other ears then did He seek for, but those of the inner man?”

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate IX. Chapter II. 1–11, paragraph 8, page 65-66**

8. Wherefore, whoso names the Father and the Son ought thereby to understand the mutual love of the Father and Son, which is the Holy Spirit. And perhaps the Scriptures on being examined (I do not say that I am able to show you this today, or as if another proof cannot be found),—nevertheless, the Scriptures, perhaps, on being searched, do show us that the Holy Spirit is charity. And do not count charity a thing cheap. How, indeed, can it be cheap, when all

things that are said to be not cheap are called dear (*chara*)? Therefore, if what is not cheap is dear, what is dearer than dearness itself (*charitas*)? The apostle so commends charity to us that he says, “I show unto you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I know all mysteries and all knowledge, and have prophecy and all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I distribute all my goods to the poor, and give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” (1 Corinthians 13:1-3) How great, then, is charity, which, if wanting, in vain have we all things else; if present, rightly have we all things! Yet the Apostle Paul, setting forth the praise of charity with copiousness and fullness, has said less of it than did the Apostle John in brief, whose Gospel this is. For he has not hesitated to say, “God is love.” It is also written, “Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given us.” (Romans 5:5) Who, then, can name the Father and the Son without thereby understanding the love of the Father and Son? Which when one begins to have, he will have the Holy Spirit; which if one has not, he will not have the Holy Spirit. **And just as thy body, if it be without spirit, namely thy soul, is dead; so likewise thy soul, if it be without the Holy Spirit, that is, without charity, will be reckoned dead.** Therefore “The waterpots contained two metretæ apiece,” because the Father and the Son are proclaimed in the prophecy of all the periods; but the Holy Spirit is there also, and therefore it is added, “or three apiece.” “I and the Father,” saith He, “are one.” (John 10:30) But far be it from us to suppose that where we are told, “I and the Father are one,” the Holy Spirit is not there. Yet since he named the Father and the Son, let the waterpots contain “two metretæ apiece,” but attend to this, “or three apiece.” “Go, baptize the nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” So, therefore, when it says “two apiece,” the Trinity is not expressed but understood; but when it says, “or three,” the Trinity is expressed also.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Wherefore, whoso names the Father and the Son ought thereby to understand the mutual love of the Father and Son, which is the Holy Spirit. And perhaps the Scriptures on being examined (I do not say that I am able to show you this today, or as if another proof cannot be found),—nevertheless, the Scriptures, perhaps, on being searched, do show us that the Holy Spirit is charity.”

The Scriptures never say this, but they do say that God is love in **1 John 4 (KJV):8** He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

He continues, “And do not count charity a thing cheap. How, indeed, can it be cheap, when all things that are said to be not cheap are called dear (*chara*)? Therefore, if what is not cheap is dear, what is dearer than dearness itself (*charitas*)? The apostle so commends charity to us that he says, “I show unto you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I know all mysteries and all knowledge, and have prophecy and all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I distribute all my goods to the poor, and give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” (1 Corinthians 13:1-3)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):1** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though

I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

He continues, “How great, then, is charity, which, if wanting, in vain have we all things else; if present, rightly have we all things! Yet the Apostle Paul, setting forth the praise of charity with copiousness and fullness, has said less of it than did the Apostle John in brief, whose Gospel this is. For he has not hesitated to say, “God is love.” It is also written, “Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given us.” (Romans 5:5)”

He refers to **1 John 4 (KJV):8** He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

And to **Romans 5 (KJV):5** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

He continues, “Who, then, can name the Father and the Son without thereby understanding the love of the Father and Son? Which when one begins to have, he will have the Holy Spirit; which if one has not, he will not have the Holy Spirit. **And just as thy body, if it be without spirit, namely thy soul, is dead; so likewise thy soul, if it be without the Holy Spirit, that is, without charity, will be reckoned dead.**”

Augustine is very logical here. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Therefore, if we don’t have love we don’t have the Holy Spirit. But we begin to have the Holy Spirit when we are born again. Love is then a fruit of the Spirit in us. It will grow as we grow grace and knowledge in the Lord.

Now Augustine believed the soul to be spirit. What he did not understand was that when the spirit is joined to a body, it becomes a living soul as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):7** And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

After Adam and Eve sinned they were still alive physically. Yet God told them that in the day that they would eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil that they would die as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):16** And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

God forgave them their sin as we know from **Genesis 3 (KJV):21** Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

But spiritual death and physical death came upon the human race as a result as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

This is why we must be born again as Jesus revealed in **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

But it is in our spirit where we are born again of the Spirit of God as Jesus also revealed in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Augustine continues, “Therefore “The waterpots contained two metretæ apiece,” because the Father and the Son are proclaimed in the prophecy of all the periods; but the Holy Spirit is there also, and therefore it is added, “or three apiece.” “I and the Father,” saith He, “are one.” (John 10:30)”

He refers to **John 10 (KJV):30** I and my Father are one.

He concludes, “But far be it from us to suppose that where we are told, “I and the Father are one,” the Holy Spirit is not there. Yet since he named the Father and the Son, let the waterpots contain “two metretæ apiece;” but attend to this, “or three apiece.” “Go, baptize the nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” So, therefore, when it says “two apiece,” the Trinity is not expressed but understood; but when it says, “or three,” the Trinity is expressed also.”

But there is a difference between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as persons in the trinity. The Father is not the Son, or the Holy Spirit. There is also likewise a difference between the soul and spirit, just as there is a difference between bone and marrow, and as there is a difference in the thoughts and intents of the heart, as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Our spirit is where we have consciousness of the spiritual realm. Our soul is where we have consciousness of the this world.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XIX. Chapter V. 19–30, paragraphs 11-14, page 126-129**

11. Turn your thoughts now to what we said had to be deferred, that it may now, if possible, be opened. Concerning this very resurrection He immediately subjoined, “For as the Father hath life in Himself, even so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.” What means that, “The Father hath life in Himself”? Not elsewhere hath He life but in Himself. His living, in fact, is in Him, not from elsewhere, nor derived from another. He does not, as it were, borrow life, nor, as it were, become a partaker of life, of a life which is not what Himself is: but “hath life in Himself,” so that the very life is to Him His very self. If I should be able yet further in some small measure to speak from this matter, by proposing examples for informing your understanding, will depend on God’s help and the piety of your attention. **God lives, and the soul also lives; but the life of God is unchangeable, the life of the soul is changeable. In God is neither increase nor decrease; but He is the same always in Himself, is ever as He is: not in one way now, in another way hereafter, in some other way before. But the life of the soul is exceedingly various: it lived foolish, it lives wise; it lived unrighteous, it lives righteous; now remembers, now forgets; now learns, now cannot learn; now loses what it had learned, now apprehends what it had lost. The life of the soul is changeable. And when the soul lives in unrighteousness, that is its death; when again it becomes righteous, it becomes partaker of another life, which is not what itself is, inasmuch as by rising up to God, and cleaving to God, of Him it is justified. For it is said, “To him that believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Romans 4:5) By forsaking God, it becomes unrighteous; by coming to Him, it is made righteous. Does it not seem to thee as it were something cold, which, when brought near the fire, grows warm; when removed from the fire, grows cold? A something dark, which, brought near the light, grows bright; when removed from the light, grows dark? Something such is the soul: God is not any such thing. Moreover, man may say that he has light now in his eyes. Let thine eyes say then, if they can, as by a voice**

of their own, “We have light in ourselves.” I answer: Not correctly do you say that you have light in yourselves: you have light, but in the heavens; you have light, but in the moon, in candles, if it happen to be night, not in yourselves: for, being shut, you lose what you perceive when open. Not in yourselves have you light; keep the light if you can when the sun is set: ’tis night, enjoy the light of night; keep the light when the candle is withdrawn; but since you remain in darkness when the candle is withdrawn, you have not light in yourselves. Consequently, to have light in oneself is not to need light from another. Behold, whoso understands wherein He shows that the Son is equal with the Father, when He saith, “As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son also to have life in Himself;” that there may be only this difference between the Father and the Son, that the Father hath life in Himself, which none gave Him, whilst the Son hath life in Himself which the Father gave.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Turn your thoughts now to what we said had to be deferred, that it may now, if possible, be opened. Concerning this very resurrection He immediately subjoined, “For as the Father hath life in Himself, even so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.””

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):26** For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

He continues, “What means that, “The Father hath life in Himself”? Not elsewhere hath He life but in Himself. His living, in fact, is in Him, not from elsewhere, nor derived from another. He does not, as it were, borrow life, nor, as it were, become a partaker of life, of a life which is not what Himself is: but “hath life in Himself,” so that the very life is to Him His very self. If I should be able yet further in some small measure to speak from this matter, by proposing examples for informing your understanding, will depend on God’s help and the piety of your attention. **God lives, and the soul also lives; but the life of God is unchangeable, the life of the soul is changeable.**”

Augustine thought that spiritual life was in the soul, and therefore changeable. He is correct when he says that the soul is changeable. But because we are born from above in our spirit, our spirit is unchangeable for it is born of the Spirit of God.

He continues, **“In God is neither increase nor decrease; but He is the same always in Himself, is ever as He is: not in one way now, in another way hereafter, in some other way before. But the life of the soul is exceedingly various: it lived foolish, it lives wise; it lived unrighteous, it lives righteous; now remembers, now forgets; now learns, now cannot learn; now loses what it had learned, now apprehends what it had lost. The life of the soul is changeable. And when the soul lives in unrighteousness, that is its death; when again it becomes righteous, it becomes partaker of another life, which is not what itself is, inasmuch as by rising up to God, and cleaving to God, of Him it is justified. For it is said, “To him that believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Romans 4:5)”**

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):5** But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

He continues, **“By forsaking God, it becomes unrighteous; by coming to Him, it is made righteous. Does it not seem to thee as it were something cold, which, when brought near the fire, grows warm; when removed from the fire, grows cold? A something dark, which, brought**



near the light, grows bright; when removed from the light, grows dark? Something such is the soul: God is not any such thing.”

So by forsaking God, the soul becomes unrighteous, and “when again it becomes righteous, it becomes partaker of another life, which is not what itself is, inasmuch as by rising up to God, and cleaving to God, of Him it is justified”.

He continues, “Moreover, man may say that he has light now in his eyes. Let thine eyes say then, if they can, as by a voice of their own, “We have light in ourselves.” I answer: Not correctly do you say that you have light in yourselves: you have light, but in the heavens; you have light, but in the moon, in candles, if it happen to be night, not in yourselves: for, being shut, you lose what you perceive when open. Not in yourselves have you light; keep the light if you can when the sun is set: ’tis night, enjoy the light of night; keep the light when the candle is withdrawn; but since you remain in darkness when the candle is withdrawn, you have not light in yourselves. Consequently, to have light in oneself is not to need light from another. Behold, whoso understands wherein He shows that the Son is equal with the Father, when He saith, “As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son also to have life in Himself;” that there may be only this difference between the Father and the Son, that the Father hath life in Himself, which none gave Him, whilst the Son hath life in Himself which the Father gave.”

Augustine explains in the next paragraph.

12. But here also arises a cloud that must be scattered. Let us not lose heart, let us strive in earnest. Here are pastures of the mind; let us not disdain them, that we may live. Behold, sayest thou, thyself confessest that the Father hath given life to the Son, that He may have life in Himself, even as the Father hath life in Himself; that the Father not lacking, the Son may not lack; that as the Father is life, so the Son may be life; and both united one life, not two lives; because God is one, not two Gods; and this same is to be life. How, then, is the Father said to have given life to the Son? Not so as if the Son had been without life before, and received life from the Father that He might live; for if it were so, He would not have life in Himself. Behold, I was speaking of the soul. The soul exists; though it be not wise, though it be not righteous, though it be not godly, it is soul. It is one thing for it to be soul, but another thing to be wise, to be righteous, to be godly. Something there is, then, in which it is not yet wise, not yet righteous, not yet godly. Nevertheless it is not therefore nothing, it is not therefore non-life; for it shows itself to be alive by certain of its own actions, although it does not show itself to be wise, godly, or righteous. For if it were not living it would not move the body, would not command the feet to walk, the hands to work, the eyes to look, the ears to hear; would not open the mouth for speaking, nor move the tongue to distinction of speech. So, then, by these operations it shows itself to have life, and to be something which is better than the body. But does it in any wise show itself by these operations to be wise, godly, or righteous? Do not the foolish, the wicked, the unrighteous walk, work, see, hear, speak? But when the soul rises to something which itself is not, which is above itself, and from which its being is, then it gets wisdom, righteousness, holiness, which so long as it was without, it was dead, and did not have the life by which itself should live, but only that by which the body was quickened. For that in the soul by which the body is quickened is one thing, that by which the soul itself is quickened is another. Better, certainly, than the body is the soul, but better than the soul itself is God. The soul, even if it be foolish, ungodly, unrighteous, is the life of the body. But since its own life is God, just as it

supplies vigor, comeliness, activity, the functions of the limbs to the body, while it exists in the body; so, in like manner, while God, its life, is in the soul, He supplies to it wisdom, godliness, righteousness, charity. Accordingly, what the soul supplies to the body, and what God supplies to the soul, are of a different kind: the soul quickens and is quickened. It quickens while dead, even if itself is not quickened. But when the word comes, and is poured into the hearers, and they not only hear, but are made obedient, the soul rises from its death to its life—that is, from unrighteousness, from folly, from ungodliness, to its God, who is to it wisdom, righteousness, light. Let it rise to Him, and be enlightened by Him. “Come near,” saith he, “to Him.” And what shall we have? “And be enlightened.” (Psalm 33:5) If, therefore, by “coming to” ye are enlightened, and by “departing from” ye become darkened, your light was not in yourselves, but in your God. Come to Him that ye may rise again: if ye depart from Him, ye shall die. If by coming to Him ye live, and by departing from Him ye die, your life was not in yourselves. For the same is your life which is your light. “Because with Thee is the fountain of life, and in Thy light we shall see light.” (Psalm 35:10)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “But here also arises a cloud that must be scattered. Let us not lose heart, let us strive in earnest. Here are pastures of the mind; let us not disdain them, that we may live. Behold, sayest thou, thyself confessest that the Father hath given life to the Son, that He may have life in Himself, even as the Father hath life in Himself; that the Father not lacking, the Son may not lack; that as the Father is life, so the Son may be life; and both united one life, not two lives; because God is one, not two Gods; and this same is to be life. How, then, is the Father said to have given life to the Son? Not so as if the Son had been without life before, and received life from the Father that He might live; for if it were so, He would not have life in Himself. Behold, I was speaking of the soul. The soul exists; though it be not wise, though it be not righteous, though it be not godly, it is soul. It is one thing for it to be soul, but another thing to be wise, to be righteous, to be godly. Something there is, then, in which it is not yet wise, not yet righteous, not yet godly. Nevertheless it is not therefore nothing, it is not therefore non-life; for it shows itself to be alive by certain of its own actions, although it does not show itself to be wise, godly, or righteous. For if it were not living it would not move the body, would not command the feet to walk, the hands to work, the eyes to look, the ears to hear; would not open the mouth for speaking, nor move the tongue to distinction of speech.”

Augustine makes a good point here. Even when we were dead in sin, our soul “shows itself to be alive by certain of its own actions, although it does not show itself to be wise, godly, or righteous”, as we just read. He then reasons correctly that “if it were not living it would not move the body, would not command the feet to walk, the hands to work, the eyes to look, the ears to hear; would not open the mouth for speaking, nor move the tongue to distinction of speech.”

He continues, “So, then, by these operations it shows itself to have life, and to be something which is better than the body. But does it in any wise show itself by these operations to be wise, godly, or righteous? Do not the foolish, the wicked, the unrighteous walk, work, see, hear, speak? But when the soul rises to something which itself is not, which is above itself, and from which its being is, then it gets wisdom, righteousness, holiness, which so long as it was without, it was dead, and did not have the life by which itself should live, but only that by

which the body was quickened.”

Augustine believed that the life of the Spirit of God was in the soul. He did not understand that what is born of the Spirit is spirit, and that there is a difference between soul and spirit, just as there is a difference between bone and marrow, and the different thoughts and intents of the heart, as we read before in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

It is in our spirit where we are born again, and have eternal life by the Spirit of God. Our soul has all the issues of our past from which we must be progressively cleansed as we walk in the light of the word of God.

He continues, “For that in the soul by which the body is quickened is one thing, that by which the soul itself is quickened is another. Better, certainly, than the body is the soul, but better than the soul itself is God. The soul, even if it be foolish, ungodly, unrighteous, is the life of the body. But since its own life is God, just as it supplies vigor, comeliness, activity, the functions of the limbs to the body, while it exists in the body; so, in like manner, while God, its life, is in the soul, He supplies to it wisdom, godliness, righteousness, charity. Accordingly, what the soul supplies to the body, and what God supplies to the soul, are of a different kind: the soul quickens and is quickened. It quickens while dead, even if itself is not quickened. But when the word comes, and is poured into the hearers, and they not only hear, but are made obedient, the soul rises from its death to its life—that is, from unrighteousness, from folly, from ungodliness, to its God, who is to it wisdom, righteousness, light.”

When we are born again, our spirit is made new, and has a new divine nature because we have been born of the Spirit of God. As we yield to this new nature in our spirit, our minds are renewed, and our souls are cleansed. It is in our souls where a progressive sanctification is taking place. But in our standing, the righteousness of God has been put down to our account, and we are treated as sons and daughters of God while this process of sanctification is going on. Because Augustine combines soul and spirit into one, he believed that man was composed of two parts, body and soul, and the spirit was part of the soul. The soul could lose spiritual life if it lived in unrighteousness, or ungodliness. It could also regain spiritual life if it returned to living in righteousness and godliness.

Augustine continues, “Let it rise to Him, and be enlightened by Him. “Come near,” saith he, “to Him.” And what shall we have? “And be enlightened.” (Psalm 33:5)”

He refers to **Psalm 43 (KJV):5** Draw near to him, and be enlightened: and your faces shall not by any means be ashamed.

He continues, “If, therefore, by “coming to” ye are enlightened, and by “departing from” ye become darkened, your light was not in yourselves, but in your God. Come to Him that ye may rise again: if ye depart from Him, ye shall die. If by coming to Him ye live, and by departing from Him ye die, your life was not in yourselves. For the same is your life which is your light. “Because with Thee is the fountain of life, and in Thy light we shall see light.” (Psalm 36:9)”

He refers to **Psalm 36 (KJV):9** For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

He implies here that we can lose the life of God in our souls if we depart from Him. His thinking is that if we walk in darkness, we have not light. But because the life of God is in our spirit when we are born again by a genuine faith in Jesus Christ, we can never lose that life. We are as a candle that has been lit by the Lord with eternal life, as we read in **Proverbs 20 (KJV):** 27 The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

Because the life that is given to us by the Spirit of God is eternal life, when our spirit is born of the Spirit of God, it cannot die again. We are now sons and daughters of God, with a standing of righteous ones. If we sin, we confess our sins. But our standing of righteousness is not changed because the righteousness of God has been put down to our account. But we can count on the chastening of the Lord if we do not deal with our sin. He is a good good Father.

He continues in the next paragraph.

13. Not, then, in like manner as the soul is one thing before it is enlightened, and becomes a better thing when it is enlightened, by participation of a better; not so, I say, was the Word of God, the Son of God, something else before He received life, that He should have life by participation; but He has life in Himself, and is consequently Himself the very life. What is it, then, that He saith, “hath given to the Son to have life in Himself”? I would say it briefly, He begot the Son. For it is not that He existed without life, and received life, but He is life by being begotten. The Father is life not by being begotten; the Son is life by being begotten. The Father is of no father; the Son is of God the Father. The Father in His being is of none, but in that He is Father, ’tis because of the Son. But the Son also, in that He is Son, ’tis because of the Father: in His being, He is of the Father. This He said, therefore: “hath given life to the Son, that He might have it in Himself.” Just as if He were to say, “The Father, who is life in Himself, begot the Son, who should be life in Himself.” Indeed, He would have this dedit (hath given) to be understood for the same thing as genuit (hath begotten). It is like as if we said to a person, “God hath given thee being.” To whom? If to some one already existing, then He gave him not being, because he who could receive existed before it was given him. When, therefore, thou hearest it said, “He gave thee being,” thou wast not in being to receive, but thou didst receive, that thou shouldst be by coming into existence. The builder gave to this house that it should be. But what did he give to it? He gave it to be a house. To what did he give? To this house. Gave it what? To be a house. How could he give to a house that it should be a house? For if the house was, to what did he give to be a house, when the house existed already? What, then, does that mean, “gave it to be a house”? It means, he brought to pass that it should be a house. Well, then, what gave He to the Son? **Gave Him to be the Son, begot Him to be life—that is, “gave Him to have life in Himself” that He should be the life not needing life, that He may not be understood as having life by participation. For if He had life by participation, He might, by losing, be without life.** Do not take, nor think, nor believe this to be possible respecting the Son. Wherefore the Father continues the life, the Son continues the life: the Father, life in Himself, not from the Son; the Son, life in Himself, but from the Father. Begotten of the Father, that He might live in Himself; but the Father, not begotten, life in Himself. Nor did He beget the Son less than Himself to become equal by growth. For surely He by whom, being perfect, the times were created, was not assisted by time towards His own perfection. Before all time, He is coeternal with the Father. For the Father has never been without the Son; but the Father is eternal, therefore also the Son coeternal. **Soul, what of thee? Thou wast dead, didst lose life; hear then**

the Father through the Son. Arise, take to thee life, that in Him who has life in Himself thou mayest receive the life which is not in thee. He that giveth thee life, then, is the Father and the Son; and the first resurrection is accomplished when thou risest to partake of the life which thou art not thyself, and by partaking art made living. Rise from thy death to thy life, which is thy God, and pass from death to eternal life. For the Father hath eternal life in Himself; and unless He had begotten such a Son as had life in Himself, it could not be that as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, so also the Son should quicken whom He will.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Not, then, in like manner as the soul is one thing before it is enlightened, and becomes a better thing when it is enlightened, by participation of a better; not so, I say, was the Word of God, the Son of God, something else before He received life, that He should have life by participation; but He has life in Himself, and is consequently Himself the very life.”

So Augustine intimates that our souls have life by participation.

He continues, “What is it, then, that He saith, “hath given to the Son to have life in Himself”?”

He refers again to **John 5 (KJV):26** For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

He continues, “I would say it briefly, He begot the Son. For it is not that He existed without life, and received life, but He is life by being begotten. The Father is life not by being begotten; the Son is life by being begotten.”

He is referring to **John 1 (KJV):14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

And to **John 1 (KJV):18** No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

And to **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

And to **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

He continues, “The Father is of no father; the Son is of God the Father. The Father in His being is of none, but in that He is Father, ’tis because of the Son. But the Son also, in that He is Son, ’tis because of the Father: in His being, He is of the Father. This He said, therefore: “hath given life to the Son, that He might have it in Himself.” Just as if He were to say, “The Father, who is life in Himself, begot the Son, who should be life in Himself. Indeed, He would have this **dedit** (hath given) to be understood for the same thing as **genuit** (hath begotten). It is like as if we said to a person, “God hath given thee being.” To whom? If to some one already existing, then He gave him not being, because he who could receive existed before it was given him. When, therefore, thou hearest it said, “He gave thee being,” thou wast not in being to receive, but thou didst receive, that thou shouldst be by coming into existence. The builder gave to this house that it should be. But what did he give to it? He gave it to be a house. To what did he give? To this house. Gave it what? To be a house. How could he give to a house that it should be a house? For if the house was, to what did he give to be a house, when the house existed already? What, then, does that mean, “gave it to be a house”? It means, he brought to



pass that it should be a house. Well, then, what gave He to the Son? **Gave Him to be the Son, begot Him to be life—that is, “gave Him to have life in Himself” that He should be the life not needing life, that He may not be understood as having life by participation. For if He had life by participation, He might, by losing, be without life.”**

So Augustine intimates that we can lose life in our souls by not participating.

He continues, “Do not take, nor think, nor believe this to be possible respecting the Son. Wherefore the Father continues the life, the Son continues the life: the Father, life in Himself, not from the Son; the Son, life in Himself, but from the Father. Begotten of the Father, that He might live in Himself; but the Father, not begotten, life in Himself.”

And we read in **John 1 (KJV):4** In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

He continues, “Nor did He beget the Son less than Himself to become equal by growth. For surely He by whom, being perfect, the times were created, was not assisted by time towards His own perfection. Before all time, He is coeternal with the Father. For the Father has never been without the Son; but the Father is eternal, therefore also the Son coeternal. **Soul, what of thee? Thou wast dead, didst lose life; hear then the Father through the Son. Arise, take to thee life, that in Him who has life in Himself thou mayest receive the life which is not in thee. He that giveth thee life, then, is the Father and the Son; and the first resurrection is accomplished when thou risest to partake of the life which thou art not thyself, and by partaking art made living.”**

So we are partaking of the life when we accept Christ. That is, in Augustine’s thinking, we are born again of the Spirit of God when we are baptized.

He continues, **“Rise from thy death to thy life, which is thy God, and pass from death to eternal life.”**

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

However, in Augustine’s thinking, we pass from death to eternal life if we continue to participate in God’s life, that is, if we persevere unto the end.

He concludes, “For the Father hath eternal life in Himself; and unless He had begotten such a Son as had life in Himself, it could not be that as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, so also the Son should quicken whom He will.”

He continues in the next paragraph.

14. But what of that resurrection of the body? For these who hear and live, whence live, except by hearing? For “the friend of the Bridegroom standeth and heareth Him, and rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom’s voice:” (John 3:29) not because of his own voice; that is to say, they hear and live by partaking, not by coming into being; and all that hear live, because all that obey live. Tell us something, O Lord, also of the resurrection of the flesh; for there have been those who denied it, asserting that this is the only resurrection which is wrought by faith. Of which resurrection the Lord has just now made mention, and inflamed our desire, because “the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall live.” It is not some of those who hear shall live, and others shall die; but “all that hear shall live,” because all that obey shall live. **Behold, we see a resurrection of the mind; let us not therefore let go our faith of the resurrection of the flesh. And unless Thou, O Lord Jesus, declare to us this, whom shall we oppose to those**

who assert the contrary? For truly all sects that have undertaken to engraft any religion upon men have allowed this resurrection of minds; otherwise, it might be said to them, If the soul rise not, why speakest thou to me? What meanest thou to do in me? If thou dost not make of the worse a better, why speakest thou? If thou dost not make a righteous of the unrighteous, why speakest thou? But if thou dost make righteous of the unrighteous, godly of the ungodly, wise of the foolish, thou confessest that my soul doth rise again, if I comply with thee and believe. So, then, all those that have founded any sect, even of false religion, while they wished to be believed, could not but admit this resurrection of minds: all have agreed concerning this; but many have denied the resurrection of the flesh, and affirmed that the resurrection had taken place already in faith. Such the apostle resisteth, saying, “Of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection hath taken place already, and overthrow the faith of some.” (2 Timothy 2:17-18) They said that the resurrection had taken place already, but in such manner that another was not to be expected; and they blamed people who were looking for a resurrection of the flesh, just as if the resurrection which was promised were already accomplished in the act of believing, namely, in the mind. The apostle censures these. Why does he censure them? Did they not affirm what the Lord spoke just now: “The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live”? But, saith Jesus to thee, it is of the life of minds that I am hitherto speaking: I am not yet speaking of the life of bodies; but I speak of the life of that which is the life of bodies, that is, of the life of souls, in which the life of bodies exists. For I know that there are bodies lying in the tombs; I know also that your bodies will lie in the tombs. I am not speaking of that resurrection, but I speak of this; in this, rise ye again, lest ye rise to punishment in that. But that ye may know that I speak also of that, what do I add? “For as the Father hath life in Himself, even so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.” This life which the Father is, which the Son is, to what does it pertain? To the soul or to the body? It is not surely the body that is sensible of that life of wisdom, but the rational mind. For not every soul hath capacity to apprehend wisdom. A brute beast, in fact, has a soul, but the soul of the brute beast cannot apprehend wisdom. It is the human soul, then, that can perceive this life which the Father hath in Himself, and hath given to the Son to have in Himself; because that is “the true light which enlighteneth,” not every soul, but “every man coming into this world.” When, therefore, I speak to the mind itself, let it hear, that is, let it obey and live.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “But what of that resurrection of the body? For these who hear and live, whence live, except by hearing? For “the friend of the Bridegroom standeth and heareth Him, and rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom’s voice:” (John 3:29) not because of his own voice;”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):29** He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

So according to Augustine our living in Christ is dependent on our hearing, as he said, “For these who hear and live, whence live, except by hearing?”

He continues, “that is to say, they hear and live by partaking, not by coming into being; and all that hear live, because all that obey live.”

So all in this first resurrection Augustine is describing will live as long as they hear and obey. Now a synonym of “partaking” would be “sharing”, or “participating”.

He continues, “Tell us something, O Lord, also of the resurrection of the flesh; for there have been those who denied it, asserting that this is the only resurrection which is wrought by faith. Of which resurrection the Lord has just now made mention, and inflamed our desire, because “the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall live.” It is not some of those who hear shall live, and others shall die; but “all that hear shall live,” because all that obey shall live. **Behold, we see a resurrection of the mind; let us not therefore let go our faith of the resurrection of the flesh.**”

The mind is in the soul, and the soul is resurrected, according to Augustine, when it hears and obeys the voice of the Son of God.

He continues, **“And unless Thou, O Lord Jesus, declare to us this, whom shall we oppose to those who assert the contrary? For truly all sects that have undertaken to engraft any religion upon men have allowed this resurrection of minds; otherwise, it might be said to them, If the soul rise not, why speakest thou to me?”**

Again, the mind is in the soul, and according to Augustine, the soul is resurrected when it hears and obeys the voice of the Son of God.

He continues, **“What meanest thou to do in me? If thou dost not make of the worse a better, why speakest thou? If thou dost not make a righteous of the unrighteous, why speakest thou? But if thou dost make righteous of the unrighteous, godly of the ungodly, wise of the foolish, thou confessest that my soul doth rise again, if I comply with thee and believe.”**

So, according to Augustine, the rising of the soul is dependent on compliance, or obedience, and believing in Jesus.

He continues, **“So, then, all those that have founded any sect, even of false religion, while they wished to be believed, could not but admit this resurrection of minds: all have agreed concerning this; but many have denied the resurrection of the flesh, and affirmed that the resurrection had taken place already in faith.** Such the apostle resisteth, saying, “Of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection hath taken place already, and overthrow the faith of some.” (2 Timothy 2:17-18)”

He refers in context to **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.

He continues, “They said that the resurrection had taken place already, but in such manner that another was not to be expected; and they blamed people who were looking for a resurrection of the flesh, just as if the resurrection which was promised were already accomplished in the act of believing, namely, in the mind. The apostle censures these. Why does he censure them? Did they not affirm what the Lord spoke just now: “The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live”? But, saith Jesus to thee, it is of the life of minds that I am hitherto speaking: I am not yet speaking of the life of bodies; but I speak of the life of that which is the life of bodies, that is, of the life of souls, in which the life of bodies exists.”

So the life of minds is the life of souls, which is the life of bodies, according to Augustine.

He continues, “For I know that there are bodies lying in the tombs; I know also that your bodies will lie in the tombs. I am not speaking of that resurrection, but I speak of this; in this, rise ye again, lest ye rise to punishment in that. But that ye may know that I speak also of that, what do I add? “For as the Father hath life in Himself, even so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.” This life which the Father is, which the Son is, to what does it pertain? To the soul or to the body? It is not surely the body that is sensible of that life of wisdom, but the rational mind. For not every soul hath capacity to apprehend wisdom. A brute beast, in fact, has a soul, but the soul of the brute beast cannot apprehend wisdom. It is the human soul, then, that can perceive this life which the Father hath in Himself, and hath given to the Son to have in Himself; because that is “the true light which enlighteneth,” not every soul, but “every man coming into this world.” When, therefore, I speak to the mind itself, let it hear, that is, let it obey and live.”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):9** That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world

Augustine here seems to be saying that if my mind is open to hear, and I obey, I live.

When we hear the Gospel preached, our mind is enlightened as we read in **Hebrews 6 (KJV):4** For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost...

And in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):18** The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints...

And in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):32** But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings,

The mind understands, but it is with the heart that we believe as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; **9** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

So with the mind, we understand as long as the heart is open and willing. The heart must be open in order for us to understand. The heart must be willing if we are to receive Him. And it is the Lord who opens our heart to believe as we read in **Acts 16 (KJV):14** And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

Let us read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. **25** Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. **26** For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

When we hear, and understand, and believe from the heart, there is a birth in our spirit by the Holy Spirit. This birth is not in the mind, but in our spirit. It is not in our soul that we are

born again, but in our spirit, as we read again in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

This birth makes us sons and daughters of God. This is what we are now as John says in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

If we sin now, as children of God, we have an advocate with the Father as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

If we sin, we do not die spiritually, for then we would have to be born again, again. Because of our faith, God has justified us as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Justification means to declare righteous. When we believe in Jesus, God justifies us, that is, He declares us to be righteous. Not only so, but He puts His righteousness down to our account. This is what Paul is explaining, speaking of Abraham, in **Romans 4 (KJV):22** And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Being justified by God, no one can condemn us as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):31** What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Our life as a born again believer is not dependent on us. Our life is hidden with Christ in God, as we read in **Colossians 3 (KJV):1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Augustine's perception that the new birth of the Spirit occurred in the soul seems to have greatly hindered his understanding of the security of our salvation. But let us give diligence as Peter taught in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):5** And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and



to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. 10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XX. Chapter V. 19, paragraph 12, page 136-137**

12. Consider the body: it is mortal, earthly, weak, corruptible; away with it. Yes, perhaps thou sayest, but the body is temporal. Think then of other bodies, the heavenly; they are greater, better, more magnificent. Look at them, moreover, attentively. They roll from east to west, they stand not; they are seen with the eyes, not only by man, but even by the beast of the field. Pass beyond them too. And how, sayest thou, pass beyond the heavenly bodies, seeing that I walk on the earth? Not in the flesh dost thou pass beyond them, but in the mind. Away with them too: though they shine ever so much, they are bodies; though they glitter from heaven, they are bodies. Come, now that perhaps thou thinkest thou hast not whither to go, after considering all these. And whither am I to go, sayest thou, beyond the heavenly bodies; and what am I to pass beyond with the mind? Hast thou considered all these? I have, sayest thou. By what means hast thou considered them? Let the being that considers appear in person. The being that considers all these, that discriminates, distinguishes, and in a manner weighs them in the balance of wisdom, is really the mind. Doubtless, then, better is the mind with which thou hast contemplated all these things, than these things which thou hast contemplated. This mind, then, is a spirit, not a body. Pass beyond it too. And that thou mayest see whither thou art to pass beyond, compare that mind itself, in the first place, with the flesh. Heaven forbid that thou shouldest deign so to compare it! Compare it with the brightness of the sun, of the moon, and of the stars; the brightness of the mind is greater. Observe, first, the swiftness of the mind; see whether the scintillation of the thinking mind be not more impetuous than the brilliance of the shining sun. With the mind thou seest the sun rising. How slow is its motion compared with thy mind! What the sun is about to do, thou canst think in a trice. It is about to come from the east to the west; tomorrow rises from another quarter. Where thy thought has done this, the sun still lags behind, and thou hast traversed the whole journey. A great thing, therefore, is the mind. But how do I say *is*? Pass beyond it also. For the mind, notwithstanding it be better than every kind of body, is itself changeable. Now it knows, now knows not; now forgets, now remembers; now wills, now wills not; now errs, now is right. Pass therefore beyond all changeableness; not only beyond all that is seen, but also beyond all that changes. For thou hast passed beyond the flesh which is seen; beyond heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, which are seen. Pass, too, beyond all that changes. For when thou hadst done with those things that are seen, and hadst come to thy mind, there thou didst find the changeableness of thy mind. Is God at all changeable? Pass then, beyond even thy mind. Pour out thy soul “above thee,” that thou mayest reach unto God, of whom it is said to thee, “Where is thy God?”

**Commentary:** Augustine here says, “Consider the body: it is mortal, earthy, weak, corruptible; away with it. Yes, perhaps thou sayest, but the body is temporal. Think then of other bodies, the heavenly; they are greater, better, more magnificent. Look at them, moreover, attentively. They roll from east to west, they stand not; they are seen with the eyes, not only by man, but even by the beast of the field. Pass beyond them too. And how, sayest thou, pass beyond the heavenly bodies, seeing that I walk on the earth? Not in the flesh dost thou pass beyond them, but in the mind. Away with them too: though they shine ever so much, they are bodies; though they glitter from heaven, they are bodies. Come, now that perhaps thou thinkest thou hast not whither to go, after considering all these. And whither am I to go, sayest thou, beyond the heavenly bodies; and what am I to pass beyond with the mind? Hast thou considered all these? I have, sayest thou. By what means hast thou considered them? Let the being that considers appear in person. The being that considers all these, that discriminates, distinguishes, and in a manner weighs them in the balance of wisdom, is really the mind.”

But the “mind” is not a “being”. The “mind” is a part of man’s being. It is a part of his soul, with the heart, and the emotions or feelings, and the conscience, and the will. The soul gives us consciousness of the physical world. The spirit of man is where we have consciousness of God, if we have been born again. Man can with his mind conclude that there is a God by the things that are made, as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV):** 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

This is an indictment of man because he is spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. He must be born again to connect with God. Just being in the flesh he cannot please God as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):** 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

The unregenerate are carnally minded, and controlled by their fleshly desires. When we are born again, the Spirit has now given us His life in our spirits, and we have a new nature. This is why we don’t have to fulfill the desires of our flesh. But we must still be cleansed in our souls. We must be renewed in our minds, which changes our thinking, and process our feelings to be free from our past sinful ways.

Augustine continues, “Doubtless, then, better is the mind with which thou hast contemplated all these things, than these things which thou hast contemplated. This mind, then, is a spirit, not a body. Pass beyond it too. And that thou mayest see whither thou art to pass beyond, compare that mind itself, in the first place, with the flesh. Heaven forbid that thou

shouldest deign so to compare it! Compare it with the brightness of the sun, of the moon, and of the stars; the brightness of the mind is greater.”

The mind is a part of our souls, and is not a spirit. It is not a body either. As we have read in Romans 8:6 above, to be spiritually minded is life and peace. What does it mean to be spiritually minded? We must think on things which are true as we read in context in

**Philippians 4 (KJV):**6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Augustine continues, “Observe, first, the swiftness of the mind; see whether the scintillation of the thinking mind be not more impetuous than the brilliance of the shining sun. With the mind thou seest the sun rising. How slow is its motion compared with thy mind! What the sun is about to do, thou canst think in a trice. It is about to come from the east to the west; tomorrow rises from another quarter. Where thy thought has done this, the sun still lags behind, and thou hast traversed the whole journey. A great thing, therefore, is the mind. But how do I say is? Pass beyond it also. For the mind, notwithstanding it be better than every kind of body, is itself changeable. Now it knows, now knows not; now forgets, now remembers; now wills, now wills not; now errs, now is right. Pass therefore beyond all changeableness; not only beyond all that is seen, but also beyond all that changes. For thou hast passed beyond the flesh which is seen; beyond heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, which are seen. Pass, too, beyond all that changes. For when thou hadst done with those things that are seen, and hadst come to thy mind, there thou didst find the changeableness of thy mind. Is God at all changeable? Pass then, beyond even thy mind. Pour out thy soul “above thee,” that thou mayest reach unto God, of whom it is said to thee, “Where is thy God?””

Paul says that he passed to the third heaven as we read in **2 Corinthians 12 (KJVK):**1 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) 4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 5 Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. 6 For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. 7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

So where is the third heaven? The first heaven is our earth’s atmosphere. The second

heaven is the heaven of the stars. The third heaven is where God dwells.

Augustine is trying to demonstrate the spirituality of the mind. But the mind can also be carnal as we read above in **Romans 8 (KJV):6** For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

But when our heart chooses, with our will we decide to accept Christ as our Lord and Savior. Then we have the capacity to discern spiritual things as we read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

Now that we have been born again in our spirit, we are spiritual, that is, we can discern spiritual things. Then, as our heart chooses to think on things which are true, our minds are renewed by the knowledge of God, and we are beginning to become spiritual in our minds, which are in our souls.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XXVI. Chapter VI. 41–59, paragraph 13, page 172**

13. “I am the living bread, which came down from heaven.” For that reason “living,” because I came down from heaven. The manna also came down from heaven; but the manna was only a shadow, this is the truth. “If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.” When did flesh comprehend this flesh which He called bread? That is called flesh which flesh does not comprehend, and for that reason all the more flesh does not comprehend it, that it is called flesh. For they were terrified at this: they said it was too much for them; they thought it impossible. “Is my flesh,” saith He, “for the life of the world.” Believers know the body of Christ, if they neglect not to be the body of Christ. Let them become the body of Christ, if they wish to live by the Spirit of Christ. None lives by the Spirit of Christ but the body of Christ. Understand, my brethren, what I mean to say. **Thou art a man; thou hast both a spirit and a body. I call that a spirit which is called the soul; that whereby it consists that thou art a man, for thou consistest of soul and body. And so thou hast an invisible spirit and a visible body. Tell me which lives of the other: does thy spirit live of thy body, or thy body of thy spirit? Every man that lives can answer; and he that cannot answer this, I know not whether he lives: what doth every man that lives answer? My body, of course, lives by my spirit. Wouldst thou then also live by the Spirit of Christ. Be in the body of Christ. For surely my body does not live by thy spirit. My body lives by my spirit, and thy body by thy spirit. The body of Christ cannot live but by the Spirit of Christ.** It is for this that the Apostle Paul, expounding this bread, says: “One bread,” saith he, “we being many are one body.” (1 Corinthians 10:17) O mystery of piety! O sign of unity! O bond of charity! He that would live has where to live, has whence to live. Let him draw near, let him believe; let him be embodied, that he may be made to live. Let him not shrink from the compact of members; let him not be a rotten member that deserves to be cut off; let him not be a deformed member whereof to be ashamed; let him be a fair, fit, and sound member; let him cleave to the body, live for God by God: now let him labor on earth, that hereafter he may reign in heaven.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““I am the living bread, which came down from heaven.” For that reason “living,” because I came down from heaven. The manna also came down from heaven; but the manna was only a shadow, this is the truth. “If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.””

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):49** Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

He continues, “When did flesh comprehend this flesh which He called bread? That is called flesh which flesh does not comprehend, and for that reason all the more flesh does not comprehend it, that it is called flesh.”

Jesus called His flesh “living bread”. He gave Himself as a sacrifice for the propitiation of the sins of the whole world. The Jews did not understand what He was saying.

He continues, “For they were terrified at this: they said it was too much for them; they thought it impossible.”

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):52** The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

He continues, ““Is my flesh,” saith He, “for the life of the world.””

He refers again to **John 6 (KJV):51** I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

He continues, “Believers know the body of Christ, if they neglect not to be the body of Christ. Let them become the body of Christ, if they wish to live by the Spirit of Christ. None lives by the Spirit of Christ but the body of Christ.”

Union with the Catholic Church had become a necessity to salvation in the time of Augustine. There was so much heresy that they had concluded that one must belong to the Catholic Church to be saved.

He explains, “Understand, my brethren, what I mean to say. **Thou art a man; thou hast both a spirit and a body. I call that a spirit which is called the soul; that whereby it consists that thou art a man, for thou consistest of soul and body.**”

So Augustine believed man to be made up of two parts, body and soul, and he called “that a spirit which is called the soul”.

He continues, “**And so thou hast an invisible spirit and a visible body. Tell me which lives of the other: does thy spirit live of thy body, or thy body of thy spirit? Every man that lives can answer; and he that cannot answer this, I know not whether he lives: what doth every man that lives answer? My body, of course, lives by my spirit. Wouldst thou then also live by the Spirit of Christ. Be in the body of Christ. For surely my body does not live by thy spirit. My body lives by my spirit, and thy body by thy spirit. The body of Christ cannot live but by the Spirit of Christ.**”

So just as our bodies cannot live without our spirits, so, “**The body of Christ cannot live but by the Spirit of Christ,**” thus making it a necessity to belong to the Church which is the body of Christ. And in Augustine’s time, the true Church was the Catholic Church.



He continues, “It is for this that the Apostle Paul, expounding this bread, says: “One bread,” saith he, “we being many are one body.” (1 Corinthians 10:17)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):17** For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

He concludes, “O mystery of piety! O sign of unity! O bond of charity! He that would live has where to live, has whence to live. Let him draw near, let him believe; let him be embodied, that he may be made to live. Let him not shrink from the compact of members; let him not be a rotten member that deserves to be cut off; let him not be a deformed member whereof to be ashamed; let him be a fair, fit, and sound member; let him cleave to the body, live for God by God: now let him labor on earth, that hereafter he may reign in heaven.”

But the Scriptures are clear. We become members of the body of Christ when we believe as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

This baptism is done by the Spirit of God. It is a sovereign baptism that takes place when one believes in Jesus Christ, and confesses Him as Lord. We are not made members of the body of Christ by joining a church, or abiding in a Church. We are made members of the body of Christ when we believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord.

So again, Augustine believed man to be made up of two parts, body and soul, and he called “**that a spirit which is called the soul**”.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XXXIX. Chapter VIII. 26, 27, paragraph 8, page 224**

8. I see I must speak more plainly. And, not to detain you long, let me treat only of this point today. When I have finished what, with God’s help, I wish to say, my discourse shall close. I have said this, then, to enlist your attention. **Every soul, as being a thing, is mutable; and although a great creature, yet a creature; though superior to the body, yet made. Every soul, then, since it is changeable—that is, sometimes believes, sometimes disbelieves; at one time wishes, at another time refuses; at one time is adulterous, at another chaste; now good, and again wicked,—is changeable.** But God is that which is, and so has retained as His own peculiar name, “I am who am.” (Exodus 3:14) Such also is the Son, when He says, “If ye believe not that I am;” and thereto pertains also, “Who art thou? The Beginning” (ver. 25). God therefore is unchangeable, the soul changeable. When the soul receives from God the elements of its goodness it becomes good by participation, just as by participation thine eye seeth. For it sees not when the light is withdrawn, while so long as it shares in the light it sees. Since then by participation the soul is made good, if *it* changes and becomes bad, the goodness remains that made it good. For there is a goodness of which it partook when good; and when it has turned to evil, that goodness continues entire. If the soul fall away and become evil, there is no lessening of goodness; if it return and become good, that goodness is not enlarged. Thine eye participates in this light, and thou seest. Is it shut? Then thou hast not diminished the light. Is it open? Thou hast not increased the light. By this illustration, brethren, understand that if the soul is pious, there is piety with God, of which the soul is partaker; if the soul is chaste, there is chastity with God, of which it partakes; if it is good, there is goodness with God, of which it partakes; if it is

true, there is truth with God, of which the soul is partaker. Whereof if the soul is no partaker, every man is false; (Psalm 116:11) and if every man may be false, no man is true of himself. But the true Father is true of Himself, for He begat the Truth. It is one thing to say, That man is true, for he has taken in the truth: it is another, God is true, for He begat the Truth. See then how God is true,—not by participating in, but by generating the Truth. I see you have understood me, and am glad. Let this suffice you today. The rest, according as He gives it, we shall expound when the Lord pleases.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “I see I must speak more plainly. And, not to detain you long, let me treat only of this point today. When I have finished what, with God’s help, I wish to say, my discourse shall close. I have said this, then, to enlist your attention.

Every soul, as being a thing, is mutable; and although a great creature, yet a creature; though superior to the body, yet made. Every soul, then, since it is changeable—that is, sometimes believes, sometimes disbelieves; at one time wishes, at another time refuses; at one time is adulterous, at another chaste; now good, and again wicked,—is changeable.”

Every soul is mutable, or changeable, because it is composed of the mind, the will, the emotions, the heart which is the center of our emotions or feelings, and the conscience. And before Christ, our spirit is dead in trespasses and sins. When we are born again, our spirit is born of the Spirit of God, and receives a new nature and eternal life. But our soul must be renewed, for it contains all our past ways of thinking, and feeling. So our soul is changeable. But Augustine thought that the soul was composed of spirit, and that man was really composed of two parts, the soul and the body, the soul being composed of spirit.

Augustine continues, “But God is that which is, and so has retained as His own peculiar name, “I am who am.” (Exodus 3:14)”

He refers to **Exodus 3 (KJV):14** And God said unto Moses, I Am That I Am: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you.

He continues, “Such also is the Son, when He says, “If ye believe not that I am;” and thereto pertains also, “Who art thou? The Beginning” (ver. 25).”

He refers in context to **John 8 (KJV):24** I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. 25 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.

He continues, “God therefore is unchangeable, the soul changeable. When the soul receives from God the elements of its goodness it becomes good by participation, just as by participation thine eye seeth. For it sees not when the light is withdrawn, while so long as it shares in the light it sees. Since then by participation the soul is made good, if it changes and becomes bad, the goodness remains that made it good. For there is a goodness of which it partook when good; and when it has turned to evil, that goodness continues entire.”

In other words, good is still good, but the soul, “when it has turned to evil”, no longer participates in the good.

He continues, “If the soul fall away and become evil, there is no lessening of goodness; if it return and become good, that goodness is not enlarged. Thine eye participates in this light, and thou seest. Is it shut? Then thou hast not diminished the light. Is it open? Thou hast not increased the light. By this illustration, brethren, understand that if the soul is pious, there is

piety with God, of which the soul is partaker; if the soul is chaste, there is chastity with God, of which it partakes; if it is good, there is goodness with God, of which it partakes; if it is true, there is truth with God, of which the soul is partaker. Whereof if the soul is no partaker, every man is false; (Psalm 116:11) and if every man may be false, no man is true of himself.”

He refers to **Psalm 116 (KJV):11** I said in my haste, All men are liars.

He continues, “But the true Father is true of Himself, for He begat the Truth. It is one thing to say, That man is true, for he has taken in the truth: it is another, God is true, for He begat the Truth. See then how God is true,—not by participating in, but by generating the Truth. I see you have understood me, and am glad. Let this suffice you today. The rest, according as He gives it, we shall expound when the Lord pleases.”

Augustine does not understand the new birth of the spirit of the believer. We do not just participate in the goodness of God, or His light. Our spirit is the candle of the Lord as we read in **Proverbs 20 (KJV):27** The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

When we are born again, our candle is lit as it were, by the Spirit of God. We then shine as lights in the world as Paul reveals in **Philippians 2 (KJV):15** That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

When we are born again, God is now our Father as we read in **James 1 (KJV):17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

We now become partakers of the divine nature when we are born again, as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

This new divine nature is what Paul calls the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

This “law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” is the new divine nature in our spirits, which been born of the Spirit of God. The reason I am free from the law of sin and death, which is the Adamic sin nature in our bodies, is because “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” is now the law of our spirits which have been born again of the Spirit of God.

The Spirit of God has imparted eternal life to our spirit when we are born of the Spirit of God. This is what John is saying in **1 John 5 (KJV):11** And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

We who have believed in the Son of God are sons and daughters of God as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

God now treats us as His sons and daughters. He will discipline us as a good Father. But He will never forsake us under any circumstances as we read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):5** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Augustine did not understand the change in our spirit when we are born again. He attributed the new birth to the soul, which is changeable. Our soul is changeable. It is the part of us that is being cleansed in a progressive sanctification as we walk in the light of the word of God, and grow in grace and knowledge. This cleansing does not happen over night. There are no 90 day wonders. As we hear and do the word of God, we become more and more like Him. And we grow in grace and knowledge as Peter encourages in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

As we grow in Him, we will become effective in our measure as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):15** But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Now the consequence of Augustine's lack of understanding in this regard made it, in his thinking, possible for one to fall away and lose what they were "participating in". But if we have truly believed in Jesus Christ, and we have been born again, Jesus Christ is in us as Paul reveals in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XLVII. Chapter X. 14–21, paragraph 11, page 264**

11. Let us turn, then, to what is true and easily understood. Take the case of any man, who does not consist of the word and soul and flesh, but only of soul and flesh; and let us inquire how any such man lays down his life. Can no ordinary man do so? Thou mayest say to me: No man has power to lay down his life [soul], and to take it again. But were not a man able to lay down his life, the Apostle John would not say, "As Christ laid down his life for us, even so ought we also to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John 3:16) Therefore may we also (if only we are filled with His courage, for without Him we can do nothing) lay down our lives for the brethren. When some holy martyr has laid down his life for the brethren, who laid it down, and what laid he down? If we understand this, we shall perceive in what sense it was said by Christ, "I have power to lay down my life." Art thou prepared, O man, to die for Christ? I am prepared, he replies. Let me repeat the question in other words. Art thou prepared to lay down thy life for Christ? And to these words he makes me the same reply, I am prepared, as he had, when I said, Art thou prepared to die? To lay down one's life [soul], is, then, the same as to die. But in whose behalf is the sacrifice in this case? For all men, when they die, lay down their life; but it is not all who lay it down for Christ. And no one has power to resume what he has laid down. But Christ both laid it down for us, and did so when it pleased Him; and when it pleased Him, He took it again. To lay down one's soul then, is to die. As also the Apostle Peter said to

the Lord: "I will lay down my life [soul] for Thy sake;" that is, I will die for Thy sake. View it, then, as referable to the flesh: the flesh layeth down its life, and the flesh taketh it again; not, indeed, the flesh by its own power, but by the power of Him that inhabiteth it. The flesh, then, layeth down its life in expiring. Look at the Lord Himself on the cross: He said, "I thirst:" those who were present dipped a sponge in vinegar, fastened it to a reed, and applied it to His mouth; then, having received it, He said, "It is finished;" meaning, All is fulfilled which had been prophesied regarding me as, prior to my death, still in the future. And because He had the power, when He pleased, to lay down His life, after He had said, "It is finished," what adds the evangelist? "And He bowed His head, and gave up the spirit." This is to lay down the soul [life]. Only let your Charity attend to this. "He bowed His head, and gave up the spirit." Who gave up what gave He up? He gave up the spirit; His flesh gave it up. What means, the flesh gave it up? The flesh sent it forth, breathed it out. For so, in becoming separated from the spirit, we are said to expire. **Just as getting outside the paternal soil is to be expatriated, turning aside from the track is to deviate; so to become separated from the spirit is to expire; and that spirit is the soul [life].** Accordingly, when the soul quits the flesh, and the flesh remains without the soul, then is a man said to lay down his soul [his human life]. When did Christ lay down His life? When it pleased the Word. For sovereign authority resided in the Word; and therein lay the power to determine when the flesh should lay down its life, and when it should take it again.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, **"Let us turn, then, to what is true and easily understood. Take the case of any man, who does not consist of the word and soul and flesh, but only of soul and flesh;** and let us inquire how any such man lays down his life. Can no ordinary man do so? Thou mayest say to me: No man has power to lay down his life [soul], and to take it again. But were not a man able to lay down his life, the Apostle John would not say, "As Christ laid down his life for us, even so ought we also to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John 3:16)"

He refers to **1 John 3 (KJV):16** Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

He continues, "Therefore may we also (if only we are filled with His courage, for without Him we can do nothing) lay down our lives for the brethren. When some holy martyr has laid down his life for the brethren, who laid it down, and what laid he down? If we understand this, we shall perceive in what sense it was said by Christ, "I have power to lay down my life.""

He refers in context to **John 10 (KJV):17** Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

He continues, "Art thou prepared, O man, to die for Christ? I am prepared, he replies. Let me repeat the question in other words. Art thou prepared to lay down thy life for Christ? And to these words he makes me the same reply, I am prepared, as he had, when I said, Art thou prepared to die? To lay down one's life [soul], is, then, the same as to die. But in whose behalf is the sacrifice in this case? For all men, when they die, lay down their life; but it is not all who lay it down for Christ. And no one has power to resume what he has laid down. But Christ both laid it down for us, and did so when it pleased Him; and when it pleased Him, He took it again. To lay down one's soul then, is to die. As also the Apostle Peter said to the Lord: "I will lay



down my life [soul] for Thy sake;” that is, I will die for Thy sake.”

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):37** Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

He continues, “View it, then, as referable to the flesh: the flesh layeth down its life, and the flesh taketh it again; not, indeed, the flesh by its own power, but by the power of Him that inhabiteth it. The flesh, then, layeth down its life in expiring. Look at the Lord Himself on the cross: He said, “I thirst:” those who were present dipped a sponge in vinegar, fastened it to a reed, and applied it to His mouth; then, having received it, He said, “It is finished;” meaning, All is fulfilled which had been prophesied regarding me as, prior to my death, still in the future. And because He had the power, when He pleased, to lay down His life, after He had said, “It is finished,” what adds the evangelist? “And He bowed His head, and gave up the spirit.””

He refers in context to **John 19 (KJV):28** After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. 29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

He continues, “This is to lay down the soul [life].”

The word *anima*, according to Augustin’s explanation of it above, may be rendered in these sections either “soul” or “life.” The original also is ψύχη.—Tr.

The word for “life” in the Greek is ψυχή (pronounced psü-khā’), breath, i.e. (by implication) spirit, abstractly or concretely (the animal sentient principle only; thus distinguished on the one hand from G4151, which is the rational and immortal soul; and on the other from G2222, which is mere vitality, even of plants: these terms thus exactly correspond respectively to the Hebrew H5315, H7307 and H2416):—heart (+ -ily), life, mind, soul, + us, + you. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5590.**

The King James Version translates this word as soul, 58 times, life, 40 times, mind, 3 times, heart 1 time.

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G5590&t=LXX>

He continues, “Only let your Charity attend to this. “He bowed His head, and gave up the spirit.” Who gave up what gave He up? He gave up the spirit; His flesh gave it up. What means, the flesh gave it up? The flesh sent it forth, breathed it out. For so, in becoming separated from the spirit, we are said to expire. **Just as getting outside the paternal soil is to be expatriated, turning aside from the track is to deviate; so to become separated from the spirit is to expire; and that spirit is the soul [life].”**

It is true that sometimes the words “soul” and “spirit” are used interchangeably when a person dies, as we read in **Genesis 35 (KJV):18** And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.

And in **Luke 8 (KJV):53** And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. 54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. 55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

Yet just as there is a difference between bone and marrow, and the thoughts and intents of the heart, so there is a difference between soul and spirit as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing

even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

He concludes, “Accordingly, when the soul quits the flesh, and the flesh remains without the soul, then is a man said to lay down his soul [his human life]. When did Christ lay down His life? When it pleased the Word. For sovereign authority resided in the Word; and therein lay the power to determine when the flesh should lay down its life, and when it should take it again.”

Augustine did not understand the division between the soul and the spirit. He thought that they are the same. So the soul and body were two instead of three. But that they are three is evident in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And each part has a definite purpose and function.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm LXXI, paragraph 20, page 322-323**

20. What next after youth? For, “Thou hast taught me,” he saith, “from my youth:” what after youth? For in that same first conversion of thine thou didst learn, how before conversion thou wast not just, but iniquity preceded, in order that iniquity being banished, there might succeed love: and having been renewed into a new man, only in hope, not yet in substance, thou didst learn how nothing of thy good had preceded, and by the grace of God thou wast converted to God: now perchance since the time that thou hast been converted wilt thou have anything of thine own, and on thy own strength oughtest thou to rely? Just as men are wont to say, now leave me, it was necessary for thee to show me the way; it is sufficient, I will walk in the way. And he that hath shown thee the way, “wilt thou not that I conduct thee to the place?” But thou, if thou art conceited, “let me alone, it is enough, I will walk in the way.” Thou art left, and through thy weakness again thou wilt lose the way. Good were it for thee that He should have conducted thee, who first put thee in the way. But unless He too lead thee, again also thou wilt stray: say to Him then, “Conduct me, O Lord, in Thy way, and I will walk in Thy truth.” (Psalm 86:11) But thy having entered on the way, is youth, the very renewal and beginning of the faith. For before thou wast walking through thy own ways a vagabond; straying through woody places, through rough places, torn in all thy limbs, thou wast seeking a home, that is, a sort of settlement of thy spirit, where thou mightest say, it is well; and being in security mightest say it, at rest from every uneasiness, from every trial, in a word from every captivity; and thou didst not find. What shall I say? Came there to thee one to show thee the way? There came to thee the Way itself, and thou wast set therein by no merits of thine preceding, for evidently thou wast straying. What, since the time that thou hast set foot therein dost thou now direct thyself? Doth He that hath taught thee the way now leave thee? No, he saith: “Thou hast taught me from my youth; and even until now I will tell forth Thy wonderful works.” For a wonderful thing is that which still Thou doest; namely, that Thou dost direct me, who in the way hast put me: and these are Thy wonderful works. What dost thou think to be the wonderful works of God? What is more wonderful among God’s wonderful works, than the raising the dead? But am I by any means dead, thou sayest? Unless dead thou hadst been, there would not have been said to thee, “Rise, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall enlighten thee.” (Ephesians

5:14) Dead are all unbelievers, all unrighteous men; in body they live, but in heart they are extinct. But he that raiseth a man dead according to the body, doth bring him back to see this light and to breathe this air: but he that raiseth is not himself light and air to him; he beginneth to see, as he saw before. A soul is not so resuscitated. For a soul is resuscitated by God; though even a body is resuscitated by God: but God, when He doth resuscitate a body, to the world doth bring it back: when He doth resuscitate a soul, to Himself He bringeth it back. **If the air of this world be withdrawn, there dieth body: if God be withdrawn, there dieth soul.** When then God doth resuscitate a soul, unless there be with her He that hath resuscitated, she being resuscitated liveth not. For He doth not resuscitate, and then leave her to live to herself: in the same manner as Lazarus, when he was resuscitated after being four days dead, was resuscitated by the Lord's corporal presence....The Lord withdrew from that same city or from that spot, did Lazarus cease to live? Not so is the soul resuscitated: God doth resuscitate her, she dieth if God shall have withdrawn. For I will speak boldly, brethren, but yet the truth. Two lives there are, one of the body, another of the soul: as the life of the body is the soul, so the life of the soul is God: in like manner as, if the soul forsake, the body dieth: so the soul dieth, if God forsake. This then is His grace, namely, that He resuscitate and be with us. Because then He doth resuscitate us from our past death, and doth renew in a manner our life, we say to Him, "O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth." But because He doth not withdraw from those whom He resuscitateth, lest when He shall have withdrawn from them they die, we say to Him, "and even until now I will tell forth Thy wonderful works:" because while Thou art with me I live, and of my soul Thou art the life, which will die if she be left to herself. Therefore while my life is present, that is, my God, "even until now," what next?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "What next after youth? For, "Thou hast taught me," he saith, "from my youth:" what after youth?"

He refers to **Psalm 71 (KJV):17** O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

He continues, "For in that same first conversion of thine thou didst learn, how before conversion thou wast not just, but iniquity preceded, in order that iniquity being banished, there might succeed love: and having been renewed into a new man, only in hope, not yet in substance, thou didst learn how nothing of thy good had preceded, and by the grace of God thou wast converted to God: now perchance since the time that thou hast been converted wilt thou have anything of thine own, and on thy own strength oughtest thou to rely?"

Augustine did not understand that, when one is born again, their spirit is made a partaker of the divine nature, being born of the Spirit of God. This is revealed in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

And in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

So in a sense, there has been a change in the substance of our spirit.

He continues, "Just as men are wont to say, now leave me, it was necessary for thee to show me the way; it is sufficient, I will walk in the way. And he that hath shown thee the way, "wilt thou not that I conduct thee to the place?" But thou, if thou art conceited, "let me alone, it is enough, I will walk in the way." Thou art left, and through thy weakness again thou wilt lose

the way. Good were it for thee that He should have conducted thee, who first put thee in the way. But unless He too lead thee, again also thou wilt stray: say to Him then, “Conduct me, O Lord, in Thy way, and I will walk in Thy truth.” (Psalm 86:11)”

He refers to **Psalm 86 (KJV):11** Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.

He continues, “But thy having entered on the way, is youth, the very renewal and beginning of the faith. For before thou wast walking through thy own ways a vagabond; straying through woody places, through rough places, torn in all thy limbs, thou wast seeking a home, that is, a sort of settlement of thy spirit, where thou mightest say, it is well; and being in security mightest say it, at rest from every uneasiness, from every trial, in a word from every captivity; and thou didst not find. What shall I say? Came there to thee one to show thee the way? There came to thee the Way itself, and thou wast set therein by no merits of thine preceding, for evidently thou wast straying. What, since the time that thou hast set foot therein dost thou now direct thyself? Doth He that hath taught thee the way now leave thee? No, he saith: “Thou hast taught me from my youth; and even until now I will tell forth Thy wonderful works.” For a wonderful thing is that which still Thou doest; namely, that Thou dost direct me, who in the way hast put me: and these are Thy wonderful works. What dost thou think to be the wonderful works of God? What is more wonderful among God’s wonderful works, than the raising the dead? But am I by any means dead, thou sayest? Unless dead thou hadst been, there would not have been said to thee, “Rise, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall enlighten thee.” (Ephesians 5:14)”

He refers to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):14** Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

And we read as in **Psalm 40 (KJV):5** Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

He continues, “Dead are all unbelievers, all unrighteous men; in body they live, but in heart they are extinct.”

All unbelievers are indeed dead as we read in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Our death in sin was spiritual. Our spirit had no consciousness of God. Our heart is part of our soul. Our soul is where we have consciousness of this world. Our body is how we interact in the physical realm. Augustine did not understand this relationship of the different parts of our being.

He continues, “But he that raiseth a man dead according to the body, doth bring him back to see this light and to breathe this air: but he that raiseth is not himself light and air to him; he beginneth to see, as he saw before. A soul is not so resuscitated. For a soul is resuscitated by God; though even a body is resuscitated by God: but God, when He doth resuscitate a body, to the world doth bring it back: when He doth resuscitate a soul, to Himself He bringeth it back. **If the air of this world be withdrawn, there dieth body: if God be withdrawn, there dieth soul.**”

Spiritual death is not in our soul but in our spirit. When we are born again, our spirit is made a partaker of the divine nature. Our spirit is made alive to God as we read in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Being born again of the Spirit of God, we are made alive to God, and our life is hidden with Christ in God as we read in **Colossians 3 (KJV):1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Since Christ is our life, the life in our spirit is now eternal life, as John reveals in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

This is why we delight to do the will of God as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

Augustine continues, “When then God doth resuscitate a soul, unless there be with her He that hath resuscitated, she being resuscitated liveth not. For He doth not resuscitate, and then leave her to live to herself: in the same manner as Lazarus, when he was resuscitated after being four days dead, was resuscitated by the Lord’s corporal presence....The Lord withdrew from that same city or from that spot, did Lazarus cease to live? Not so is the soul resuscitated: God doth resuscitate her, she dieth if God shall have withdrawn. For I will speak boldly, brethren, but yet the truth. Two lives there are, one of the body, another of the soul: as the life of the body is the soul, so the life of the soul is God: in like manner as, if the soul forsake, the body dieth: so the soul dieth, if God forsake.”

Augustine did not understand that the new birth of the Holy Spirit takes place in our spirit, and not in our soul. Now we are sons of God as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

God will not forsake the one who is born of God, as we read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):5** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

We are not what we shall be, but our soul is being renewed as we walk in the light, and grow in grace and knowledge. Our soul is now going through a progressive sanctification. Augustine did not understand this process because of his perception that “the life of the soul is God”. Rather, the life of our spirit is Christ, as we read again in **Colossians 3 (KJV):1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

He continues, “This then is His grace, namely, that He resuscitate and be with us. Because then He doth resuscitate us from our past death, and doth renew in a manner our life,



we say to Him, “O God, Thou hast taught me from my youth.” But because He doth not withdraw from those whom He resuscitateth, lest when He shall have withdrawn from them they die, we say to Him, “and even until now I will tell forth Thy wonderful works:” because while Thou art with me I live, and of my soul Thou art the life, which will die if she be left to herself. Therefore while my life is present, that is, my God, “even until now,” what next?”

God does not forsake the one who has been born again because the life of the Holy Spirit is in our spirit. We are now not our own as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

We are not our own, but have been bought with a price.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm CXXXIX, paragraph 12, page 638**

12. “And night shall be lightened as the day.” “Night, as the day.” “Day” to us is worldly prosperity, night adversity in this world: but, if we learn that it is by the desert of our sins that we suffer adversities, and our Father’s scourges are sweet to us, that the Judge’s sentence may not be bitter to us, so shall we find the darkness of this night to be, as it were, the light of this night....**But when Christ our Lord has come, and has dwelt in the soul by faith**, and promised other light, and inspired and given patience, and warned a man not to delight in prosperity or to be crushed by adversity, the man, being faithful, begins to treat this world with indifference; not to be lifted up when prosperity befalls him, nor crushed when adversity, but in all things to praise God, not only when he aboundeth, but also when he loseth; not only when he is in health, but also when he is sick. (Psalm 34:1) ...“As is His darkness, so is also His light.” His darkness overwhelms me not, because His light lifts me not up.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine did not understand that the new birth of the Spirit is in our spirit. His thinking was that as long as we have faith, God dwells in our souls. But if we lose faith, God is not in our souls any more. But in all things, let us praise God, as we read in **Psalms 34 (KJV):1** I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

And let us come to Him and find His rest as we read in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

## **The Mind**

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate XXXII. Chapter VII. 37–39, paragraphs 1-5, page 193-194**

1. Among the dissensions and doubtings of the Jews concerning the Lord Jesus Christ,

among other things which He said, by which some were confounded, others taught: “On the last day of that feast” (for it was then that these things were done) which is called the feast of tabernacles; that is, the building of tents, of which feast you remember, my beloved, that we have already discoursed, the Lord Jesus Christ calls, not by speaking in any way soever, but by crying aloud, that whoso thirsts may come to Him. If we thirst, let us come; and not by our feet, but by our affections; let us come, not by removing from our place, but by loving. Although, according to the inner man, he that loves does also move from a place. But it is one thing to move with the body, another thing to move with the heart: he migrates with the body who changes his place by a motion of the body; he migrates with the heart who changes his affection by a motion of the heart. If thou lovest one thing, and didst love another thing before, thou art not now where thou wast.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Among the dissensions and doubtings of the Jews concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, among other things which He said, by which some were confounded, others taught: “On the last day of that feast” (for it was then that these things were done) which is called the feast of tabernacles; that is, the building of tents, of which feast you remember, my beloved, that we have already discoursed, the Lord Jesus Christ calls, not by speaking in any way soever, but by crying aloud, that whoso thirsts may come to Him.”

He refers in context to **John 7 (KJV):1** After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. 2 Now the Jew's feast of tabernacles was at hand.

And in context to **John 7 (KJV):37** In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

The feast of tabernacles lasted seven days as we read in **Leviticus 23 (KJV):34** Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord.

He continues, “If we thirst, let us come; and not by our feet, but by our affections; let us come, not by removing from our place, but by loving. Although, according to the inner man, he that loves does also move from a place. But it is one thing to move with the body, another thing to move with the heart: he migrates with the body who changes his place by a motion of the body; he migrates with the heart who changes his affection by a motion of the heart. If thou lovest one thing, and didst love another thing before, thou art not now where thou wast.”

Let us continue to read in the next paragraph.

2. Accordingly, the Lord cries aloud to us: for, “He stood and cried out, if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” We are not obliged to delay to inquire what this meant, since the evangelist has explained it. For why the Lord said, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink;” and, “He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;” the evangelist has subsequently explained, saying: “But this spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive. For the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet

glorified.” There is therefore an inner thirst and an inner belly, because there is an inner man. And that inner man is indeed invisible, but the outer man is visible; but yet better is the inner than the outer. And this which is not seen is the more loved; for it is certain that the inner man is loved more than the outer. How is this certain? Let every man prove it in himself. **For although they who live ill may surrender their minds to the body, yet they do wish to live, and to live is the property of the mind only; and they who rule, manifest themselves more than those things that are ruled. Now it is minds that rule, bodies are ruled. Every man rejoices in pleasure, and receives pleasure by the body: but separate the mind from it, and nothing remains in the body to rejoice; and if there is joy of the body, it is the mind that rejoices.** If it has joy of its dwelling, ought it not to have joy of itself? And if the mind has whereof it may have delight outside itself, does it remain without delights within? It is quite certain that a man loves his soul more than his body. But further, a man loves the soul even in another man more than the body. What is it that is loved in a friend, where the love is the purer and more sincere? What in the friend is loved—the mind, or the body? If fidelity is loved, the mind is loved; if benevolence is loved, the mind is the seat of benevolence: if this is what thou lovest in another, that he too loves thee, it is the mind thou lovest, because it is not the flesh, but the mind that loves. For therefore thou lovest, because he loves thee: ask why he loves thee, and then see what it is thou lovest. Consequently, it is more loved, and yet is not seen.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Accordingly, the Lord cries aloud to us: for, “He stood and cried out, if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” We are not obliged to delay to inquire what this meant, since the evangelist has explained it. For why the Lord said, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink;” and, “He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water;” the evangelist has subsequently explained, saying: “But this spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive. For the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” There is therefore an inner thirst and an inner belly, because there is an inner man. And that inner man is indeed invisible, but the outer man is visible; but yet better is the inner than the outer. And this which is not seen is the more loved; for it is certain that the inner man is loved more than the outer. How is this certain? Let every man prove it in himself. **For although they who live ill may surrender their minds to the body, yet they do wish to live, and to live is the property of the mind only; and they who rule, manifest themselves more than those things that are ruled. Now it is minds that rule, bodies are ruled. Every man rejoices in pleasure, and receives pleasure by the body: but separate the mind from it, and nothing remains in the body to rejoice; and if there is joy of the body, it is the mind that rejoices.**”

But the mind is where our thoughts are present. It is in our feelings, or affections, and the heart, which is the center of our feelings, that we feel pleasure, and joy. Augustine was a thinker.

He continues, “If it has joy of its dwelling, ought it not to have joy of itself? And if the mind has whereof it may have delight outside itself, does it remain without delights within? It is quite certain that a man loves his soul more than his body. But further, a man loves the soul even in another man more than the body. What is it that is loved in a friend, where the love is the purer and more sincere? What in the friend is loved—the mind, or the body? If fidelity is

loved, the mind is loved; if benevolence is loved, the mind is the seat of benevolence: if this is what thou lovest in another, that he too loves thee, it is the mind thou lovest, because it is not the flesh, but the mind that loves. For therefore thou lovest, because he loves thee: ask why he loves thee, and then see what it is thou lovest. Consequently, it is more loved, and yet is not seen.”

Love is a feeling of the heart. This is how we know we love someone, that is, we feel love for them. The mind may be loved, but the mind does not love. The mind ponders things. We love with our heart, which is in our soul. We think with our mind. Augustine was a thinker.

Let us continue to read the next paragraph.

3. I would say something further, by which it may more clearly appear to you, beloved, how much the mind is loved, and how it is preferred to the body. Those wanton lovers even, who delight in beauty of bodies, and are charmed by shapeliness of limbs, love the more when they are loved. For when a man loves, and finds that he is regarded with hatred, he feels more anger than liking. Why does he feel anger rather than liking? Because the love that he bestows is not given him in return. If, therefore, even the lovers of bodies desire to be loved in return, and this delights them more when they are loved, what shall we say of the lovers of minds? And if the lovers of minds are great, what shall we say of the lovers of God who makes minds beautiful? **For as the mind gives grace to the body, so it is God that gives grace to the mind.** For it is only the mind that causes that in the body by which it is loved; when the mind has left it, it is a corpse at which thou hast a horror; and how much soever thou mayest have loved its beautiful limbs, thou makest haste to bury it. **Hence, the ornament of the body is the mind; the ornament of the mind is God.**

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “I would say something further, by which it may more clearly appear to you, beloved, how much the mind is loved, and how it is preferred to the body. Those wanton lovers even, who delight in beauty of bodies, and are charmed by shapeliness of limbs, love the more when they are loved. For when a man loves, and finds that he is regarded with hatred, he feels more anger than liking. Why does he feel anger rather than liking? Because the love that he bestows is not given him in return. If, therefore, even the lovers of bodies desire to be loved in return, and this delights them more when they are loved, what shall we say of the lovers of minds? And if the lovers of minds are great, what shall we say of the lovers of God who makes minds beautiful? **For as the mind gives grace to the body, so it is God that gives grace to the mind.**”

But it is with the heart that man believes as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

The mind may examine the evidence, but the heart is the center of the man or woman. It is the heart that the Lord opens, and moves the will to believe. And so it is with the heart that we believe unto righteousness.

Augustine continues, “For it is only the mind that causes that in the body by which it is loved; when the mind has left it, it is a corpse at which thou hast a horror; and how much soever thou mayest have loved its beautiful limbs, thou makest haste to bury it. **Hence, the ornament of the body is the mind; the ornament of the mind is God.**”

But it is our heart that God wants, as we read in **Isaiah 29 (KJV):13** Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Let us continue to read the next paragraph.

4. The Lord, therefore, cries aloud to us to come and drink, if we thirst within; and He says that when we have drunk, rivers of living water shall flow from our belly. The belly of the inner man is the conscience of the heart. Having drunk that water then, the conscience being purged begins to live; and drinking in, it will have a fountain, will be itself a fountain. What is the fountain, and what the river that flows from the belly of the inner man? Benevolence, whereby a man will consult the interest of his neighbor. For if he imagines that what he drinks ought to be only for his own satisfying, there is no flowing of living water from his belly; but if he is quick to consult for the good of his neighbor, then he becomes not dry, because there is a flowing. We will now see what it is that they drink who believe in the Lord; because we surely are Christians, and if we believe, we drink. And it is every man's duty to know in himself whether or not he drinks, and whether he lives by what he drinks; for the fountain does not forsake us if we forsake not the fountain.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, "The Lord, therefore, cries aloud to us to come and drink, if we thirst within; and He says that when we have drunk, rivers of living water shall flow from our belly. The belly of the inner man is the conscience of the heart. Having drunk that water then, the conscience being purged begins to live; and drinking in, it will have a fountain, will be itself a fountain. What is the fountain, and what the river that flows from the belly of the inner man? Benevolence, whereby a man will consult the interest of his neighbor. For if he imagines that what he drinks ought to be only for his own satisfying, there is no flowing of living water from his belly; but if he is quick to consult for the good of his neighbor, then he becomes not dry, because there is a flowing. We will now see what it is that they drink who believe in the Lord; because we surely are Christians, and if we believe, we drink. And it is every man's duty to know in himself whether or not he drinks, and whether he lives by what he drinks; for the fountain does not forsake us if we forsake not the fountain."

Let us read again in **John 7 (KJV):37** In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Augustine asks above, "What is the fountain, and what the river that flows from the belly of the inner man?"

His answer, "Benevolence, whereby a man will consult the interest of his neighbor." But Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit, "which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified".

The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):5** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.



And we read in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):13** If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

If we have truly believed, Jesus Christ is in us, as we read in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Augustine said above, “for the fountain does not forsake us if we forsake not the fountain”. Again, he implies that we can lose our salvation.

Let us continue to read the next paragraph. If we have truly believed, He will not forsake us, for He cannot deny Himself.

5. The evangelist explained, as I have said, whereof the Lord had cried out, to what kind of drink He had invited, what He had procured for them that drink, saying, “But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” What spirit does He speak of, if not the Holy Spirit? For every man has in himself a spirit of his own, of which I spoke when I was commending to you the consideration of the mind. **For every man’s mind is his own spirit: of which the Apostle Paul says, “For what man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of the man which is in himself?” And then he added, “So also the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:11)** None knows the things that are ours but our own spirit. I indeed do not know what are thy thoughts, nor dost thou know what are mine; for those things which we think within are our own, peculiar to ourselves; and his own spirit is the witness of every man’s thoughts. “So also the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” We with our spirit, God with His: so, however, that God with His Spirit knows also what goes on within us; but we are not able, without His own Spirit, to know what takes place in God. God, however, knows in us even what we know not in ourselves. For Peter did not know his own weakness, when he heard from the Lord that he would deny Him thrice: the sick man was ignorant of his own condition; the Physician knew him to be sick. There are then certain things which God knows in us, while we ourselves know them not. So far, however, as belongs to men, no man knows a man as he does himself: another does not know what is going on within him, but his own spirit knows it. But on receiving the Spirit of God, we learn also what takes place in God: not the whole, for we have not received the whole. We know many things from the pledge; for we have received a pledge, and the fullness of this pledge shall be given hereafter. Meanwhile, let the pledge console us in our pilgrimage here; because he who has condescended to bind himself to us by a pledge, is prepared to give us much. If such is the token, what must that be of which it is the token?

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “The evangelist explained, as I have said, whereof the Lord had cried out, to what kind of drink He had invited, what He had procured for them that drink, saying, “But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” What spirit does He speak of, if not the Holy Spirit? For every man has in himself a spirit of his own, of which I spoke when I was commending to you the consideration of the mind. **For every man’s mind is his own spirit: of which the Apostle Paul says, “For what man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of the man which is in himself?” And then he added, “So also the things of God**

knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:11)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):11** For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

But the mind is not our spirit. The mind is a part of our soul. Our spirit is the spiritual part of us where we have connection with God. Before Christ, our spirit is dead in trespasses and sins. When we are born again, our spirit is made alive to God by the Holy Spirit. We are then able to discern spiritual things as we continue to read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

He continues, “None knows the things that are ours but our own spirit. I indeed do not know what are thy thoughts, nor dost thou know what are mine; for those things which we think within are our own, peculiar to ourselves; and his own spirit is the witness of every man’s thoughts. “So also the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” We with our spirit, God with His: so, however, that God with His Spirit knows also what goes on within us; but we are not able, without His own Spirit, to know what takes place in God. God, however, knows in us even what we know not in ourselves. For Peter did not know his own weakness, when he heard from the Lord that he would deny Him thrice: the sick man was ignorant of his own condition; the Physician knew him to be sick. There are then certain things which God knows in us, while we ourselves know them not. So far, however, as belongs to men, no man knows a man as he does himself: another does not know what is going on within him, but his own spirit knows it. But on receiving the Spirit of God, we learn also what takes place in God: not the whole, for we have not received the whole. We know many things from the pledge; for we have received a pledge, and the fullness of this pledge shall be given hereafter. Meanwhile, let the pledge console us in our pilgrimage here; because he who has condescended to bind himself to us by a pledge, is prepared to give us much. If such is the token, what must that be of which it is the token?”

He is referring to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):13** In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

The “token” Augustine refers to is the word “earnest”, which in the Greek is **ἀρραβών** (pronounced är-rä-bō'n), “of Hebrew origin (H6162); a pledge, i.e. part of the purchase-money or property given in advance as security for the rest:—earnest.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G728.**

Our mind is in our soul, as we read in **Psalms 139 (KJV):14** I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

But the spirit has mind as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):27** And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

But the faculties of the spirit have to do with the spiritual realm, as it is “comparing spiritual things with spiritual” as we read in 1 Corinthians 2:13, whereas the faculties of the soul relate to this world, the natural, as in 1 Corinthians 2:14. When we are dead in trespasses and sins, we have no access to the realm of the Spirit of God. When we are alive to God, we can judge all things as we read in context in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):13** Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ.

With our minds we think thoughts. With our hearts we feel things. The mind and the heart are not spirit. They are part of our soul.

## Summary

Augustine did not understand the division between the soul and the spirit. He thought that mind was spirit. But the mind is a faculty of our soul, as is also our heart, and our emotions, and our conscience. Our spirit is where we have consciousness of God and spiritual things. Our soul is where we have consciousness of this world. Knowing the difference between soul and spirit helps us understand the new birth that Jesus spoke of.

Augustine's thinking of the soul made it possible for him to believe that one could lose their salvation. If our spirit, or soul, is just mind, it is changeable. We can change our minds. So in Augustine's thinking, we could lose our salvation if we have not faith.

But the Scriptures teach that when we are born again, we are born of the Spirit of God. And when we receive Him, we are born “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”, as in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

This is not a gradual thing, but an event in our lives when we have believed in Jesus Christ, and confessed Him as Lord. When we do this, we pass from death to life, as Jesus said in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Being born of God, we can no longer die. We now have eternal life.

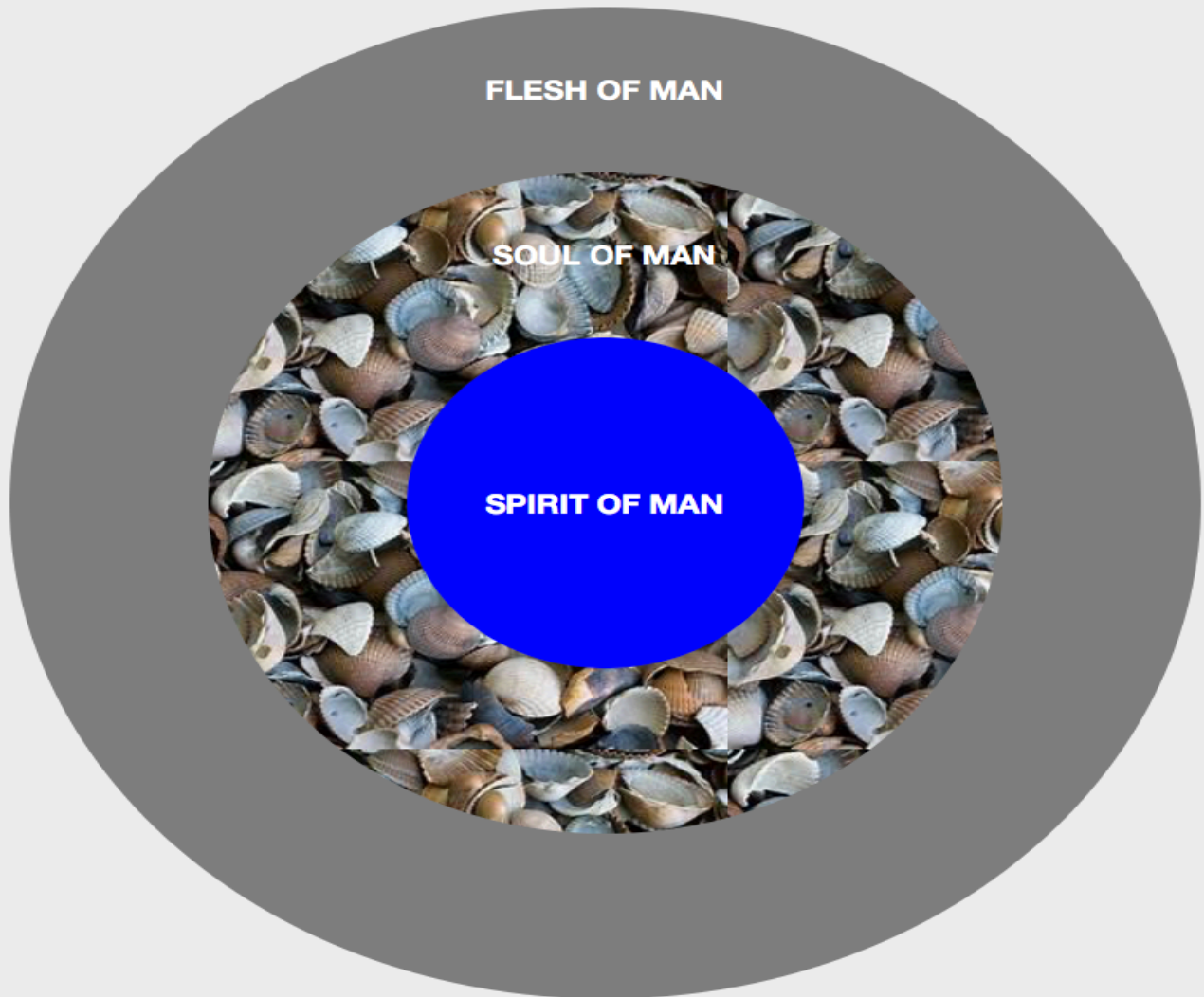
We pass from condemnation to righteousness, as in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

We then have everlasting life in our spirit as in **John 3 (KJV):36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Now the triunity of man is pictured below. The spirit of man is where we are born again of the Spirit of God. It is here that we have consciousness of God and things spiritual. Our soul

is where we have consciousness of this world. Our soul has all of the baggage of our past, our old ways of thinking, our hurt feelings, and our conscience that has been defiled. Our soul is where we must be renewed. The faculties of spirit are faith, hope, and prayer. The faculties of our soul are thoughts, feelings, and our will, heart, and conscience. The faculties of the flesh are sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste.

# The Regenerated Man



# Marriage

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God  
Book XIV, Chapters 22-23, page 278-280**

Chapter 22.—Of the Conjugal Union as It Was Originally Instituted and Blessed by God.

But we, for our part, have no manner of doubt that to increase and multiply and replenish the earth in virtue of the blessing of God, is a gift of marriage as God instituted it from the beginning before man sinned, when He created them male and female,—in other words, two sexes manifestly distinct. And it was this work of God on which His blessing was pronounced. For no sooner had Scripture said, “Male and female created He them,” (Genesis 1:27-28) than it immediately continues, “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Increase, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it,” etc. And though all these things may not unsuitably be interpreted in a spiritual sense, yet “male and female” cannot be understood of two things in one man, as if there were in him one thing which rules, another which is ruled; but it is quite clear that they were created male and female, with bodies of different sexes, for the very purpose of begetting offspring, and so increasing, multiplying, and replenishing the earth; and it is great folly to oppose so plain a fact. It was not of the spirit which commands and the body which obeys, nor of the rational soul which rules and the irrational desire which is ruled, nor of the contemplative virtue which is supreme and the active which is subject, nor of the understanding of the mind and the sense of the body, but plainly of the matrimonial union by which the sexes are mutually bound together, that our Lord, when asked whether it were lawful for any cause to put away one’s wife (for on account of the hardness of the hearts of the Israelites Moses permitted a bill of divorcement to be given), answered and said, “Have ye not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” (Matthew 19:4-5) It is certain, then, that from the first men were created, as we see and know them to be now, of two sexes, male and female, and that they are called one, either on account of the matrimonial union, or on account of the origin of the woman, who was created from the side of the man. And it is by this original example, which God Himself instituted, that the apostle admonishes all husbands to love their own wives in particular. (Ephesians 5:25)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But we, for our part, have no manner of doubt that to increase and multiply and replenish the earth in virtue of the blessing of God, is a gift of marriage as God instituted it from the beginning before man sinned, when He created them male and female,—in other words, two sexes manifestly distinct. And it was this work of God on which His blessing was pronounced. For no sooner had Scripture said, “Male and female created He them,” (Genesis 1:27-28) than it immediately continues, “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Increase, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it,” etc.”

He refers to **Genesis 1 (KJV):27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of



God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Augustine then continues and says, “And though all these things may not unsuitably be interpreted in a spiritual sense, yet “male and female” cannot be understood of two things in one man, as if there were in him one thing which rules, another which is ruled; but it is quite clear that they were created male and female, with bodies of different sexes, for the very purpose of begetting offspring, and so increasing, multiplying, and replenishing the earth; and it is great folly to oppose so plain a fact.”

And we can agree with Augustine here. He continues, “It was not of the spirit which commands and the body which obeys, nor of the rational soul which rules and the irrational desire which is ruled, nor of the contemplative virtue which is supreme and the active which is subject, nor of the understanding of the mind and the sense of the body, but plainly of the matrimonial union by which the sexes are mutually bound together, that our Lord, when asked whether it were lawful for any cause to put away one’s wife (for on account of the hardness of the hearts of the Israelites Moses permitted a bill of divorcement to be given), answered and said, “Have ye not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” (Matthew 19:4-5)”

And in context he refers to **Matthew 19 (KJV):4** And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

He then concludes, “It is certain, then, that from the first men were created, as we see and know them to be now, of two sexes, male and female, and that they are called one, either on account of the matrimonial union, or on account of the origin of the woman, who was created from the side of the man. And it is by this original example, which God Himself instituted, that the apostle admonishes all husbands to love their own wives in particular. (Ephesians 5:25)”

And to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

We can agree with Augustine here.

Chapter 23.—Whether Generation Should Have Taken Place Even in Paradise Had Man Not Sinned, or Whether There Should Have Been Any Contention There Between Chastity and Lust.

But he who says that there should have been neither copulation nor generation but for sin, virtually says that man's sin was necessary to complete the number of the saints. For if these two by not sinning should have continued to live alone, because, as is supposed, they could not have begotten children had they not sinned, then certainly sin was necessary in order that there might be not only two but many righteous men. And if this cannot be maintained without absurdity, we must rather believe that the number of the saints fit to complete this most blessed city would have been as great though no one had sinned, as it is now that the grace of God gathers its citizens out of the multitude of sinners, so long as the children of this world generate and are generated. (Luke 20:34)

And therefore that marriage, worthy of the happiness of Paradise, should have had desirable fruit without the shame of lust, had there been no sin. But how that could be, there is now no example to teach us. Nevertheless, it ought not to seem incredible that one member might serve the will without lust then, since so many serve it now. Do we now move our feet and hands when we will to do the things we would by means of these members? Do we meet with no resistance in them, but perceive that they are ready servants of the will, both in our own case and in that of others, and especially of artisans employed in mechanical operations, by which the weakness and clumsiness of nature become, through industrious exercise, wonderfully dexterous? And shall we not believe that, like as all those members obediently serve the will, so also should the members have discharged the function of generation, though lust, the award of disobedience, had been a wanting? Did not Cicero, in discussing the difference of governments in his *De Republica*, adopt a simile from human nature, and say that we command our bodily members as children, they are so obedient; but that the vicious parts of the soul must be treated as slaves, and be coerced with a more stringent authority? And no doubt, in the order of nature, the soul is more excellent than the body; and yet the soul commands the body more easily than itself. Nevertheless this lust, of which we at present speak, is the more shameful on this account, because the soul is therein neither master of itself, so as not to lust at all, nor of the body, so as to keep the members under the control of the will; for if they were thus ruled, there should be no shame. But now the soul is ashamed that the body, which by nature is inferior and subject to it, should resist its authority. For in the resistance experienced by the soul in the other emotions there is less shame, because the resistance is from itself, and thus, when it is conquered by itself, itself is the conqueror, although the conquest is inordinate and vicious, because accomplished by those parts of the soul which ought to be subject to reason, yet, being accomplished by its own parts and energies, the conquest is, as I say, its own. For when the soul conquers itself to a due subordination, so that its unreasonable motions are controlled by reason, while it again is subject to God, this is a conquest virtuous and praiseworthy. Yet there is less shame when the soul is resisted by its own vicious parts than when its will and order are resisted by the body, which is distinct from and inferior to it, and dependent on it for life itself.

But so long as the will retains under its authority the other members, without which the members excited by lust to resist the will cannot accomplish what they seek, chastity is preserved, and the delight of sin foregone. And certainly, had not culpable disobedience been visited with penal disobedience, the marriage of Paradise should have been ignorant of this struggle and rebellion, this quarrel between will and lust, that the will may be satisfied and lust restrained, but those members, like all the rest, should have obeyed the will. The field of

generation should have been sown by the organ created for this purpose, as the earth is sown by the hand. And whereas now, as we essay to investigate this subject more exactly, modesty hinders us, and compels us to ask pardon of chaste ears, there would have been no cause to do so, but we could have discoursed freely, and without fear of seeming obscene, upon all those points which occur to one who meditates on the subject. There would not have been even words which could be called obscene, but all that might be said of these members would have been as pure as what is said of the other parts of the body. Whoever, then, comes to the perusal of these pages with unchaste mind, let him blame his disposition, not his nature; let him brand the actings of his own impurity, not the words which necessity forces us to use, and for which every pure and pious reader or hearer will very readily pardon me, while I expose the folly of that scepticism which argues solely on the ground of its own experience, and has no faith in anything beyond. He who is not scandalized at the apostle's censure of the horrible wickedness of the women who "changed the natural use into that which is against nature," (Romans 1:26) will read all this without being shocked, especially as we are not, like Paul, citing and censuring a damnable uncleanness, but are explaining, so far as we can, human generation, while with Paul we avoid all obscenity of language.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "But he who says that there should have been neither copulation nor generation but for sin, virtually says that man's sin was necessary to complete the number of the saints. For if these two by not sinning should have continued to live alone, because, as is supposed, they could not have begotten children had they not sinned, then certainly sin was necessary in order that there might be not only two but many righteous men."

And Augustine argues against this when he calls it "absurdity", as he continues, "And if this cannot be maintained without absurdity, we must rather believe that the number of the saints fit to complete this most blessed city would have been as great though no one had sinned, as it is now that the grace of God gathers its citizens out of the multitude of sinners, so long as the children of this world generate and are generated."

He refers in context to **Luke 20 (KJV):34** And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: 35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: 36 Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

He then continues, "And therefore that marriage, worthy of the happiness of Paradise, should have had desirable fruit without the shame of lust, had there been no sin. But how that could be, there is now no example to teach us."

So now, he says, there is "the shame of lust", in marriage because of sin. He continues, "Nevertheless, it ought not to seem incredible that one member might serve the will without lust then, since so many serve it now. Do we now move our feet and hands when we will to do the things we would by means of these members? Do we meet with no resistance in them, but perceive that they are ready servants of the will, both in our own case and in that of others, and especially of artisans employed in mechanical operations, by which the weakness and clumsiness of nature become, through industrious exercise, wonderfully dexterous? And shall we not believe that, like as all those members obediently serve the will, so also should the

members have discharged the function of generation, though lust, the award of disobedience, had been a wanting?”

He imagines what marriage would have been like without sin in the world. So we can agree with his conclusion, and answer yes. If Adam and Eve had not sinned, that just as “those members obediently serve the will, so also should the members have discharged the function of generation” without lust.

He continues, “Did not Cicero, in discussing the difference of governments in his *De Republica*, adopt a simile from human nature, and say that we command our bodily members as children, they are so obedient; but that the vicious parts of the soul must be treated as slaves, and be coerced with a more stringent authority? And no doubt, in the order of nature, the soul is more excellent than the body; and yet the soul commands the body more easily than itself.”

He then explains shame, as he continues, “**Nevertheless this lust, of which we at present speak, is the more shameful on this account, because the soul is therein neither master of itself, so as not to lust at all, nor of the body, so as to keep the members under the control of the will; for if they were thus ruled, there should be no shame. But now the soul is ashamed that the body, which by nature is inferior and subject to it, should resist its authority.**”

What Augustine did not understand is that the sin nature is in our flesh, and not in our soul. In those of us who have been born again, we are not then debtors to submit to the desires of the flesh as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):11** But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

Therefore our soul does not have to feel “**ashamed that the body, which by nature is inferior and subject to it, should resist its authority.**”

Augustine seems to think that sex in marriage is tainted by shame, because it is prompted by a body that resists its authority. What Augustine does not understand is that sex in marriage is not tainted by lust. Instead, sex is in response to love for our spouse. This is what God intended. Augustine had issues because of his past which tainted his perception of love in marriage.

He then tries to explain, as he continues, “**For in the resistance experienced by the soul in the other emotions there is less shame, because the resistance is from itself, and thus, when it is conquered by itself, itself is the conqueror, although the conquest is inordinate and vicious, because accomplished by those parts of the soul which ought to be subject to reason, yet, being accomplished by its own parts and energies, the conquest is, as I say, its own. For when the soul conquers itself to a due subordination, so that its unreasonable motions are controlled by reason, while it again is subject to God, this is a conquest virtuous and praiseworthy. Yet there is less shame when the soul is resisted by its own vicious parts than when its will and order are resisted by the body, which is distinct from and inferior to it, and dependent on it for life itself.**”

In our soul is where the baggage of our past resides. All of the hurt feelings, the old ways of thinking which excluded God, our conscience which was defiled in our unbelief, are what need to be cleansed in us, that is, in our soul. But the mind after the Spirit is life and peace as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):6** For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

He continues, “But so long as the will retains under its authority the other members, without which the members excited by lust to resist the will cannot accomplish what they seek, chastity is preserved, and the delight of sin foregone. And certainly, had not culpable disobedience been visited with penal disobedience, the marriage of Paradise should have been ignorant of this struggle and rebellion, this quarrel between will and lust, that the will may be satisfied and lust restrained, but those members, like all the rest, should have obeyed the will. The field of generation should have been sown by the organ created for this purpose, as the earth is sown by the hand.”

Augustine does not understand that the one who is born again is a new creation. Though we still have a sinful nature in our flesh, it does not mean that we do not have authority over our members. We have been redeemed, and the law of the Spirit of life has set us free, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Marriage is honorable in all as we read again in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):**4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

The bed is undefiled as long as it is used solely in marriage. He continues, “**And whereas now, as we essay to investigate this subject more exactly, modesty hinders us, and compels us to ask pardon of chaste ears, there would have been no cause to do so, but we could have discoursed freely, and without fear of seeming obscene, upon all those points which occur to one who meditates on the subject. There would not have been even words which could be called obscene, but all that might be said of these members would have been as pure as what is said of the other parts of the body. Whoever, then, comes to the perusal of these pages with unchaste mind, let him blame his disposition, not his nature; let him brand the actings of his own impurity, not the words which necessity forces us to use, and for which every pure and pious reader or hearer will very readily pardon me, while I expose the folly of that scepticism which argues solely on the ground of its own experience, and has no faith in anything beyond. He who is not scandalized at the apostle’s censure of the horrible wickedness of the women who “changed the natural use into that which is against nature,” (Romans 1:26) will read all this without being shocked, especially as we are not, like Paul, citing and censuring a damnable uncleanness, but are explaining, so far as we can, human generation, while with Paul we avoid all obscenity of language.**”

Augustine was feeling the impurity of his own past, when he says above, that “**modesty hinders us, and compels us to ask pardon of chaste ears**”.

If he could have processed his feelings about his own past, he might have felt more freedom to speak on this subject. As it was, he submitted to the rule of celibacy for the clergy. Now, in his present circumstance, he thinks he uses “**words which could be called obscene**”, by even mentioning the subject.

He then refers to Paul, “**citing and censuring a damnable uncleanness**”, as we read in context to **Romans 1 (KJV):**21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the



lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

In verse 28, Paul is speaking of men and women who “did not like to retain God in their knowledge”. These were “without natural affection” in verse 31. So God gave them over to their sin, and “to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves”, in verse 24.

This is man’s condition before Christ. Augustine only proves that our sanctification is not instantaneous when we come to Christ. There was much of his past that he still needed to process. There was a lot of shame, as a result of the guilt he felt from his past profligacy, that he needed to deal with.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Original Sin, Chapters 38-40, page 250-252**

### **Chapter 38 [XXXIII.]—Original Sin Does Not Render Marriage Evil.**

But they argue thus, saying: “Is not, then, marriage an evil, and the man that is produced by marriage not God’s work?” As if the good of the married life were that disease of concupiscence with which they who know not God love their wives—a course which the apostle forbids; (1 Thessalonians 4:5) and not rather that conjugal chastity, by which carnal lust is reduced to the good purposes of the appointed procreation of children. Or as if, forsooth, a man could possibly be anything but God’s work, not only when born in wedlock, but even if he be produced in fornication or adultery. In the present inquiry, however, when the question is not for what a Creator is necessary, but for what a Saviour, we have not to consider what good there is in the procreation of nature, but what evil there is in sin, whereby our nature has been certainly corrupted. No doubt the two are generated simultaneously—both nature and nature’s corruption; one of which is good, the other evil. The one comes to us from the bounty of the Creator, the other is contracted from the condemnation of our origin; the one has its cause in the good-will of the Supreme God, the other in the depraved will of the first man; the one exhibits God as the maker of the creature, the other exhibits God as the punisher of disobedience: **in short, the very same Christ was the maker of man for the creation of the one, and was made man for the healing of the other.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But they argue thus, saying: “Is not, then, marriage an evil, and the man that is produced by marriage not God’s work?” As if the good of the married life were that disease of concupiscence with which they who know not God love their wives—a course which the apostle forbids; (1 Thessalonians 4:5) and not rather that conjugal chastity, by which carnal lust is reduced to the good purposes of the appointed procreation of children.”

He refers in context to **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):4** That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: 6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

Augustine says that the marriages of those “who know not God love their wives” with “that disease of concupiscence”. But the marriage relationship is honorable in all. It is sexual relationships outside of marriage that are against the law of God. This is why it says, “but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge”, as in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):4** Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Or as we read in **Hebrews 13 (NASB):4** Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge

To Augustine, “conjugal chastity” reduces “carnal lust” to “the good purposes of the appointed procreation of children”. But “conjugal chastity” maintains the love relationship between a man and his wife. As long as they do not go beyond that relationship, “marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled”.

He continues, “Or as if, forsooth, a man could possibly be anything but God’s work, not only when born in wedlock, but even if he be produced in fornication or adultery. In the present inquiry, however, when the question is not for what a Creator is necessary, but for what a Saviour, we have not to consider what good there is in the procreation of nature, but what evil there is in sin, whereby our nature has been certainly corrupted. No doubt the two are generated simultaneously—both nature and nature’s corruption; one of which is good, the other evil. The one comes to us from the bounty of the Creator, the other is contracted from the condemnation of our origin; the one has its cause in the good-will of the Supreme God, the other in the depraved will of the first man; the one exhibits God as the maker of the creature, the other exhibits God as the punisher of disobedience: in short, the very same Christ was the maker of man for the creation of the one, and was made man for the healing of the other.”

All who are born of Adam have mortal, or death doomed bodies. This is because there is a nature to sin which we inherit as descendants of Adam. So Augustine is saying that as God’s creation we are good, but as our nature has been corrupted by sin, we are all sinners and need a Savior.

Chapter 39 [XXXIV.]—Three Things Good and Laudable in Matrimony.

Marriage, therefore, is a good in all the things which are proper to the married state. And these are three: it is the ordained means of procreation, it is the guarantee of chastity, it is the bond of union. In respect of its ordination for generation the Scripture says, “I will therefore

that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house;" (1 Timothy 5:14) as regards its guaranteeing chastity, it is said of it, "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband; and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife;" (1 Corinthians 7:4) and considered as the bond of union: "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Matthew 19:6) Touching these points, we do not forget that we have treated at sufficient length, with whatever ability the Lord has given us, in other works of ours, which are not unknown to you. In relation to them all the Scripture has this general praise: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled." (Hebrews 13:4) For, inasmuch as the wedded state is good, insomuch does it produce a very large amount of good in respect of the evil of concupiscence; for it is not lust, but reason, which makes a good use of concupiscence. Now lust lies in that law of the "disobedient" members which the apostle notes as "warring against the law of the mind;" (Romans 7:23) whereas reason lies in that law of the wedded state which makes good use of concupiscence. If, however, it were impossible for any good to arise out of evil, God could not create man out of the embraces of adultery. As, therefore, the damnable evil of adultery, whenever man is born in it, is not chargeable on God, who certainly amidst man's evil work actually produces a good work; so, likewise, all which causes shame in that rebellion of the members which brought the accusing blush on those who after their sin covered these members with the figtree leaves, (Genesis 3:7) is not laid to the charge of marriage, by virtue of which the conjugal embrace is not only allowable, but is even useful and honourable; but it is imputable to the sin of that disobedience which was followed by the penalty of man's finding his own members emulating against himself that very disobedience which he had practiced against God. Then, abashed at their action, since they moved no more at the bidding of his rational will, but at their own arbitrary choice as it were, instigated by lust, he devised the covering which should conceal such of them as he judged to be worthy of shame. For man, as the handiwork of God, deserved not confusion of face; nor were the members which it seemed fit to the Creator to form and appoint by any means designed to bring the blush to the creature. Accordingly, that simple nudity was displeasing neither to God nor to man: there was nothing to be ashamed of, because nothing at first accrued which deserved punishment.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "Marriage, therefore, is a good in all the things which are proper to the married state. And these are three:"

He then lists the three:

- 1.) "it is the ordained means of procreation,"
- 2.) "it is the guarantee of chastity,"
- 3.) "it is the bond of union."

He then continues, "In respect of its ordination for generation the Scripture says, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house;" (1 Timothy 5:14) as regards its guaranteeing chastity, it is said of it, "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband; and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife;" (1 Corinthians 7:4) and considered as the bond of union: "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Matthew 19:6)"

He refers to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):14** I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

And to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):4** The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

And to **Matthew 19 (KJV):6** Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

He then continues, “Touching these points, we do not forget that we have treated at sufficient length, with whatever ability the Lord has given us, in other works of ours, which are not unknown to you. **In relation to them all the Scripture has this general praise: “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled.” (Hebrews 13:4)”**

He refers to **Hebrews 13 (KJV):4** Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

He continues, **“For, inasmuch as the wedded state is good, insomuch does it produce a very large amount of good in respect of the evil of concupiscence; for it is not lust, but reason, which makes a good use of concupiscence. Now lust lies in that law of the “disobedient” members which the apostle notes as “warring against the law of the mind;” (Romans 7:23) whereas reason lies in that law of the wedded state which makes good use of concupiscence.”**

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

What Augustine did not grasp is that it is not lust when a man loves his wife, and they embrace. Man felt shame in the garden of Eden when he sinned. This made him want to hide from God as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):8** And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. 9 And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. 11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? 12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

God then provided clothes for the man and the woman in **Genesis 3 (KJV):20** Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

There is no sin in the marriage relationship, but only in sexual relationships outside of marriage. Therefore, there is no shame in the marriage relationship, for we feel shame when we sin.

Augustine continues, “If, however, it were impossible for any good to arise out of evil, God could not create man out of the embraces of adultery. **As, therefore, the damnable evil of adultery, whenever man is born in it, is not chargeable on God, who certainly amidst man’s evil work actually produces a good work; so, likewise, all which causes shame in that rebellion of the members which brought the accusing blush on those who after their sin covered these members with the figtree leaves, (Genesis 3:7) is not laid to the charge of marriage, by virtue of which the conjugal embrace is not only allowable, but is even useful and honourable; but it is imputable to the sin of that disobedience which was followed by the penalty of man’s finding his own members emulating against himself that very disobedience which he had practiced against God.”**

He says here that **“the conjugal embrace is not only allowable, but is even useful and honourable”**, and then he says, **“but it is imputable to the sin of that disobedience which was followed by the penalty of man’s finding his own members emulating against himself that very**

disobedience which he had practiced against God.”

He does not realize that now as a result of sin, everywhere a man goes, he has made him to be constantly fighting “his own members emulating against himself that very disobedience which he had practiced against God”, which is the law of sin in our flesh. But the first sin of man had nothing to do with the conjugal embrace, as Augustine seems to imply. The conjugal embrace is by God’s design. We have been freed from sin as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

We sin when we yield to the flesh. Having a “conjugal embrace is not only allowable, but is even useful and honourable”, and we could add, without sin.

Augustine continues, “Then, abashed at their action, since they moved no more at the bidding of his rational will, but at their own arbitrary choice as it were, instigated by lust, he devised the covering which should conceal such of them as he judged to be worthy of shame. For man, as the handiwork of God, deserved not confusion of face; nor were the members which it seemed fit to the Creator to form and appoint by any means designed to bring the blush to the creature. Accordingly, that simple nudity was displeasing neither to God nor to man: there was nothing to be ashamed of, because nothing at first accrued which deserved punishment.”

Another way we could look at this is that man and woman, before they sinned, had no knowledge of good and evil. They were in a child state of innocence as we read in **Deuteronomy 1 (KJV):39** Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.

Adam and Eve would have gotten this knowledge between good and evil if they would have passed the test of obedience. Sin was already in the universe because of Lucifer. Man and woman were on probation as it were. Now, because of their sin, they have the knowledge of good and evil. Their eyes were opened as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):7** And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Now, we cover ourselves so that we do not sin. Sin brings feelings of shame. There is no shame in the “conjugal embrace” in marriage, because there is no sin in marriage.

Chapter 40 [XXXV.]—Marriage Existed Before Sin Was Committed. How God’s Blessing Operated in Our First Parents.

There was, however, undoubtedly marriage, even when sin had no prior existence; and for no other reason was it that woman, and not a second man, was created as a help for the man. Moreover, those words of God, “Be fruitful and multiply,” (Genesis 1:28) are not prophetic of sins to be condemned, but a benediction upon the fertility of marriage. For by these ineffable words of His, I mean by the divine methods which are inherent in the truth of His wisdom by which all things were made, God endowed the primeval pair with their seminal power. Suppose, however, that nature had not been dishonoured by sin, God forbid that we should think that marriages in Paradise must have been such, that in them the procreative members would be



excited by the mere ardour of lust, and not by the command of the will for producing offspring,—as the foot is for walking, the hand for labour, and the tongue for speech. Nor, as now happens, would the chastity of virginity be corrupted to the conception of offspring by the force of a turbid heat, but it would rather be submissive to the power of the gentlest love; and thus there would be no pain, no blood-effusion of the concumbent virgin, as there would also be no groan of the parturient mother. This, however, men refuse to believe, because it has not been verified in the actual condition of our mortal state. Nature, having been vitiated by sin, has never experienced an instance of that primeval purity. But we speak to faithful men, who have learnt to believe the inspired Scriptures, even though no examples are adduced of actual reality. For how could I now possibly prove that a man was made of the dust, without any parents, and a wife formed for him out of his own side? (Genesis 2:7,22) And yet faith takes on trust what the eye no longer discovers.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “There was, however, undoubtedly marriage, even when sin had no prior existence; and for no other reason was it that woman, and not a second man, was created as a help for the man.”

Yes, and so we read that it is not good for the man to be alone in **Genesis 2 (KJV):18** And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. 19 And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. 20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. 21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Are we to suppose that God made the woman just as she is with no intention for them to have a “conjugal embrace”? No, the conjugal embrace is God’s design.

So Augustine continues, “Moreover, those words of God, “Be fruitful and multiply,” (Genesis 1:28) are not prophetic of sins to be condemned, but a benediction upon the fertility of marriage. For by these ineffable words of His, I mean by the divine methods which are inherent in the truth of His wisdom by which all things were made, God endowed the primeval pair with their seminal power.”

Augustine will only allow the “conjugal embrace” to be for procreation.

He continues, “Suppose, however, that nature had not been dishonoured by sin, God forbid that we should think that marriages in Paradise must have been such, that in them the procreative members would be excited by the mere ardour of lust, and not by the command of the will for producing offspring,—as the foot is for walking, the hand for labour, and the tongue for speech.”

So the “conjugal embrace” was just like eating a piece of fish? What was he afraid of? He continues, “Nor, as now happens, would the chastity of virginity be corrupted to the conception

of offspring by the force of a turbid heat, but it would rather be submissive to the power of the gentlest love; and thus there would be no pain, no blood-effusion of the concumbent virgin, as there would also be no groan of the parturient mother. This, however, men refuse to believe, because it has not been verified in the actual condition of our mortal state. Nature, having been vitiated by sin, has never experienced an instance of that primeval purity.”

The word “parturient” means “: bringing forth or about to bring forth young”.

**(Merriam Webster)**

The pain a woman experiences in child birth is a result of the the judgement of God on the woman for sin as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):16** Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

So we might ask how does Augustine know of what he speaks? Of course he would have to reply that his only experience was with women who were not his wives.

He then explains, “But we speak to faithful men, who have learnt to believe the inspired Scriptures, even though no examples are adduced of actual reality. For how could I now possibly prove that a man was made of the dust, without any parents, and a wife formed for him out of his own side? (Genesis 2:7,22) And yet faith takes on trust what the eye no longer discovers.”

But his explanation does not explain how he knows with no apparent doubt that there would be no “conception of offspring by the force of a turbid heat” in “marriages in Paradise”.

Why could not “the procreative members...be excited by the mere ardour” of the natural desire that is found in marriage? Part of the attraction that inspires a desire in one to be married is physical. Augustine certainly knew of this. I believe the rules of the Church in his day looked down on marriage in order to preserve the perception of holiness in the clergy. This was to maintain their rule over the laity.

And let us read again in **Romans 1 (KJV):26** For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.

The “women did change the natural use into that which is against nature”, and “likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another”. When the Scripture speaks of “natural use”, is it speaking of just holding hands?

The “natural use” speaks of the way God created us to multiply. So the “**conjugal embrace**” was part of the love relationship God created between a man and a woman, and part of His design.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Original Sin, Chapter 43, page 252-253**

Chapter 43 [XXXVIII.]—Human Offspring, Even Previous to Birth, Under Condemnation at the Very Root. Uses of Matrimony Undertaken for Mere Pleasure Not Without Venial Fault.

**Where God did nothing else than by a just sentence to condemn the man who willfully**

sins, together with his stock; there also, as a matter of course, whatsoever was even not yet born is justly condemned in its sinful root. In this condemned stock carnal generation holds every man; and from it nothing but spiritual regeneration liberates him. In the case, therefore, of regenerate parents, if they continue in the same state of grace, it will undoubtedly work no injurious consequence, by reason of the remission of sins which has been bestowed upon them, unless they make a perverse use of it,—not alone all kinds of lawless corruptions, but even in the marriage state itself, whenever husband and wife toil at procreation, not from the desire of natural propagation of their species, but are mere slaves to the gratification of their lust out of very wantonness. As for the permission which the apostle gives to husbands and wives, “not to defraud one another, except with consent for a time, that they may have leisure for prayer,” (1 Corinthians 7:5) he concedes it by way of indulgent allowance, and not as a command; but this very form of the concession evidently implies some degree of fault. The connubial embrace, however, which marriage contracts point to as intended for the procreation of children, considered in itself simply, and without any reference to fornication, is good and right; because, although it is by reason of this body of death (which is unrenewed as yet by the resurrection) impracticable without a certain amount of bestial motion, which puts human nature to the blush, yet the embrace is not after all a sin in itself, when reason applies the concupiscence to a good end, and is not overmastered to evil.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Where God did nothing else than by a just sentence to condemn the man who willfully sins, together with his stock; there also, as a matter of course, whatsoever was even not yet born is justly condemned in its sinful root. In this condemned stock carnal generation holds every man; and from it nothing but spiritual regeneration liberates him.”

And we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

He continues, “In the case, therefore, of regenerate parents, if they continue in the same state of grace, it will undoubtedly work no injurious consequence, by reason of the remission of sins which has been bestowed upon them, unless they make a perverse use of it,—not alone all kinds of lawless corruptions, but even in the marriage state itself, whenever husband and wife toil at procreation, not from the desire of natural propagation of their species, but are mere slaves to the gratification of their lust out of very wantonness.”

We know “lust” is sin. But natural desire, or desire according to nature, is not sin. Augustine will not allow husband and wife to come together except “from the desire of natural propagation of their species”. So according to Augustine, it is not natural to simply be intimate with your spouse. Intimacy is only allowable when there is “the desire of natural propagation of their species”.

Augustine continues, “As for the permission which the apostle gives to husbands and wives, “not to defraud one another, except with consent for a time, that they may have leisure for prayer,” (1 Corinthians 7:5) he concedes it by way of indulgent allowance, and not as a command; but this very form of the concession evidently implies some degree of fault.”

Let us read in context in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):1** Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. **2** Nevertheless, to avoid

fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. 6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

What Paul is saying is that he “would that all men were even as” himself, that is, unmarried. Why does he say this? He explains in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV)**: 32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: 33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. 34 There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. 35 And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.

When we are single, we are free to focus our full attention on the Lord, and what He wants us to do. When we are married, we are attending to our spouse, as well as the Lord. We can get distracted by the cares of this life.

Paul continues in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV)**: 36 But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. 37 Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.

Now Paul said before in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV)**: 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

Every man has his own gift from God. Not everyone is gifted to be unmarried. But Paul says that those who marry do not sin. The permission he gives is for those so gifted to marry. It is not about when they should be intimate, as Augustine suggests.

Augustine then continues, “**The connubial embrace, however, which marriage contracts point to as intended for the procreation of children, considered in itself simply, and without any reference to fornication, is good and right; because, although it is by reason of this body of death (which is unrenewed as yet by the resurrection) impracticable without a certain amount of bestial motion, which puts human nature to the blush, yet the embrace is not after all a sin in itself, when reason applies the concupiscence to a good end, and is not overmastered to evil.**”

Augustine could not conceive of the “**connubial embrace**” in marriage as being anything more than for the procreation of children. But it also involves pleasure, as we read in **Genesis 18 (KJV)**: 12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

Possibly Augustine could not forgive himself for his past. The embrace is not a sin in itself, even if it is only for pleasure, as we read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV)**: 4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On Marriage and Concupiscence, Book I, Chapter 9, page 266-267**

Chapter 9 [VIII.]—This Disease of Concupiscence in Marriage is Not to Be a Matter of Will, But of Necessity; What Ought to Be the Will of Believers in the Use of Matrimony; Who is to Be Regarded as Using, and Not Succumbing To, the Evil of Concupiscence; How the Holy Fathers of the Old Testament Formerly Used Wives.

This disease of concupiscence is what the apostle refers to, when, speaking to married believers, he says: “This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the disease of desire, even as the Gentiles which know not God.” (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5) The married believer, therefore, must not only not use another man’s vessel, which is what they do who lust after others’ wives; but he must know that even his own vessel is not to be possessed in the disease of carnal concupiscence. And this counsel is not to be understood as if the apostle prohibited conjugal—that is to say, lawful and honourable—cohabitation; but so as that that cohabitation (which would have no adjunct of unwholesome lust, were it not that man’s perfect freedom of choice had become by preceding sin so disabled that it has this fatal adjunct) should not be a matter of will, but of necessity, without which, nevertheless, it would be impossible to attain to the fruition of the will itself in the procreation of children. **And this wish is not in the marriages of believers determined by the purpose of having such children born as shall pass through life in this present world, but such as shall be born again in Christ, and remain in Him for evermore. Now if this result should come about, the reward of a full felicity will spring from marriage; but if such result be not realized, there will yet ensue to the married pair the peace of their good will. Whosoever possesses his vessel (that is, his wife) with this intention of heart, certainly does not possess her in the “disease of desire,” as the Gentiles which know not God, but in sanctification and honour, as believers who hope in God. A man turns to use the evil of concupiscence, and is not overcome by it, when he bridles and restrains its rage, as it works in inordinate and indecorous motions; and never relaxes his hold upon it except when intent on offspring, and then controls and applies it to the carnal generation of children to be spiritually regenerated, not to the subjection of the spirit to the flesh in a sordid servitude.** That the holy fathers of olden times after Abraham, and before him, to whom God gave His testimony that “they pleased Him,” (Hebrews 11:4-6) thus used their wives, no one who is a Christian ought to doubt, since it was permitted to certain individuals amongst them to have a plurality of wives, where the reason was for the multiplication of their offspring, not the desire of varying gratification.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “This disease of concupiscence is what the apostle refers to, when, speaking to married believers, he says: “This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the disease of desire, even as the Gentiles which know not God.” (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5)”



He refers to **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):3** For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

The word translated “lust” in verse 5 in the Greek is **πάθος** (pronounced pā'-thos), “from the alternate of G3958; properly, suffering ("pathos"), i.e. (subjectively) a passion (especially concupiscence):—(inordinate) affection, lust.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3806.**

This Greek word is used in two other Scriptures in the New Testament, and translated as follows in the **King James Version**:

**Romans 1 (KJV):26** For this cause God gave them up unto vile **affections**: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

**Colossians 3 (KJV):5** Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, **inordinate affection**, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

The word “concupiscence” in the Greek is **ἐπιθυμία** (pronounced e-pē-thū-mē'-ā), “ep-ee-thoo-mee'-ah; from G1937; a longing (especially for what is forbidden):—concupiscence, desire, lust (after).” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1939.**

This is the normal word translated as “lust” in the King James New Testament. For example:

**Galatians 5 (KJV):16** This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the **lust** of the flesh.

It is also translated as “concupiscence” in **Colossians 3 (KJV):5** Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil **concupiscence**, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

Augustine continues, “The married believer, therefore, must not only not use another man’s vessel, which is what they do who lust after others’ wives; but he must know that even his own vessel is not to be possessed in the disease of carnal concupiscence. And this counsel is not to be understood as if the apostle prohibited conjugal—that is to say, lawful and honourable—cohabitation; but so as that that cohabitation (which would have no adjunct of unwholesome lust, were it not that man’s perfect freedom of choice had become by preceding sin so disabled that it has this fatal adjunct) should not be a matter of will, but of necessity, without which, nevertheless, it would be impossible to attain to the fruition of the will itself in the procreation of children.”

So he is saying that “man’s perfect freedom of choice”, because of sin, has become “so disabled that it has this fatal adjunct”, that is, this “adjunct of unwholesome lust”. So then he concludes, “cohabitation...should not be a matter of will, but of necessity, without which, nevertheless, it would be impossible to attain to the fruition of the will itself in the procreation of children.”

I believe he is referring to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):9** But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

That is, if they do not have self-control, let them marry.

He then continues, “**And this wish is not in the marriages of believers determined by the purpose of having such children born as shall pass through life in this present world, but such as**

shall be born again in Christ, and remain in Him for evermore.”

So, the will, or “wish”, of believers in marriages must be to have children that “shall be born again in Christ, and remain in Him for evermore.”

He continues, “Now if this result should come about, the reward of a full felicity will spring from marriage; but if such result be not realized, there will yet ensue to the married pair the peace of their good will.”

As long as the intention of the believers in their marriage is to have children when they procreate that “shall be born again in Christ, and remain in Him for evermore”, they will have “the peace of their good will.”

He continues, “Whosoever possesses his vessel (that is, his wife) with this intention of heart, certainly does not possess her in the “disease of desire,” as the Gentiles which know not God, but in sanctification and honour, as believers who hope in God.”

But the Scripture says that within the confines of marriage, “marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled”, as in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):4** Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

If we marry, we do not sin as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):36** But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.

And Paul says we are to love our wives, as in **Ephesians 5 (KJV):25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Doesn’t loving our wives include embracing them? Nothing is said about “procreation in marriage” in Paul’s instruction to the married believers. This was all added by the Church, and codified by Augustine through his writing.

Augustine continues, “A man turns to use the evil of concupiscence, and is not overcome by it, when he bridles and restrains its rage, as it works in inordinate and indecorous motions; and never relaxes his hold upon it except when intent on offspring, and then controls and applies it to the carnal generation of children to be spiritually regenerated, not to the subjection of the spirit to the flesh in a sordid servitude.”

Augustine speaks from his own experience before he was in Christ. He never knew the innocence in a healthy marriage. The Catholic Church indoctrinated him this way, and he was never able to see what God had made clean as God showed Peter in **Acts 10 (ESV):15** And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.”

Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed is undefiled. But when married people stray outside of marriage, God’s judgment will fall on them.

He continues, “That the holy fathers of olden times after Abraham, and before him, to whom God gave His testimony that “they pleased Him,” (Hebrews 11:4-6) thus used their wives, no one who is a Christian ought to doubt, since it was permitted to certain individuals amongst them to have a plurality of wives, where the reason was for the multiplication of their offspring, not the desire of varying gratification.

He refers to **Hebrews 11 (KJV):4** By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. 5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

The fact that many in the Old Testament had more than one wife does not prove that it was only for “the multiplication of their offspring”. We have only to look at David who took the wife of Uriah the Hittite in **2 Samuel 11 (KJV):2** And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. 3 And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? 4 And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. 5 And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child.

The reason David took her was because she “was very beautiful to look upon” in verse 2. As it happens, she became pregnant. David then had Uriah killed by his general, Joab, in **2 Samuel 11 (KJV):14** And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. 15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. 16 And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were. 17 And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also. 18 Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war; 19 And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king, 20 And if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? Knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall? 21 Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? Why went ye nigh the wall? Then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

And this did not please God as we read in **2 Samuel 11 (KJV):25** Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him. 26 And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. 27 And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

In our flesh dwells no good thing. Sin dwells in our members as we read in **Romans 7**

**(KJV):**20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Just because it is there does not mean I have to yield to it, for the law of the Spirit of life has set me free as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Augustine thought that the sin nature of the flesh was still active when anyone embraces their spouse, and that it was the fulfillment of lust when one was embracing. This lust was put to a good use when one embraced with the intention of having children who would be born again when they accepted Christ. But it was still lust in his thinking.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Marriage and Concupiscence, Book I, Chapters 12-17, page 268-270**

Chapter 12 [XI.]—Marriage Does Not Cancel a Mutual Vow of Continence; There Was True Wedlock Between Mary and Joseph; In What Way Joseph Was the Father of Christ.

But God forbid that the nuptial bond should be regarded as broken between those who have by mutual consent agreed to observe a perpetual abstinence from the use of carnal concupiscence. Nay, it will be only a firmer one, whereby they have exchanged pledges together, which will have to be kept by an especial endearment and concord,—not by the voluptuous links of bodies, but by the voluntary affections of souls. For it was not deceitfully that the angel said to Joseph: “Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife.” (Matthew 1:20) She is called his wife because of her first troth of betrothal, although he had had no carnal knowledge of her, nor was destined to have. The designation of wife was neither destroyed nor made untrue, where there never had been, nor was meant to be, any carnal connection. That virgin wife was rather a holier and more wonderful joy to her husband because of her very pregnancy without man, with disparity as to the child that was born, without disparity in the faith they cherished. And because of this conjugal fidelity they are both deservedly called “parents” (Luke 2:41) of Christ (not only she as His mother, but he as His father, as being her husband), both having been such in mind and purpose, though not in the flesh. But while the one was His father in purpose only, and the other His mother in the flesh also, they were both of them, for all that, only the parents of His humility, not of His sublimity; of His weakness, not of His divinity. For the Gospel does not lie, in which one reads, “Both His father and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken about Him;” (Luke 2:33) and in another passage, “Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year;” (Luke 2:41) and again a little afterwards, “His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.” (Luke 2:48) In order, however, that He might show them that He had a Father besides them, who begat Him without a mother, He said to them in answer: “How is it that ye

sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49) Furthermore, lest He should be thought to have repudiated them as His parents by what He had just said, the evangelist at once added: "And they understood not the saying which He spake unto them; and He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." (Luke 2:50-51) Subject to whom but His parents? And who was the subject but Jesus Christ, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God"? (Philippians 2:6) And wherefore subject to them, who were far beneath the form of God, except that "He emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant," (Philippians 2:7)—the form in which His parents lived? Now, since she bore Him without his engendering, they could not surely have both been His parents, of that form of a servant, if they had not been conjugally united, though without carnal connection. Accordingly the genealogical series (although both parents of Christ are mentioned together in the succession) Matthew 1:16) had to be extended, as it is in fact, (compare Luke 3:23 with Matthew 1:16) down rather to Joseph's name, that no wrong might be done, in the case of this marriage, to the male, and indeed the stronger sex, while at the same time there was nothing detrimental to truth, since Joseph, no less than Mary, was of the seed of David, (Luke 1:27) of whom it was foretold that Christ should come.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he asserts, "But God forbid that the nuptial bond should be regarded as broken between those who have by mutual consent agreed to observe a perpetual abstinence from the use of carnal concupiscence. Nay, it will be only a firmer one, whereby they have exchanged pledges together, which will have to be kept by an especial endearment and concord,—not by the voluptuous links of bodies, but by the voluntary affections of souls."

This is a direct contradiction to what Paul directs in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJC):1** Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

What is the "due benevolence" that the husband and wife are to render to each other? Paul then explains in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJC):4** The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. 6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.

In verse 5, the word "Defraud" in the Greek is ἀποστερέω (pronounced ä-po-ste-re'-ō), from G575 and στερέω sterēō (to deprive); to despoil:—defraud, destitute, kept back by fraud. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G650.**

They were not to defraud or deprive each other but "come together again, that Satan tempt them not for their "incontinency".

But what does he mean in verse 6? We continue to read in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJC):7** For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

That is, he is not commanding them that they all should marry in verse 2, for Paul was single and happy. So he gives his permission to marry. But he says that it is a gift of God to be married, and it is a gift of God to be single. He continues in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJC):8** I say



therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. 9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

We need to understand what gifts we have, and not try to pretend we are something we are not.

Augustine then continues, “For it was not deceitfully that the angel said to Joseph: “Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife.” (Matthew 1:20) She is called his wife because of her first troth of betrothal, although he had had no carnal knowledge of her, nor was destined to have. The designation of wife was neither destroyed nor made untrue, where there never had been, nor was meant to be, any carnal connection.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 1 (KJV):18** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew says she was with child before they “came together”. We continue in **Matthew 1 (KJV):19** Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. 24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

Did Augustine never read verse 25? Joseph “knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son”. And we read in **Genesis 4 (KJV):1** And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

This is how having children is described in the word of God.

And did he not read in **Matthew 12 (KJV):46** While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

Not only did Jesus have brothers, but he had sisters as well as we read in **Matthew 13 (KJV):55** Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

Augustine interprets this as the cousins of Jesus. He could not accept the fact that Mary had other children. But this was the accepted understanding of the Scriptures in the Church in Augustine's time, which he also defended.

The apostle Paul also mentions James, the Lord's brother in **Galatians 1 (KJV):19** But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

Augustine then continues, “That virgin wife was rather a holier and more wonderful joy to her husband because of her very pregnancy without man, with disparity as to the child that was born, without disparity in the faith they cherished. And because of this conjugal fidelity they are both deservedly called “parents” (Luke 2:41) of Christ (not only she as His mother, but he as His father, as being her husband), both having been such in mind and purpose, though not in the flesh.”

He refers in context to **Luke 2 (KJV):40** And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. 41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

Augustine continues, “But while the one was His father in purpose only, and the other His mother in the flesh also, they were both of them, for all that, only the parents of His humility, not of His sublimity; of His weakness, not of His divinity. For the Gospel does not lie, in which one reads, “**Both His father and His mother marveled** at those things which were spoken about Him;” (Luke 2:33) and in another passage, “Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year;” (Luke 2:41) and again a little afterwards, “His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.” (Luke 2:48) In order, however, that He might show them that He had a Father besides them, who begat Him without a mother, He said to them in answer: “How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49) Furthermore, lest He should be thought to have repudiated them as His parents by what He had just said, the evangelist at once added: “And they understood not the saying which He spake unto them; and He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them.” (Luke 2:50-51)”

He refers first to **Luke 2 (Douay Rheims):33** And his father and mother were wondering at those things which were spoken concerning him.

And to **Luke 2 (KJV):33** And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

Augustine says above, “**Both His father and His mother marveled...**”, in Luke 2:33, and so he is relying on the **Latin Vulgate**. But as we read the verse more literally, it speaks of “Joseph and his mother”, in the **King James Version**.

He then refers to **Luke 2 (KJV):41** Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

And then in context to **Luke 2 (KJV):48** And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. 49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? 50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. 51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Augustine continues, “Subject to whom but His parents? And who was the subject but Jesus Christ, “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God?” (Philippians 2:6)”

He refers in context to **Philippians 2 (KJV):6** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

He concludes, “And wherefore subject to them, who were far beneath the form of God, except that “He emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant,” (Philippians 2:7)—the form in which His parents lived? Now, since she bore Him without his engendering, they could not surely have both been His parents, of that form of a servant, if they had not been conjugally united, though without carnal connection. Accordingly the genealogical series (although both parents of Christ are mentioned together in the succession) Matthew 1:16) had to

be extended, as it is in fact, (compare Luke 3:23 with Matthew 1:16) down rather to Joseph's name, that no wrong might be done, in the case of this marriage, to the male, and indeed the stronger sex, while at the same time there was nothing detrimental to truth, since Joseph, no less than Mary, was of the seed of David, (Luke 1:27) of whom it was foretold that Christ should come.

He refers to **Matthew 1 (KJV):16** And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

And to **Luke 3 (KJV):23** And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,

And to **Luke 1 (KJV):27** To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

Chapter 13.—In the Marriage of Mary and Joseph There Were All the Blessings of the Wedded State; All that is Born of Concubinage is Sinful Flesh.

The entire good, therefore, of the nuptial institution was effected in the case of these parents of Christ: there was offspring, there was faithfulness, there was the bond. (sacramentum) As offspring, we recognize the Lord Jesus Himself; the fidelity, in that there was no adultery; the bond, (sacramentum) because there was no divorce. [XII.] Only there was no nuptial cohabitation; because He who was to be without sin, and was sent not in sinful flesh, but in *the likeness* of sinful flesh, (Romans 8:3) could not possibly have been made in sinful flesh itself without that shameful lust of the flesh which comes from sin, and without which He willed to be born, in order that He might teach us, that every one who is born of sexual intercourse is in fact sinful flesh, since that alone which was not born of such intercourse was not sinful flesh. **Nevertheless conjugal intercourse is not in itself sin, when it is had with the intention of producing children; because the mind's goodwill leads the ensuing bodily pleasure, instead of following its lead; and the human choice is not distracted by the yoke of sin pressing upon it, inasmuch as the blow of the sin is rightly brought back to the purposes of procreation.** This blow has a certain prurient activity which plays the king in the foul indulgences of adultery, and fornication, and lasciviousness, and uncleanness; whilst in the indispensable duties of the marriage state, it exhibits the docility of the slave. In the one case it is condemned as the shameless effrontery of so violent a master; in the other, it gets modest praise as the honest service of so submissive an attendant. This lust, then, is not in itself the good of the nuptial institution; but it is obscenity in sinful men, a necessity in procreant parents, the fire of lascivious indulgences, the shame of nuptial pleasures. **Wherefore, then, may not persons remain man and wife when they cease by mutual consent from cohabitation; seeing that Joseph and Mary continued such, though they never even began to cohabit?**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he asserts, "The entire good, therefore, of the nuptial institution was effected in the case of these parents of Christ: there was offspring, there was faithfulness, there was the bond. (sacramentum) As offspring, we recognize the Lord Jesus Himself; the fidelity, in that there was no adultery; the bond, (sacramentum) because there was no divorce. [XII.] Only there was no nuptial cohabitation; because He who was to be without sin, and was sent not in sinful flesh, but in the likeness of sinful flesh, (Romans 8:3) could not

possibly have been made in sinful flesh itself without that shameful lust of the flesh which comes from sin, and without which He willed to be born, in order that He might teach us, that every one who is born of sexual intercourse is in fact sinful flesh, since that alone which was not born of such intercourse was not sinful flesh.”

Yes, Christ was born of the Holy Spirit to a virgin. However, the body of Jesus was still mortal. Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):3** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

But sexual intercourse is not sinful, even though our flesh has the Adamic sin nature. The Scripture only says that sexual intercourse is sinful only when it is done outside of marriage.

Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God as we read in **John 1 (KJV):14** And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

And in **John 1 (KJV):18** No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

And in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Augustine continues, “Nevertheless conjugal intercourse is not in itself sin, when it is had with the intention of producing children; because the mind’s goodwill leads the ensuing bodily pleasure, instead of following its lead; and the human choice is not distracted by the yoke of sin pressing upon it, inasmuch as the blow of the sin is rightly brought back to the purposes of procreation.”

There is no such requirement in the Scriptures. That sexual intercourse is pleasurable was the experience of Sarah and Abraham as we read before in **Genesis 18 (KJV):12** Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

Sexual intercourse in marriage can be done for pleasure without the thought of procreation. It is the natural outcome of a love relationship in marriage, and rendering due benevolence. And God made it this way. The only prohibition in the Old Testament was against adultery and fornication. Augustine was following the tradition of the Church in his time.

Augustine concludes, “This blow has a certain prurient activity which plays the king in the foul indulgences of adultery, and fornication, and lasciviousness, and uncleanness; whilst in the indispensable duties of the marriage state, it exhibits the docility of the slave. In the one case it is condemned as the shameless effrontery of so violent a master; in the other, it gets modest praise as the honest service of so submissive an attendant. This lust, then, is not in itself the good of the nuptial institution; but it is obscenity in sinful men, a necessity in procreant parents, the fire of lascivious indulgences, the shame of nuptial pleasures. Wherefore, then, may not persons remain man and wife when they cease by mutual consent from cohabitation; seeing that Joseph and Mary continued such, though they never even began to cohabit?”

Here he asserts that Joseph and Mary “never even began to cohabit”. This is proven false by the Scriptures as we read again in **Matthew 1 (KJV):25** And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

And in **Matthew 13 (KJV):55** Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called

Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

And this also is Paul's testimony in **Galatians 1 (KJV):19** But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

The tradition of Mary's perpetual virginity started very early in the Catholic Church.

Chapter 14 [XIII.]—Before Christ It Was a Time for Marrying; Since Christ It Has Been a Time for Continence.

Now this propagation of children which among the ancient saints was a most bounden duty for the purpose of begetting and preserving a people for God, amongst whom the prophecy of Christ's coming must needs have had precedence over everything, now has no longer the same necessity. For from among all nations the way is open for an abundant offspring to receive spiritual regeneration, from whatever quarter they derive their natural birth. So that we may acknowledge that the Scripture which says there is "a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing," (Ecclesiastes 3:5) is to be distributed in its clauses to the periods before Christ and since. **The former was the time to embrace, the latter to refrain from embracing.**

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine refers in context to **Ecclesiastes 3 (KJV):1** To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: 2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; 3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; 4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; 5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; 6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; 7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; 8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

This Scripture is not saying that now, in the Church age, is the time to "**refrain from embracing**". Paul says that there may be a time to refrain from embracing for the purpose of fasting and prayer. His guidance is in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):5** Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

We cannot take a verse out of context with the rest of Scripture. Paul makes no inference that the pleasure of embracing is sinful in a married relationship.

Chapter 15.—The Teaching of the Apostle on This Subject.

**Accordingly the apostle also, speaking apparently with this passage in view, declares: "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had them not; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as though they used it not: for the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you without solicitude." (1 Corinthians 7:29-31)** This entire passage (that I may express my view on this subject in the shape of a brief exposition of the apostle's words) I think must be



understood as follows: “This I say, brethren, the time is short.” No longer is God’s people to be propagated by carnal generation; but, henceforth, it is to be gathered out by spiritual regeneration. “**It remaineth, therefore, that they that have wives**” be not subject to carnal concupiscence; “and they that weep,” under the sadness of present evil, should rejoice in the hope of future blessing; “and they that rejoice,” over any temporary advantage, should fear the eternal judgment; “and they that buy,” should so hold their possessions as not to cleave to them by overmuch love; “and they that use this world” should reflect that it is passing away, and does not remain. “For the fashion of this world passeth away: but,” he says, “I would have you to be without solicitude,”—in other words: I would have you lift up your heart, that it may dwell among those things which do not pass away. He then goes on to say: “He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.” (1 Corinthians 7:32-33) **And thus to some extent he explains what he had already said: “Let them that have wives be as though they had none.” For they who have wives in such a way as to care for the things of the Lord, how they may please the Lord, without having any care for the things of the world in order to please their wives, are, in fact, just as if they had no wives.** And this is effected with greater ease when the wives, too, are of such a disposition, because they please their husbands not merely because they are rich, because they are high in rank, noble in race, and amiable in natural temper, but because they are believers, because they are religious, because they are chaste, because they are good men.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he argues, “**Accordingly the apostle also, speaking apparently with this passage in view, declares: “But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had them not;** and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as though they used it not: for the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you without solicitude.” (1 Corinthians 7:29-31)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):**29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; 30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; 31 And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.

He then asserts, “This entire passage (that I may express my view on this subject in the shape of a brief exposition of the apostle’s words) I think must be understood as follows: “This I say, brethren, the time is short.” No longer is God’s people to be propagated by carnal generation; but, henceforth, it is to be gathered out by spiritual regeneration. “**It remaineth, therefore, that they that have wives**” be not subject to carnal concupiscence;”

Augustine would have marriages be without “**carnal concupiscence**”, that is, he would only allow sexual intercourse in marriage if it is done with the intention of having children. The “apostle’s words”, he thinks, “must be understood” this way.

He continues, ““and they that weep,” under the sadness of present evil, should rejoice in the hope of future blessing; “and they that rejoice,” over any temporary advantage, should fear the eternal judgment; “and they that buy,” should so hold their possessions as not to cleave to

them by overmuch love; “and they that use this world” should reflect that it is passing away, and does not remain. “For the fashion of this world passeth away: but,” he says, “I would have you to be without solicitude,”—in other words: I would have you lift up your heart, that it may dwell among those things which do not pass away. He then goes on to say: “He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.” (1 Corinthians 7:32-33)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):32** But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: 33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.

But Paul is saying to hold the things of this world lightly. He is not saying to ignore all that he said previously about not defrauding your spouse. He is saying to set our affections on things above and not on the earth as in **Colossians 3 (KJV):1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

So we love our wives with the love of the Lord. And He will fill us with his love as we set our affections on things above.

Augustine continues, “**And thus to some extent he explains what he had already said: “Let them that have wives be as though they had none.”** For they who have wives in such a way as to care for the things of the Lord, how they may please the Lord, without having any care for the things of the world in order to please their wives, are, in fact, just as if they had no wives.”

And this can be done in a loving marriage without sexual abstinence, which is contrary to Augustine’s thinking.

He concludes, “And this is effected with greater ease when the wives, too, are of such a disposition, because they please their husbands not merely because they are rich, because they are high in rank, noble in race, and amiable in natural temper, but because they are believers, because they are religious, because they are chaste, because they are good men.”

Chapter 16 [XIV.]—A Certain Degree of Intemperance is to Be Tolerated in the Case of Married Persons; The Use of Matrimony for the Mere Pleasure of Lust is Not Without Sin, **But Because of the Nuptial Relation the Sin is Venial.**

But in the married, as these things are desirable and praiseworthy, so the others are to be tolerated, that no lapse occur into damnable sins; that is, into fornications and adulteries. **To escape this evil, even such embraces of husband and wife as have not procreation for their object, but serve an overbearing concupiscence, are permitted, so far as to be within range of forgiveness, though not prescribed by way of commandment: (1 Corinthians 7:6) and the married pair are enjoined not to defraud one the other, lest Satan should tempt them by reason of their incontinence. (1 Corinthians 7:5)** For thus says the Scripture: “Let the husband render unto the wife her due: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other; except it be with consent for a time, that ye may have leisure for prayer; and then come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your

incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.” **Now in a case where permission** [The Latin word for “permission” is *venia*, which also means “indulgence,” “forbearance,” “forgiveness,” and so the sins that may be forgiven are called “*venial* sins,” i.e. “pardonable,” and in this sense “permissible,” sins. Augustin’s argument here turns on this word.—W.] **must be given, it cannot by any means be contended that there is not some amount of sin. Since, however, the cohabitation for the purpose of procreating children, which must be admitted to be the proper end of marriage, is not sinful, what is it which the apostle allows to be permissible, [see note on permission above] but that married persons, when they have not the gift of continence, may require one from the other the due of the flesh—and that not from a wish for procreation, but for the pleasure of concupiscence?** This gratification incurs not the imputation of guilt on account of marriage, but receives permission [see note on permission above] on account of marriage. This, therefore, must be reckoned among the praises of matrimony; that, on its own account, it makes pardonable that which does not essentially appertain to itself. **For the nuptial embrace, which subserves the demands of concupiscence, is so effected as not to impede the childbearing, which is the end and aim of marriage.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he argues, “But in the married, as these things are desirable and praiseworthy, so the others are to be tolerated, that no lapse occur into damnable sins; that is, into fornications and adulteries.”

And what does he mean by “damnable sins”, which he names as “fornications and adulteries”? These were mortal sins, or sins which, if committed, were thought by the Church in his time to cause one to lose their salvation.

He continues, **“To escape this evil, even such embraces of husband and wife as have not procreation for their object, but serve an overbearing concupiscence, are permitted, so far as to be within range of forgiveness, though not prescribed by way of commandment: (1 Corinthians 7:6) and the married pair are enjoined not to defraud one the other, lest Satan should tempt them by reason of their incontinence. (1 Corinthians 7:5)”**

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):5** Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. 6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. 8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. 9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

The word “permission” in verse 6 in the Greek is **συγγνώμη** (pronounced sūn-gnō'-mā), and is “From a compound of σύν (pronounce sü'n) meaning “with”, and γινώσκω (pronounced gē-nō'-skō) meaning “know”.

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G4774&t=KJV>

Vine says, “lit., “a joint opinion, mind or understanding” (*sun*, “with,” *gnome*, “an opinion”), “a fellow feeling,” hence, “a concession, allowance,” is translated “permission,” in contrast to “commandment,” in 1 Corinthians 7:6. **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III, page 177.**

Paul gives his advice about marriage in 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 as to what is allowable. In verse 7, he explains that he wishes all men were like himself, that is, unmarried, although it is

likely he was married at one time, as he said he was a Pharisee in **Acts 23 (KJV):6** But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

Not only was he a Pharisee, but he was a Pharisee according to the strictest sect as we read in **Acts 26 (NASB):1** Agrippa said to Paul, “You are permitted to speak for yourself.” Then Paul stretched out his hand and proceeded to make his defense: 2 “In regard to all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that I am about to make my defense before you today; 3 especially because you are an expert in all customs and questions among the Jews; therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently. 4 “So then, all Jews know my manner of life from my youth up, which from the beginning was spent among my own nation and at Jerusalem; 5 since they have known about me for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.

It was a requirement of the strictest sect of the Pharisees to be married. Paul never mentions having been married before, but it is likely that he was at one time. But now that he has found Christ, he “would that all men were even as” himself. But he then acknowledges everyone is different, as he concludes in verse 7, “But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.” He then says in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):8** I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. 9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

It is not a sin to marry. And “it is better to marry than to burn” with desire for a wife or a husband.

Augustine continues, “For thus says the Scripture: “Let the husband render unto the wife her due: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other; except it be with consent for a time, that ye may have leisure for prayer; and then come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):3** Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. 6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.

He then continues, “**Now in a case where permission** [The Latin word for “permission” is *venia*, which also means “indulgence,” “forbearance,” “forgiveness,” and so the sins that may be forgiven are called “*venial* sins,” i.e. “pardonable,” and in this sense “permissible,” sins. Augustin’s argument here turns on this word.—W.] **must be given, it cannot by any means be contended that there is not some amount of sin.**”

Paul is clear. He says that those who marry do not sin in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):28** But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

And he says this also in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):36** But if any man think that he behaveth

himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. 37 Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. 38 So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.

In verse 38, he says, “he that giveth her in marriage doeth well”. Paul is not commanding people to be single, nor to marry. He simply wants everyone to be happy as God has given to each one, as we continue in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV)**:39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. 40 But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

The permission he gives is for people to marry. He is not commanding them to do so. He truly believes we will be happier if we do not marry. But he understands that everyone has a different gift from God.

Augustine concludes, “Since, however, the cohabitation for the purpose of procreating children, which must be admitted to be the proper end of marriage, is not sinful, what is it which the apostle allows to be permissible, [see note on permission above] but that married persons, when they have not the gift of continence, may require one from the other the due of the flesh—and that not from a wish for procreation, but for the pleasure of concupiscence?”

Augustine has assumed that the proper end of marriage is “the cohabitation for the purpose of procreating children”. But the proper end of marriage was that the man should not be alone. This is why the woman was created.

Augustine continues, “This gratification incurs not the imputation of guilt on account of marriage, but receives permission [see note on permission above] on account of marriage. This, therefore, must be reckoned among the praises of matrimony; that, on its own account, it makes pardonable that which does not essentially appertain to itself. For the nuptial embrace, which subserves the demands of concupiscence, is so effected as not to impede the childbearing, which is the end and aim of marriage.”

The “nuptial embrace” was created by God, and it is good. Augustine makes it to serve “the demands of concupiscence”, and not the promptings of love for your wife or husband. It was something that was taught already in the Church in his time, and something that he upheld in his ignorance, and because of his own former life of indulgence.

And no sin is permissible in the eyes of God. Sin is sin. This is why Jesus died. He died on the cross for our sins, big or small.

Chapter 17 [XV.]—What is Sinless in the Use of Matrimony? What is Attended With Venial Sin, and What with Mortal?

It is, however, one thing for married persons to have intercourse only for the wish to beget children, which is not sinful: it is another thing for them to desire carnal pleasure in cohabitation, but with the spouse only, which involves venial sin. For although propagation of offspring is not the motive of the intercourse, there is still no attempt to prevent such propagation, either by wrong desire or evil appliance. They who resort to these, although called by the name of spouses, are really not such; they retain no vestige of true matrimony, but



pretend the honourable designation as a cloak for criminal conduct. Having also proceeded so far, they are betrayed into exposing their children, which are born against their will. They hate to nourish and retain those whom they were afraid they would beget. This infliction of cruelty on their offspring so reluctantly begotten, unmasks the sin which they had practiced in darkness, and drags it clearly into the light of day. The open cruelty reproves the concealed sin. Sometimes, indeed, this lustful cruelty, or, if you please, cruel lust, resorts to such extravagant methods as to use poisonous drugs to secure barrenness; or else, if unsuccessful in this, to destroy the conceived seed by some means previous to birth, preferring that its offspring should rather perish than receive vitality; or if it was advancing to life within the womb, should be slain before it was born. Well, if both parties alike are so flagitious, they are not husband and wife; and if such were their character from the beginning, they have not come together by wedlock but by debauchery. But if the two are not alike in such sin, I boldly declare either that the woman is, so to say, the husband's harlot; or the man the wife's adulterer.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he argues, **"It is, however, one thing for married persons to have intercourse only for the wish to beget children, which is not sinful: it is another thing for them to desire carnal pleasure in cohabitation, but with the spouse only, which involves venial sin."**

Clearly, he associates any pleasure in marriage to **"venial sin"**. He continues, "For although propagation of offspring is not the motive of the intercourse, there is still no attempt to prevent such propagation, either by wrong desire or evil appliance."

Sin is sin, whether venial or damnable, that is, mortal. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, it was a sin of disobedience to God's command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But the word of God says that he who marries, does not sin. And when they marry, they become one flesh.

The intimacy of marriage is described in **Proverbs 5 (KJV):** 18 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. 19 Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. 20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?

To be ravished with a strange woman, or a stranger is sin. To be ravished with your wife or husband is not sin. This is the intimacy that God designed should be for marriage only.

Augustine then argues against any form of birth control, as he continues, "They who resort to these, although called by the name of spouses, are really not such; they retain no vestige of true matrimony, but pretend the honourable designation as a cloak for criminal conduct. Having also proceeded so far, they are betrayed into exposing their children, which are born against their will. They hate to nourish and retain those whom they were afraid they would beget. This infliction of cruelty on their offspring so reluctantly begotten, unmasks the sin which they had practiced in darkness, and drags it clearly into the light of day."

He is referring to the **"venial sin"** of **"carnal pleasure in cohabitation"**. He continues, "The open cruelty reproves the concealed sin. Sometimes, indeed, this lustful cruelty, or, if you please, cruel lust, resorts to such extravagant methods as to use poisonous drugs to secure barrenness; or else, if unsuccessful in this, to destroy the conceived seed by some means previous to birth, preferring that its offspring should rather perish than receive vitality; or if it

was advancing to life within the womb, should be slain before it was born. Well, if both parties alike are so flagitious, they are not husband and wife; and if such were their character from the beginning, they have not come together by wedlock but by debauchery. But if the two are not alike in such sin, I boldly declare either that the woman is, so to say, the husband's harlot; or the man the wife's adulterer."

We can agree with Augustine against abortion. But pleasure in marriage is God's design, and not a sin.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Marriage and Concupiscence, Book I, Chapter 20, page 271-272**

#### **Chapter 20 [XVIII]—Why Children of Wrath are Born of Holy Matrimony.**

This is the reason, indeed, why of even the just and lawful marriages of the children of God are born, not children of God, but children of the world; because also those who generate, if they are already regenerate, beget children not as children of God, but as still children of the world. "The children of this world," says our Lord, "beget and are begotten." (Luke 20:34 Augustin quotes an interpolation current in the Latin Bibles of his day, and found also in certain Greek (D. Origen) and Syriac (Curetonian version) witnesses.) From the fact, therefore, that we are still children of this world, our outer man is in a state of corruption; and on this account our offspring are born as children of the present world; nor do they become sons of God, except they be regenerated. Yet inasmuch as we are children of God, our inner man is renewed from day to day. (2 Corinthians 4:16) And yet even our outer man has been sanctified through the laver of regeneration, and has received the hope of future incorruption, on which account it is justly designated as "the temple of God." "Your bodies," says the apostle, "are the temples of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, and which ye have of God; and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a great price: therefore glorify and carry God in your body." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) The whole of this statement is made in reference to our present sanctification, but especially in consequence of that hope of which he says in another passage, "We ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." (Romans 8:23) If, then, the redemption of our body is expected, as the apostle declares, it follows, that being an expectation, it is as yet a matter of hope, and not of actual possession. Accordingly the apostle adds: "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Romans 8:24-25) Not, therefore, by that which we are waiting for, but by that which we are now enduring, are the children of our flesh born. **God forbid that a man who possesses faith should, when he hears the apostle bid men "love their wives," (Colossians 3:19) love that carnal concupiscence in his wife which he ought not to love even in himself; as he may know, if he listens to the words of another apostle: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever, even as also God abideth for ever." (1 John 2:15-17)**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “This is the reason, indeed, why of even the just and lawful marriages of the children of God are born, not children of God, but children of the world; because also those who generate, if they are already regenerate, beget children not as children of God, but as still children of the world. “The children of this world,” says our Lord, “beget and are begotten.” (Luke 20:34 Augustin quotes an interpolation current in the Latin Bibles of his day, and found also in certain Greek (D. Origen) and Syriac (Curetonian version) witnesses.)”

He refers to **Luke 20 (Douay Rheims):34** And Jesus said to them: The children of this world marry and are given in marriage:

And to **Luke 20 (KJV):34** And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

He continues, “From the fact, therefore, that we are still children of this world, our outer man is in a state of corruption; and on this account our offspring are born as children of the present world; nor do they become sons of God, except they be regenerated.”

And this agrees with Jesus’ words in **John 3 (KJV):3** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Augustine continues, “Yet inasmuch as we are children of God, our inner man is renewed from day to day. (2 Corinthians 4:16)”

He refers in part to **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):16** For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

When he says, “Yet inasmuch as we are children of God...”, he seems to leave some doubt whether we will continue to be children of God. But the apostle John leaves no doubt that once we are children of God, we shall remain as such, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

He continues, “And yet even our outer man has been sanctified through the laver of regeneration, and has received the hope of future incorruption, on which account it is justly designated as “the temple of God.” “Your bodies,” says the apostle, “are the temples of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, and which ye have of God; and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a great price: therefore glorify and carry God in your body.” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

And he agrees with the Scripture. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, once we have been born again, and we are not our own, for we have been bought with a price.

He continues, “The whole of this statement is made in reference to our present sanctification, but especially in consequence of that hope of which he says in another passage,

“We ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” (Romans 8:23)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):23** And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

He continues, “If, then, the redemption of our body is expected, as the apostle declares, it follows, that being an expectation, it is as yet a matter of hope, and not of actual possession. Accordingly the apostle adds: “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” (Romans 8:24-25)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):24** For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

Augustine continues, “Not, therefore, by that which we are waiting for, but by that which we are now enduring, are the children of our flesh born. **God forbid that a man who possesses faith should, when he hears the apostle bid men “love their wives,” (Colossians 3:19) love that carnal concupiscence in his wife which he ought not to love even in himself; as he may know, if he listens to the words of another apostle: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever, even as also God abideth for ever.” (1 John 2:15-17)”**

He refers first to **Colossians 3 (KJV):19** Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

And then to **1 John 2 (KJV):15** Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

We must love our wives and husbands with God’s love. We are imperfect and God loves us still. So we can love our spouse who is also imperfect with God’s love which is unconditional. The more we fill ourselves with the word of God, the more we will be free to love as God loves, as we read in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

But again, God made us for intimacy as we read in **Proverbs 5 (KJV):18** Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. 19 Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. 20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine  
On the Psalms, Psalm LI, paragraph 10, page 192-193**

10. “For, behold, in iniquities I was conceived” (ver. 5). As though he were saying, They are conquered that have done what thou, David, hast done: for this is not a little evil and little sin, to wit, adultery and man-slaying. What of them that from the day that they were born of their mother’s womb, have done no such thing? even to them dost thou ascribe some sins, in order that He may conquer all men when He beginneth to be judged. David hath taken upon him the person of mankind, and hath heeded the bonds of all men, hath considered the offspring of death, hath adverted to the origin of iniquity, and he saith, “For, behold, in iniquities I was conceived.” Was David born of adultery; being born of Jesse, (1 Samuel 16:18) a righteous man, and his own wife? What is it that he saith himself to have been in iniquity conceived, except that iniquity is drawn from Adam? Even the very bond of death, with iniquity itself is engrained? No man is born without bringing punishment, bringing desert of punishment. A Prophet saith also in another place, (Job 14:5, Septuagint) “No one is clean in Thy sight, not even an infant, whose life is of one day upon earth.” For we know both by the Baptism of Christ that sins are loosed, and that the Baptism of Christ availeth the remission of sins. If infants are every way innocent, why do mothers run with them when sick to the Church? What by that Baptism, what by that remission is put away? An innocent one I see that rather weeps than is angry. What doth Baptism wash off? what doth that Grace loose? There is loosed the offspring of sin. For if that infant could speak to thee, it would say, and if it had the understanding which David had, it would answer thee, Why heedest thou me, an infant? Thou dost not indeed see my actions: but I in iniquity have been conceived, “And in sins hath my mother nourished me in the womb.”

Apart from this bond of mortal concupiscence was Christ born without a male, of a virgin conceiving by the Holy Ghost. He cannot be said to have been conceived in iniquity, it cannot be said, In sins His mother nourished Him in the womb, to whom was said, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Virtue of the Highest shall overshadow thee.” (Luke 1:35) It is not therefore because it is sin to have to do with wives that men are conceived in iniquity, and in sins nourished in the womb by their mother; but because that which is made is surely made of flesh deserving punishment. For the punishment of the flesh is death, and surely there is in it liability to death itself. Whence the Apostle spoke not of the body as if to die, but as if dead: “The body indeed is dead,” he saith, “because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” (Romans 8:10) How then without bond of sin is born that which is conceived and sown of a body dead because of sin? This chaste operation in a married person hath not sin, but the origin of sin draweth with it condign punishment. For there is no husband that, because he is an husband, is not subject to death, or that is subject to death for any other reason but because of sin. For even the Lord was subject to death, but not on account of sin: He took upon Him our punishment, and so looseth our guilt. With reason then, “In Adam all die, but in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22) For, “Through one man,” saith the Apostle, “sin hath entered into this world, and through sin death, and so hath passed unto all men, in that all have sinned.” (Romans 5:12) Definite is the sentence: “In Adam,” he saith, “all have sinned.” Alone then could such an infant be innocent, as hath not been born of the work of Adam.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““For, behold, in iniquities I was conceived” (ver. 5).”



He refers to **Psalms 51 (KJV):5** Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

He continues, “As though he were saying, They are conquered that have done what thou, David, hast done: for this is not a little evil and little sin, to wit, adultery and man-slaying. What of them that from the day that they were born of their mother’s womb, have done no such thing? Even to them dost thou ascribe some sins, in order that He may conquer all men when He beginneth to be judged. David hath taken upon him the person of mankind, and hath heeded the bonds of all men, hath considered the offspring of death, hath adverted to the origin of iniquity, and he saith, “For, behold, in iniquities I was conceived.” Was David born of adultery; being born of Jesse, (1 Samuel 16:18) a righteous man, and his own wife?”

He refers in context to **1 Samuel 16 (KJV):18** Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him. 19 Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep.

He continues, “What is it that he saith himself to have been in iniquity conceived, except that iniquity is drawn from Adam? Even the very bond of death, with iniquity itself is engrained? No man is born without bringing punishment, bringing desert of punishment. A Prophet saith also in another place, (Job 14:5, Septuagint) “No one is clean in Thy sight, not even an infant, whose life is of one day upon earth.””

He refers to **Job 14 (Septuagint):4** For who shall be pure from uncleanness? not even one; 5 if even his life should be but one day upon the earth: and his months are numbered by him: thou hast appointed him for a time, and he shall by no means exceed it.

And to **Job 14 (KJV):4** Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. 5 Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

He continues, “For we know both by the Baptism of Christ that sins are loosed, and that the Baptism of Christ availeth the remission of sins. If infants are every way innocent, why do mothers run with them when sick to the Church? What by that Baptism, what by that remission is put away? An innocent one I see that rather weeps than is angry. What doth Baptism wash off? What doth that Grace loose? There is loosed the offspring of sin. For if that infant could speak to thee, it would say, and if it had the understanding which David had, it would answer thee, Why heedest thou me, an infant? Thou dost not indeed see my actions: but I in iniquity have been conceived, “And in sins hath my mother nourished me in the womb.””

Augustine then explains, “Apart from this bond of mortal concupiscence was Christ born without a male, of a virgin conceiving by the Holy Ghost. He cannot be said to have been conceived in iniquity, it cannot be said, In sins His mother nourished Him in the womb, to whom was said, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Virtue of the Highest shall overshadow thee.” (Luke 1:35)”

He refers in context to **Luke 1 (KJV):34** Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

He continues, “It is not therefore because it is sin to have to do with wives that men are

conceived in iniquity, and in sins nourished in the womb by their mother; but because that which is made is surely made of flesh deserving punishment. For the punishment of the flesh is death, and surely there is in it liability to death itself. Whence the Apostle spoke not of the body as if to die, but as if dead: “The body indeed is dead,” he saith, “because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” (Romans 8:10)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):10** And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

He continues, “How then without bond of sin is born that which is conceived and sown of a body dead because of sin? This chaste operation in a married person hath not sin, but the origin of sin draweth with it condign punishment.”

The word “condign” means DESERVED, APPROPRIATE. (**Merriam Webster**)

He continues, “For there is no husband that, because he is an husband, is not subject to death, or that is subject to death for any other reason but because of sin. For even the Lord was subject to death, but not on account of sin: He took upon Him our punishment, and so looseth our guilt. With reason then, “In Adam all die, but in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

He continues, “For, “Through one man,” saith the Apostle, “sin hath entered into this world, and through sin death, and so hath passed unto all men, in that all have sinned.” (Romans 5:12) Definite is the sentence: “In Adam,” he saith, “all have sinned.””

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

He concludes, “Alone then could such an infant be innocent, as hath not been born of the work of Adam.”

Augustine has explained our need for a Savior well here.

## Concupiscence

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Marriage and Concupiscence, Book I, Chapters 27-40, page 274-280

Chapter 27 [XXIV.]—Through Lust Original Sin is Transmitted; Venial Sins in Married Persons; Concupiscence of the Flesh, the Daughter and Mother of Sin.

Wherefore the devil holds infants guilty who are born, not of the good by which marriage is good, but of the evil of concupiscence, which, indeed, marriage uses aright, but at which even marriage has occasion to feel shame. **Marriage is itself “honourable in all” (Hebrews 13:4) the goods which properly appertain to it; but even when it has its “bed undefiled” (not only by fornication and adultery, which are damnable disgraces, but also by any of those excesses of cohabitation such as do not arise from any prevailing desire of children, but from an overbearing lust of pleasure, which are venial sins in man and wife), yet, whenever it comes to the actual process of generation, the very embrace which is lawful and honourable cannot be**

effected without the ardour of lust, so as to be able to accomplish that which appertains to the use of reason and not of lust. Now, this ardour, whether following or preceding the will, does somehow, by a power of its own, move the members which cannot be moved simply by the will, and in this manner it shows itself not to be the servant of a will which commands it, but rather to be the punishment of a will which disobeys it. It shows, moreover, that it must be excited, not by a free choice, but by a certain seductive stimulus, and that on this very account it produces shame. This is the carnal concupiscence, which, while it is no longer accounted sin in the regenerate, yet in no case happens to nature except from sin. It is the daughter of sin, as it were; and whenever it yields assent to the commission of shameful deeds, it becomes also the mother of many sins. Now from this concupiscence whatever comes into being by natural birth is bound by original sin, unless, indeed, it be born again in Him whom the Virgin conceived without this concupiscence. Wherefore, when He vouchsafed to be born in the flesh, He alone was born without sin.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he argues, “Wherefore the devil holds infants guilty who are born, not of the good by which marriage is good, but of the evil of concupiscence, which, indeed, marriage uses aright, but at which even marriage has occasion to feel shame.”

So he says that, “marriage uses aright” the “evil of concupiscence”, and “the devil holds infants guilty who are born” in this way. And “marriage has occasion to feel shame” for this.

He continues, “Marriage is itself “honourable in all” (Hebrews 13:4) the goods which properly appertain to it; but even when it has its “bed undefiled” (not only by fornication and adultery, which are damnable disgraces, but also by any of those excesses of cohabitation such as do not arise from any prevailing desire of children, but from an overbearing lust of pleasure, which are venial sins in man and wife), yet, whenever it comes to the actual process of generation, the very embrace which is lawful and honourable cannot be effected without the ardour of lust, so as to be able to accomplish that which appertains to the use of reason and not of lust.”

Augustine was never able to get over the shame he felt for his past “excesses of cohabitation”, which were not done in a marriage, for he was never married. We read again that marriage is honorable in all in **Hebrew 13 (KJV):4** Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

The only limitation of sexual desire placed on marriage in the Scriptures is that it remain in the marriage, and not go outside of it.

The Scripture does not speak of venial sins, or permissible sins, or pardonable sins in marriage. Sin is sin, and it must be confessed as the apostle John commands in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: **2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Having a desire for your wife or your husband is according to nature. It is natural, and not a venial sin, or any sin at all. This is not to say that those with a past history of sexual promiscuity will not have problems in their marriage. These things must be dealt with. As we confess the sins of our past, he is faithful to cleanse us. As we walk in the light of His word, these things will be revealed to us. As we become aware of our past sins, we must confess them. This is the process we read of in **1 John 1 (KJV):5** This then is the message which we have

heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Augustine continues, “Now, this ardour, whether following or preceding the will, does somehow, by a power of its own, move the members which cannot be moved simply by the will, and in this manner it shows itself not to be the servant of a will which commands it, but rather to be the punishment of a will which disobeys it. It shows, moreover, that it must be excited, not by a free choice, but by a certain seductive stimulus, and that on this very account it produces shame.”

Augustine speaks from his own experience. He had a lot of past sexual sin which carried over into his life as a Christian. He had never experienced a healthy marriage. He spoke from his own experience in his past illicit relationships. It is sin which caused his members to move not “simply by the will”. Then when he became a bishop, and he had taken a vow of celibacy, he never went back and processed these things. So he speaks from the unresolved issues in his own past.

He continues, “This is the carnal concupiscence, which, while it is no longer accounted sin in the regenerate, yet in no case happens to nature except from sin. It is the daughter of sin, as it were; and whenever it yields assent to the commission of shameful deeds, it becomes also the mother of many sins. Now from this concupiscence whatever comes into being by natural birth is bound by original sin, unless, indeed, it be born again in Him whom the Virgin conceived without this concupiscence. Wherefore, when He vouchsafed to be born in the flesh, He alone was born without sin.”

According to Augustine, if one had pleasure in marriage, they would never be sure that their motives were right because it was “carnal concupiscence, which, while it is no longer accounted sin in the regenerate, yet in no case happens to nature except from sin”.

Yet he is correct when He says that Jesus “alone was born without sin”, and “whatever comes into being by natural birth is bound by original sin”.

But sexual desire in marriage is not a sin. It is a natural desire, and it is the reason people marry. Augustine’s past, and the Catholic Church in his time, hindered him from grasping the Biblical truth about marriage. To him, sexual desire was concupiscence, or lust, because it involves the members we must cover to maintain modesty.

Chapter 28 [XXV.]—Concupiscence Remains After Baptism, Just as Languor Does After Recovery from Disease; Concupiscence is Diminished in Persons of Advancing Years, and Increased in the Incontinent.

If the question arises, how this concupiscence of the flesh remains in the regenerate, in whose case has been effected a remission of all sins whatever; seeing that human semination takes place by its means, even when the carnal offspring of even a baptized parent is born: or, at all events, if it may be in the case of a baptized parent concupiscence and not be sin, why should this same concupiscence be sin in the offspring?—the answer to be given is this: Carnal

concupiscence is remitted, indeed, in baptism; not so that it is put out of existence, but so that it is not to be imputed for sin. Although its guilt is now taken away, it still remains until our entire infirmity be healed by the advancing renewal of our inner man, day by day, when at last our outward man shall be clothed with incorruption. (1 Corinthians 15:53) It does not remain, however, substantially, as a body, or a spirit; but it is nothing more than a certain affection of an evil quality, such as languor, for instance. There is not, to be sure, anything remaining which may be remitted whenever, as the Scripture says, “the Lord forgiveth all our iniquities.” (Psalm 103:3) But until that happens which immediately follows in the same passage, “Who healeth all thine infirmities, who redeemeth thy life from corruption,” (Psalm 103:4) there remains this concupiscence of the flesh in the body of this death. Now we are admonished not to obey its sinful desires to do evil: “Let not sin reign in your mortal body.” (Romans 6:19) Still this concupiscence is daily lessened in persons of continence and increasing years, and most of all when old age makes a near approach. The man, however, who yields to it a wicked service, receives such great energies that, even when all his members are now failing through age, and those especial parts of his body are unable to be applied to their proper function, he does not ever cease to revel in a still increasing rage of disgraceful and shameless desire.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “If the question arises, how this concupiscence of the flesh remains in the regenerate, in whose case has been effected a remission of all sins whatever; seeing that human semination takes place by its means, even when the carnal offspring of even a baptized parent is born: or, at all events, if it may be in the case of a baptized parent concupiscence and not be sin, why should this same concupiscence be sin in the offspring?—the answer to be given is this: Carnal concupiscence is remitted, indeed, in baptism; not so that it is put out of existence, but so that it is not to be imputed for sin.”

Augustine thought that all sexual desire was a result of “concupiscence of the flesh”, or lust of the flesh. He did not fully understand how the sinful nature in our flesh from Adam affected the regenerate or born again believer. So he did not understand that, in the regenerate, “human semination” did not take place by means of the “concupiscence of the flesh”, but from the love relationship in the marriage of believers. The child who is born is “carnal” in that it must be born again to enter the Kingdom of God. But this does not mean they were born of the lust of the flesh, but according to the natural desire in the marriage.

When Augustine calls the sexual relationship between husband and wife “Carnal concupiscence”, and says it “is remitted, indeed, in baptism; not so that it is put out of existence, but so that it is not to be imputed for sin”, he makes it sound as if the desire for sex in marriage is sinful, though it isn’t “to be imputed for sin”. But in the regenerate believer, though we have a sinful nature in our flesh, it does not mean that we sin when we enjoy a good meal. Nor does it mean that we sin when we have pleasure in the sexual relationship between husband and wife. It is the way that God made us. It is not good for the man to be alone.

Chapter 29 [XXVI.]—How Concupiscence Remains in the Baptized in Act, When It Has Passed Away as to Its Guilt.

In the case, then, of those persons who are born again in Christ, when they receive an entire remission of all their sins, it is of course necessary that the guilt also of the still



indwelling concupiscence should be remitted, in order that (as I said) it should not be imputed to them for sin. For even as in the case of those sins which cannot be themselves permanent, since they pass away as soon as they are committed, the guilt yet is permanent, and (if not remitted) will remain for evermore; so, when the concupiscence is remitted, the guilt of it also is taken away. For not to have sin means this, not to be deemed guilty of sin. If a man have (for example) committed adultery, though he do not repeat the sin, he is held to be guilty of adultery until the indulgence in guilt be itself remitted. He has the sin, therefore, remaining, although the particular act of his sin no longer exists, since it has passed away along with the time when it was committed. For if to desist from sinning were the same thing as not to have sins, it would be sufficient if Scripture were content to give us the simple warning, “My son, hast thou sinned? Do so no more.” (Ecclesiasticus 21:1) This, however, does not suffice, for it goes on to say, “Ask forgiveness for thy former sins.” (Ecclesiasticus 21:1) Sins remain, therefore, if they are not forgiven. But how do they remain if they are passed away? Only thus, they have passed away in their *act*, but they are permanent in their *guilt*. Contrariwise, then, may it happen that a thing may remain in act, but pass away in guilt.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “In the case, then, of those persons who are born again in Christ, when they receive an entire remission of all their sins, it is of course necessary that the guilt also of the still indwelling concupiscence should be remitted, in order that (as I said) it should not be imputed to them for sin. For even as in the case of those sins which cannot be themselves permanent, since they pass away as soon as they are committed, the guilt yet is permanent, and (if not remitted) will remain for evermore; so, when the concupiscence is remitted, the guilt of it also is taken away.”

He then explains, “For not to have sin means this, not to be deemed guilty of sin. If a man have (for example) committed adultery, though he do not repeat the sin, he is held to be guilty of adultery until the indulgence in guilt be itself remitted. He has the sin, therefore, remaining, although the particular act of his sin no longer exists, since it has passed away along with the time when it was committed. For if to desist from sinning were the same thing as not to have sins, it would be sufficient if Scripture were content to give us the simple warning, “My son, hast thou sinned? Do so no more.” (Ecclesiasticus 21:1)”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 21 (KJV):1** My son, hast thou sinned? Do so no more, but ask pardon for thy former sins.

But in the life of the believer, he or she has a standing of righteousness, having been justified by faith. This standing is not affected by sin in the life of the believer, because the believer has the righteousness of God imputed to them, that is, put down to their account. The only thing that cleanses us is the blood of Jesus as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

But our fellowship with the Lord is maintained by confessing our sins. He continues, “This, however, does not suffice, for it goes on to say, “Ask forgiveness for thy former sins.” (Ecclesiasticus 21:1) Sins remain, therefore, if they are not forgiven.”

And we read also in **Proverbs 28 (KJV):13** He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

He concludes, “But how do they remain if they are passed away? Only thus, they have

passed away in their act, but they are permanent in their guilt. Contrariwise, then, may it happen that a thing may remain in act, but pass away in guilt.”

That is, it passes away in guilt if it has been forgiven. But as he says, “they are permanent in their guilt”, the sin is forgiven when it is confessed. This is how the believer maintains fellowship with the Lord. His or her salvation is secure by their justification when they believed in Jesus Christ. But our fellowship with the Lord is maintained as we abide in him, and confess our sins as they are brought to light by His word.

Chapter 30 [XXVII.]—The Evil Desires of Concupiscence; We Ought to Wish that They May Not Be.

For the concupiscence of the flesh is in some sort active, even when it does not exhibit either an assent of the heart, where its seat of empire is, or those members whereby, as its weapons, it fulfills what it is bent on. But what in this action does it effect, unless it be its evil and shameful desires? For if these were good and lawful, the apostle would not forbid obedience to them, saying, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof.” (Romans 6:12) He does not say, that ye should have the lusts thereof, but “that ye should obey the lusts thereof,” in order that (as these desires are greater or less in different individuals, according as each shall have progressed in the renewal of the inner man) we may maintain the fight of holiness and chastity, for the purpose of withholding obedience to these lusts. Nevertheless, our wish ought to be nothing less than the nonexistence of these very desires, even if the accomplishment of such a wish be not possible in the body of this death. This is the reason why the same apostle, in another passage, addressing us as if in his own person, gives us this instruction: “For what I would,” says he, “that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.” (Romans 7:15) In a word, “I covet.” (“*Concupisco*” in the Latin, and hence used in this discussion.) For he was unwilling to do this, that he might be perfect on every side. “If, then, I do that which I would not,” he goes on to say, “I consent unto the law that it is good.” (Romans 7:16) Because the law, too, wills not that which I also would not. For it wills not that I should have concupiscence, for it says, “Thou shall not covet;” (“*Concupisco*” in the Latin) and I am no less unwilling to cherish so evil a desire. In this, therefore, there is complete accord between the will of the law and my own will. But because he was unwilling to covet, (“*Concupisco*” in the Latin) and yet did covet, (“*Concupisco*” in the Latin) and for all that did not by any means obey this concupiscence so as to yield assent to it, he immediately adds these words: “Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” (Romans 7:17)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “For the concupiscence of the flesh is in some sort active, even when it does not exhibit either an assent of the heart, where its seat of empire is, or those members whereby, as its weapons, it fulfills what it is bent on. But what in this action does it effect, unless it be its evil and shameful desires?”

He refers to the sinful nature of the flesh as in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

He continues, “For if these were good and lawful, the apostle would not forbid obedience to them, saying, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts

thereof.” (Romans 6:12)

He refers in context to **Romans 6 (KJV):12** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

He continues, “He does not say, that ye should have the lusts thereof, but “that ye should obey the lusts thereof;” in order that (as these desires are greater or less in different individuals, according as each shall have progressed in the renewal of the inner man) we may maintain the fight of holiness and chastity, for the purpose of withholding obedience to these lusts.”

Augustine did not grasp the difference between soul and spirit. Our flesh is not being transformed because it is mortal. But our souls are being transformed by the renewing of our minds as in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The believer is given a new heart and a new spirit when they are born again as we read in **Ezekiel 36 (KJV):26** A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

The heart is the center of our emotions. As we yield to the new nature in our spirits, which have been born again of the Spirit of God, and to the Holy Spirit within us, we do not fulfill the desires of the flesh, and we are transformed in the area of our mind, will, heart, emotions, and conscience, that is, our souls.

Augustine continues, “Nevertheless, our wish ought to be nothing less than the nonexistence of these very desires, even if the accomplishment of such a wish be not possible in the body of this death. This is the reason why the same apostle, in another passage, addressing us as if in his own person, gives us this instruction: “For what I would,” says he, “that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.” (Romans 7:15) In a word, “I covet.” (“*Concupisco*” in the Latin, and hence used in this discussion.) For he was unwilling to do this, that he might be perfect on every side. “If, then, I do that which I would not,” he goes on to say, “I consent unto the law that it is good.” (Romans 7:16) Because the law, too, wills not that which I also would not. For it wills not that I should have concupiscence, for it says, “Thou shall not covet;” (“*Concupisco*” in the Latin) and I am no less unwilling to cherish so evil a desire. In this, therefore, there is complete accord between the will of the law and my own will. But because he was unwilling to covet, (“*Concupisco*” in the Latin) and yet did covet, (“*Concupisco*” in the Latin) and for all that did not by any means obey this concupiscence so as to yield assent to it, he immediately adds these words: “Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” (Romans 7:17)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):15** For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Let us read more of his thinking on this in the next chapter.

A man, however, is much deceived if, while consenting to the lust of his flesh, and then both resolving in his mind to do its desires and setting about it, he supposes that he has still a right to say, “It is not I that do it,” even if he hates and loathes himself for assenting to evil desires. The two things are simultaneous in his case: he hates the thing himself because he knows that it is evil; and yet he does it, because he is bent on doing it. Now if, in addition to all this, he proceeds to do what the Scripture forbids him, when it says, “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin,” (Romans 6:13) and completes with a bodily act what he was bent on doing in his mind; and says, “It is not I that do the thing, but sin that dwelleth in me,” (Romans 7:18) because he feels displeased with himself for resolving on and accomplishing the deed,—he so greatly errs as not to know his own self. For, whereas he is altogether himself, his mind determining and his body executing his own purpose, he yet supposes that he is himself no longer! [XXIX.] **That man, therefore, alone speaks the truth when he says, “It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me,” who only feels the concupiscence, and neither resolves on doing it with the consent of his heart, nor accomplishes it with the ministry of his body.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “A man, however, is much deceived if, while consenting to the lust of his flesh, and then both resolving in his mind to do its desires and setting about it, he supposes that he has still a right to say, “It is not I that do it,” even if he hates and loathes himself for assenting to evil desires. The two things are simultaneous in his case: he hates the thing himself because he knows that it is evil; and yet he does it, because he is bent on doing it.”

Paul is not giving us an excuse to sin because we can’t help it anyway. He is speaking of the conflict of the old sinful Adamic nature in our flesh with the new divine nature in our spirits that have been born of the Spirit of God.

Augustine continues, “Now if, in addition to all this, he proceeds to do what the Scripture forbids him, when it says, “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin,” (Romans 6:13) and completes with a bodily act what he was bent on doing in his mind; and says, “It is not I that do the thing, but sin that dwelleth in me,” (Romans 7:18) because he feels displeased with himself for resolving on and accomplishing the deed,—he so greatly errs as not to know his own self. For, whereas he is altogether himself, his mind determining and his body executing his own purpose, he yet supposes that he is himself no longer!”

He refers in part to **Romans 6 (KJV):13** Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

And then to **Romans 7 (KJV):18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

And why is “to will” present with me? It is because I have been born again of the Spirit of God, and I have a new nature in my inner man which is spirit. But Augustine is correct in that he is saying that the old nature is not an excuse to sin.

He concludes, **“That man, therefore, alone speaks the truth when he says, “It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me,” who only feels the concupiscence, and neither resolves**

on doing it with the consent of his heart, nor accomplishes it with the ministry of his body.”

And Augustine speaks the truth here. It is ok to feel what we feel. But if we dwell on a lust, and act on it, it becomes sin.

## Chapter 32.—When Good Will Be Perfectly Done.

The apostle then adds these words: “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perfect that which is good I find not.” (Romans 7:18) Now this is said, because a good thing is not then perfected, when there is an absence of evil desires, as evil is perfected when evil desires are obeyed. But when they are present, but are not obeyed, neither evil is performed, since obedience is not yielded to them; nor good, because of their inoperative presence. There is rather an intermediate condition of things: good is effected in some degree, because the evil concupiscence has gained no assent to itself; and in some degree there is a remnant of evil, because the concupiscence is present. This accounts for the apostle’s precise words. He does not say, To do good is not present to him, but “how to perfect it.” For the truth is, one does a good deal of good when he does what the Scripture enjoins, “Go not after thy lusts;” (Ecclesiasticus 18:30) yet he falls short of perfection, in that he fails to keep the great commandment, “Thou shalt not covet.” (Exodus 20:7) The law said, “Thou shalt not covet,” in order that, when we find ourselves lying in this diseased state, we might seek the medicine of Grace, and by that commandment know both in what direction our endeavours should aim as we advance in our present mortal condition, and to what a height it is possible to reach in the future immortality. For unless perfection could somewhere be attained, this commandment would never have been given to us.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “The apostle then adds these words: “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perfect that which is good I find not.” (Romans 7:18)

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Note that Augustine uses the word “perfect” in this verse, though the word “perform” is used in the **King James Version** because in the verse in the original Greek the word is **κατεργάζομαι** (pronounced katergázomai, kat-er-gad'-zom-ahee); from G2596 and G2038; to work fully, i.e. accomplish; by implication, to finish, fashion:—cause, to (deed), perform, work (out). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2716.**

Even in the **Latin Vulgate** we read as in **Romans 7 (Douay Rheims):18** For I know that there dwelleth not in me, that is to say, in my flesh, that which is good. For to will is present with me: but to accomplish that which is good, I find not.

However, the word “accomplish” in the **Latin Vulgate** is **perficere**, and means “To complete, carry out”. <http://latindictionary.wikidot.com/verb:perficere>

This could explain Augustine’s understanding of the verse.

He then explains, “Now this is said, because a good thing is not then perfected, when there is an absence of evil desires, as evil is perfected when evil desires are obeyed. But when they are present, but are not obeyed, neither evil is performed, since obedience is not yielded to them; nor good, because of their inoperative presence. There is rather an intermediate condition



of things: good is effected in some degree, because the evil concupiscence has gained no assent to itself; and in some degree there is a remnant of evil, because the concupiscence is present. This accounts for the apostle's precise words. He does not say, To do good is not present to him, but "how to perfect it." For the truth is, one does a good deal of good when he does what the Scripture enjoins, "Go not after thy lusts;" (Ecclesiasticus 18:30) yet he falls short of perfection, in that he fails to keep the great commandment, "Thou shalt not covet." (Exodus 20:17)"

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 18 (KJV):30** Go not after thy lusts, but refrain thyself from thine appetites.

And to **Exodus 20 (KJV):17** Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

However, the apostle Paul is saying, "to will is present with me", but "how to perform", or how do "that which is good I find not". Paul is not saying that we cannot perform, or complete something good, but that he has not found it yet. That is, he has not explained what he has found, as we shall see.

Augustine then continues, "The law said, "Thou shalt not covet," in order that, when we find ourselves lying in this diseased state, we might seek the medicine of Grace, and by that commandment know both in what direction our endeavours should aim as we advance in our present mortal condition, and to what a height it is possible to reach in the future immortality. For unless perfection could somewhere be attained, this commandment would never have been given to us."

Augustine agrees that the law is our tutor to bring us to Christ, as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):24** Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

For by the law is the knowledge of sin as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

And perfection will be attained at the resurrection as in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Paul explains what we should do in **Philippians 3 (KJV):7** But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in

Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

So in verse 12, the word “perfect” is in the perfect, passive, indicative tense, and should be translated as in **Philippians 3 (NASB):12** Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.

Then in Philippians 3:15 above, the word “perfect” has the sense of one who is mature.

### Chapter 33 [XXX.]—True Freedom Comes with Willing Delight in God’s Law.

The apostle then repeats his former statement, the more fully to recommend its purport: “For the good,” says he, “that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” Then follows this: “I find then the law, when I would act, to be good to me; for evil is present with me.” (Romans 7:19-21) In other words, I find that the law is a good to me, when I wish to do what the law would have me do; inasmuch as it is not with the law itself (which says, “Thou shalt not covet”) that evil is present; no, it is with myself that the evil is present, which I would not do, because I have the concupiscence even in my willingness. “For,” he adds, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” (Romans 7:22-23) **This delight with the law of God after the inward man, comes to us from the mighty grace of God; for thereby is our inward man renewed day by day, (2 Corinthians 4:16) because it is thereby that progress is made by us with perseverance. In it there is not the fear that has torment, but the love that cheers and gratifies. We are truly free there, where we have no unwilling joy.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “The apostle then repeats his former statement, the more fully to recommend its purport: “For the good,” says he, “that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” Then follows this: “I find then the law, when I would act, to be good to me; for evil is present with me.” (Romans 7:19-21)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):19** For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

In verse 21, Paul is saying that he finds a law, that is, the way things are so to speak. And the way things are that he found was that evil was present with him when he would do good. The evil that is present with him is the law of sin, or nature to sin, that is in his flesh.

But Augustine misunderstands verse 21, and interprets it as the law in the Old Testament, as he continues, “In other words, I find that the law is a good to me, when I wish to do what the law would have me do; inasmuch as it is not with the law itself (which says, “Thou shalt not covet”) that evil is present; no, it is with myself that the evil is present, which I would not do, because I have the concupiscence even in my willingness. “For,” he adds, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” (Romans

7:22-23) This delight with the law of God after the inward man, comes to us from the mighty grace of God; for thereby is our inward man renewed day by day, (2 Corinthians 4:16) because it is thereby that progress is made by us with perseverance. In it there is not the fear that has torment, but the love that cheers and gratifies. We are truly free there, where we have no unwilling joy.”

Now Augustine refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

And to **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):16** For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

What Augustine does not understand is that the inward man of our spirit is the part of us that has been born of the Spirit of God. It is not gradually becoming born again, by some process of renewal, but our spirit has been born again when we believe in Jesus Christ. This is why we “delight in the law of God after the inward man” in verse 22. But our flesh wars against the law of my mind, which is in my soul area. But as I yield to the new nature in my spirit, my soul is renewed, and is gradually transformed. This results in a progressive sanctification as we grow in grace and knowledge.

The fear he speaks of is mentioned in **1 John 4 (KJV):18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

And as we surrender to the truth in the word of God, we are made free as Jesus promised in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Chapter 34.—How Concupiscence Made a Captive of the Apostle; What the Law of Sin Was to the Apostle.

Then, indeed, this statement, “I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind,” refers to that very concupiscence which we are now speaking of—the law of sin in our sinful flesh. But when he said, “And bringing me into captivity to the law of sin,” that is, to its own self, “which is in my members,” he either meant “bringing me into captivity,” in the sense of endeavoring to make me captive, that is, urging me to approve and accomplish evil desire; or rather (and this opens no controversy), in the sense of leading me captive according to the flesh, and, if this is not possessed by the carnal concupiscence which he calls the law of sin, no unlawful desire—such as our mind ought not to obey—would, of course, be there to excite and disturb. The fact, however, that the apostle does not say, Bringing my flesh into captivity, but “Bringing me into captivity,” leads us to look out for some other meaning for the phrase, and to understand the term “bringing me into captivity” as if he had said, endeavoring to make me captive. But why, after all, might he not say, “Bringing me into captivity,” and at the same time mean us to understand his flesh? Was it not spoken by one concerning Jesus, when His flesh was not found in the sepulchre: “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him”? (John 20:2) Was Mary’s then an improper question, because she said, “My Lord,” and not “My Lord’s body” or “flesh”?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Then, indeed, this statement, “I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind,” refers to that very concupiscence which we are now speaking of—the law of sin in our sinful flesh.”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

He continues, “But when he said, “And bringing me into captivity to the law of sin,” that is, to its own self, “which is in my members,” he either meant “bringing me into captivity,” in the sense of endeavoring to make me captive, that is, urging me to approve and accomplish evil desire; or rather (and this opens no controversy), in the sense of leading me captive according to the flesh, and, if this is not possessed by the carnal concupiscence which he calls the law of sin, no unlawful desire—such as our mind ought not to obey—would, of course, be there to excite and disturb.”

Paul is referring to the captivity of the soul. When the soul gives in to the law of sin in our members, we are taken captive to it. This captivity is what Paul is referring to in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

The carnal mind is the mind that submits to the flesh. The unsaved are held captive by their flesh, so their minds are carnal. The victory over the flesh is only possible to the saved.

Augustine continues, “The fact, however, that the apostle does not say, Bringing my flesh into captivity, but “Bringing me into captivity,” leads us to look out for some other meaning for the phrase, and to understand the term “bringing me into captivity” as if he had said, endeavoring to make me captive. But why, after all, might he not say, “Bringing me into captivity,” and at the same time mean us to understand his flesh? Was it not spoken by one concerning Jesus, when His flesh was not found in the sepulchre: “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him”? (John 20:2) Was Mary’s then an improper question, because she said, “My Lord,” and not “My Lord’s body” or “flesh”?

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):2** Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

Let us read the next chapter to see where he is going.

## Chapter 35 [XXXI.]—The Flesh, Carnal Affection.

But we have in the apostle’s own language, a little before, a sufficiently clear proof that he might have meant his flesh when he said, “Bringing *me* into captivity.” For after declaring, “I know that in me dwelleth no good thing,” he at once added an explanatory sentence to this effect, “That is, in my flesh.” (Romans 7:18) It is then the flesh, in which there dwells nothing good, that is brought into captivity to the law of sin. Now he designates that as the flesh wherein lies a certain morbid carnal affection, not the mere conformation of our bodily fabric whose members are not to be used as weapons for sin—that is, for that very concupiscence which holds this flesh of ours captive. So far, indeed, as concerns this actual bodily substance and

nature of ours, it is already God's temple in all faithful men, whether living in marriage or in continence. If, however, absolutely nothing of our flesh were in captivity, not even to the devil, because there has accrued to it the remission of sin, that sin be not imputed to it (and this is properly designated the law of sin); yet if under this law of sin, that is, under its own concupiscence, our flesh were not to some degree held captive, how could that be true which the apostle states, when he speaks of our "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body"? (Romans 8:23) In so far, then, as there is now this waiting for the redemption of our body, there is also in some degree still existing something in us which is a captive to the law of sin. Accordingly he exclaims, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 7:24-25) What are we to understand by such language, but that our body, which is undergoing corruption, weighs heavily on our soul? When, therefore, this very body of ours shall be restored to us in an incorrupt state, there shall be a full liberation from the body of this death; but there will be no such deliverance for them who shall rise again to condemnation. To the body of this death then is understood to be owing the circumstance that there is in our members another law which wars against the law of the mind, so long as the flesh lusts against the spirit—without, however, subjugating the mind, inasmuch as on its side, too, the spirit has a concupiscence contrary to the flesh. (Galatians 5:17) Thus, although the actual law of sin partly holds the flesh in captivity (whence comes its resistance to the law of the mind), still it has not an absolute empire in our body, notwithstanding its mortal state, since it refuses obedience to its desires. (Romans 6:12) For in the case of hostile armies between whom there is an earnest conflict, even the side which is inferior in the fight usually holds a something which it has captured; of sin, yet it has before it the hope of redemption: and then there will remain not a particle of this corrupt concupiscence; but our flesh, healed of that diseased plague, and wholly clad in immortality, shall live for evermore in eternal blessedness.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "But we have in the apostle's own language, a little before, a sufficiently clear proof that he might have meant his flesh when he said, "Bringing me into captivity." For after declaring, "I know that in me dwelleth no good thing," he at once added an explanatory sentence to this effect, "That is, in my flesh." (Romans 7:18)"

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Augustine then concludes, "It is then the flesh, in which there dwells nothing good, that is brought into captivity to the law of sin."

Actually, it is in our soul that we are brought into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members, that is, our flesh. The soul is the part of us that is between our spirit and our body, or flesh. Our spirit has been made new. Our soul is being made new. And in our flesh there is a law of sin as Paul reveals in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Our mind is in our soul. Augustine continues, "Now he designates that as the flesh wherein lies a certain morbid carnal affection, not the mere conformation of our bodily fabric whose members are not to be used as weapons for sin—that is, for that very concupiscence which holds this flesh of ours captive. So far, indeed, as concerns this actual bodily substance



and nature of ours, it is already God's temple in all faithful men, whether living in marriage or in continence. If, however, absolutely nothing of our flesh were in captivity, not even to the devil, because there has accrued to it the remission of sin, that sin be not imputed to it (and this is properly designated the law of sin); yet if under this law of sin, that is, under its own concupiscence, our flesh were not to some degree held captive, how could that be true which the apostle states, when he speaks of our "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body"? (Romans 8:23)"

It is true that the bodies of believers are God's temple. But in our flesh is a law of sin, a nature to sin that we inherited from Adam. This is why our bodies are mortal, and waiting for the redemption that he refers to in **Romans 8 (KJV):23** And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Augustine then continues, "In so far, then, as there is now this waiting for the redemption of our body, there is also in some degree still existing something in us which is a captive to the law of sin. Accordingly he exclaims, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 7:24-25)"

He refers to **Romans 7 (Douay Rheims):24** Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 The grace of God, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, I myself, with the mind serve the law of God: but with the flesh, the law of sin.

And to **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Notice that Augustine answers, "The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord", when the **King James Version** says, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The law of sin is the old Adamic nature to sin in our mortal bodies. It is true that the grace of God through faith has provided for us a new nature in our spirit when we were born again. But Augustine attributed the victory simply to the grace of God, as in the **Latin Vulgate**.

Augustine continues, "What are we to understand by such language, but that our body, which is undergoing corruption, weighs heavily on our soul?"

He refers to **Wisdom 9 (Septuagint):15** For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things.

And he referred before to this, as we read in **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):16** For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

He continues, "When, therefore, this very body of ours shall be restored to us in an incorrupt state, there shall be a full liberation from the body of this death; but there will be no such deliverance for them who shall rise again to condemnation. To the body of this death then is understood to be owing the circumstance that there is in our members another law which wars against the law of the mind, so long as the flesh lusts against the spirit—without, however, subjugating the mind, inasmuch as on its side, too, the spirit has a concupiscence contrary to the flesh. (Galatians 5:17)"

He refers in context to **Galatians 5 (KJV):16** This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

It would have helped if he would have read verse 16 above. But he continues, “Thus, although the actual law of sin partly holds the flesh in captivity (whence comes its resistance to the law of the mind), still it has not an absolute empire in our body, notwithstanding its mortal state, since it refuses obedience to its desires. (Romans 6:12)”

He refers to **Romans 6 (KJV):12** Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

But the law of sin does not “partly” hold our flesh. The law of sin is the sin nature in our flesh, as we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):17** Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Before Christ we were by nature children of wrath as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

But the Spirit of of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Augustine then concludes, “For in the case of hostile armies between whom there is an earnest conflict, even the side which is inferior in the fight usually holds a something which it has captured; and although in some such way there is somewhat in our flesh which is kept under the law of sin, yet it has before it the hope of redemption: and then there will remain not a particle of this corrupt concupiscence; but our flesh, healed of that diseased plague, and wholly clad in immortality, shall live for evermore in eternal blessedness.”

When we see Him we shall be like Him as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

#### Chapter 36.—Even Now While We Still Have Concupiscence We May Be Safe in Christ.

But the apostle pursues the subject, and says, “So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin;” (Romans 7:25) which must be thus understood: “With my mind I serve the law of God,” by refusing my consent to the law of sin; “with my flesh, however,” I serve “the law of sin,” by having the desires of sin, from which I am not yet entirely freed, although I yield them no assent. Then let us observe carefully what he has said after all the above: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1) Even now, says he, when the law in my members keeps up its warfare against the law of my mind, and retains in captivity somewhat in the body of this death, there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. And listen why: “For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” says he, “hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 8:2) How made me free, except by abolishing its sentence of guilt by the remission of all my sins; so that, though it still remains, only daily lessening more and more, it is nevertheless not imputed to me as sin?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he explains well, “But the apostle pursues the subject, and says, “So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin;” (Romans 7:25) which must be thus understood: “With my mind I serve the law of God,” by refusing my consent to the law of sin; “with my flesh, however,” I serve “the law of sin,” by having the desires of sin, from which I am not yet entirely freed, although I yield them no assent.”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):25** I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

He continues, “Then let us observe carefully what he has said after all the above: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1) Even now, says he, when the law in my members keeps up its warfare against the law of my mind, and retains in captivity somewhat in the body of this death, there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. And listen why: “For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” says he, “hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 8:2) How made me free, except by abolishing its sentence of guilt by the remission of all my sins; so that, though it still remains, only daily lessening more and more, it is nevertheless not imputed to me as sin?

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

The Scripture says that “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death”, in verse 2 above. Now we must walk in our freedom, and not yield to our flesh.

God deals with us as sons and daughters. We have a standing of righteousness because God has justified us by our faith. We have been born again by the Spirit of God, and we have a new divine nature in our spirit. So although in our soul, that is, in our mind, or our heart, we may give in to our flesh, we still have a standing as righteous ones. Our fellowship with God will be affected by any sin we commit. We maintain our fellowship with the Lord by confessing our sins. He is then faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):8** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

In our unsaved state, our minds had a lot of misperceptions of reality as we walked according to the course of this world. As we grow in grace and knowledge, our minds will be renewed by the truth, and our old ways of thinking will be cleansed of all our unrighteous thoughts. We will also be set free from hurt feelings as we process them with the Lord’s help.

We are able to do this because God has provided an Advocate for us as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Jesus is the propitiation for our sins. He has paid it all. We just have to confess our sins to maintain our fellowship with the Lord. But our salvation is secured by our faith in Jesus Christ.

Chapter 37 [XXXII.]—The Law of Sin with Its Guilt in Unbaptized Infants. By Adam’s Sin the Human Race Has Become a “Wild Olive Tree.”

Until, then, this remission of sins takes place in the offspring, they have within them the law of sin in such manner, that it is really imputed to them as sin; in other words, with that law there is attaching to them its sentence of guilt, which holds them debtors to eternal condemnation. For what a parent transmits to his carnal offspring is the condition of his own carnal birth, not that of his spiritual new birth. For, that he was born in the flesh, although no hindrance after the remission of his guilt to his fruit, still remains hidden, as it were, in the seed of the olive, even though, because of the remission of his sins, it in no respect injures the oil—that is, in plain language, his life which he lives, “righteous by faith,” (Romans 1:17) after Christ, whose very name comes from the oil, that is, from the anointing. That, however, which in the case of a regenerate parent, as in the seed of the pure olive, is covered without any guilt, which has been remitted, is still no doubt retained in the case of his offspring, which is yet unregenerate, as in the wild olive, with all its guilt, until here also it be remitted by the self-same grace. When Adam sinned, he was changed from that pure olive, which had no such corrupt seed whence should spring the bitter issue of the wild olive, into a wild olive tree; and, inasmuch as his sin was so great, that by it his nature became commensurately changed for the worse, he converted the entire race of man into a wild olive stock. The effect of this change we see illustrated, as has been said above, in the instance of these very trees. **Whenever God’s grace converts a sapling into a good olive, so that the fault of the first birth (that original sin which had been derived and contracted from the concupiscence of the flesh) is remitted, covered, and not imputed, there is still inherent in it that nature from which is born a wild olive, unless it, too, by the same grace, is by the second birth changed into a good olive.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Until, then, this remission of sins takes place in the offspring, they have within them the law of sin in such manner, that it is really imputed to them as sin; in other words, with that law there is attaching to them its sentence of guilt, which holds them debtors to eternal condemnation. For what a parent transmits to his carnal offspring is the condition of his own carnal birth, not that of his spiritual new birth. For, that he was born in the flesh, although no hindrance after the remission of his guilt to his fruit, still remains hidden, as it were, in the seed of the olive, even though, because of the remission of his sins, it in no respect injures the oil—that is, in plain language, his life which he lives, “righteous by faith,” (Romans 1:17) after Christ, whose very name comes from the oil, that is, from the anointing.”

He refers in context to **Romans 1 (KJV):16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

The word “Christ” in the Greek is **Χριστός** (pronounced khrē-sto's), from G5548; anointed, i.e. the Messiah, an epithet of Jesus:—Christ. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5547.**

This Greek word comes from **χρίω** (pronounced khrē'-ō), probably akin to G5530 through the idea of contact; to smear or rub with oil, i.e. (by implication) to consecrate to an office or religious service:—anoint. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5548.**

Augustine continues, “That, however, which in the case of a regenerate parent, as in the seed of the pure olive, is covered without any guilt, which has been remitted, is still no doubt

retained in the case of his offspring, which is yet unregenerate, as in the wild olive, with all its guilt, until here also it be remitted by the self-same grace. When Adam sinned, he was changed from that pure olive, which had no such corrupt seed whence should spring the bitter issue of the wild olive, into a wild olive tree; and, inasmuch as his sin was so great, that by it his nature became commensurately changed for the worse, he converted the entire race of man into a wild olive stock. The effect of this change we see illustrated, as has been said above, in the instance of these very trees.”

Augustine is taking the analogy of the olive tree a little out of context, but not without some relevance. The passage in Romans, chapter 11, is speaking of the Gentiles who were the wild olive trees. The olive tree is speaking of those who are righteous by faith, and Israel.

He refers in context to **Romans 11 (KJV)**: 13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: 14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. 15 For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? 16 For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. 17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; 18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. 19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: 21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. 22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. 23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? 25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

Augustine concludes, “Whenever God’s grace converts a sapling into a good olive, so that the fault of the first birth (that original sin which had been derived and contracted from the concupiscence of the flesh) is remitted, covered, and not imputed, there is still inherent in it that nature from which is born a wild olive, unless it, too, by the same grace, is by the second birth changed into a good olive.”

We were all born wild olives. That is why we need to be born again.

Chapter 38 [XXXIII.]—To Baptism Must Be Referred All Remission of Sins, and the Complete Healing of the Resurrection. Daily Cleansing.

Blessed, therefore, is the olive tree “whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;” blessed is it “to which the Lord hath not imputed sin.” (Psalm 32:1-2) But this, which has received the remission, the covering, and the acquittal, even up to the complete change into



an eternal immortality, still retains a secret force which furnishes seed for a wild and bitter olive tree, unless the same tillage of God prunes it also, by remission, covering, and acquittal. There will, however, be left no corruption at all in even carnal seed, when the same regeneration, which is now effected through the sacred laver, purges and heals all man's evil to the very end. By its means the very same flesh, through which the carnal mind was formed, shall become spiritual,—no longer having that carnal lust which resists the law of the mind, no longer emitting carnal seed. For in this sense must be understood that which the apostle whom we have so often quoted says elsewhere: "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." (Ephesians 5:25-27)

**It must, I say, be understood as implying, that by this laver of regeneration and word of sanctification all the evils of regenerate men of whatever kind are cleansed and healed,—not the sins only which are all now remitted in baptism, but those also which after baptism are committed by human ignorance and frailty; not, indeed, that baptism is to be repeated as often as sin is repeated, but that by its one only ministration it comes to pass that pardon is secured to the faithful of all their sins both before and after their regeneration.** For of what use would repentance be, either before baptism, if baptism did not follow; or after it, if it did not precede? Nay, in the Lord's Prayer itself, which is our daily cleansing, of what avail or advantage would it be for that petition to be uttered, "Forgive us our debts," (Matthew 6:12) unless it be by such as have been baptized? And in like manner, how great soever be the liberality and kindness of a man's alms, what, I ask, would they profit him towards the remission of his sins if he had not been baptized? In short, on whom but on the baptized shall be bestowed the very felicities of the kingdom of heaven; where the Church shall have no spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; where there shall be nothing blameworthy, nothing unreal; where there shall be not only no guilt for sin, but no concupiscence to excite it?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "Blessed, therefore, is the olive tree "whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;" blessed is it "to which the Lord hath not imputed sin." (Psalm 32:1-2)"

He refers to **Psalm 32 (KJV):1** Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. **2** Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

He continues, "But this, which has received the remission, the covering, and the acquittal, even up to the complete change into an eternal immortality, still retains a secret force which furnishes seed for a wild and bitter olive tree, unless the same tillage of God prunes it also, by remission, covering, and acquittal. There will, however, be left no corruption at all in even carnal seed, when the same regeneration, which is now effected through the sacred laver, purges and heals all man's evil to the very end. By its means the very same flesh, through which the carnal mind was formed, shall become spiritual,—no longer having that carnal lust which resists the law of the mind, no longer emitting carnal seed."

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):44** It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

He continues, "For in this sense must be understood that which the apostle whom we have so often quoted says elsewhere: "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He

might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” (Ephesians 5:25-27)”

He refers to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

He then continues, “It must, I say, be understood as implying, that by this laver of regeneration and word of sanctification all the evils of regenerate men of whatever kind are cleansed and healed,—not the sins only which are all now remitted in baptism, but those also which after baptism are committed by human ignorance and frailty; not, indeed, that baptism is to be repeated as often as sin is repeated, but that by its one only ministration it comes to pass that pardon is secured to the faithful of all their sins both before and after their regeneration.”

Although we are not regenerated by baptism but by faith in Jesus Christ, it is true that all sins before and after regeneration are pardoned, or forgiven. And this assurance may be clearly seen in our standing as righteous ones before God, as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

When we understand that we have been justified by God, who thereby has put His righteousness down to our account, we understand why Paul says we are more than conquerors in **Romans 8 (KJV):31** What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Augustine continues, “For of what use would repentance be, either before baptism, if baptism did not follow; or after it, if it did not precede?”

Repentance is absolutely necessary to be saved as Jesus reveals in **Luke 13 (KJV):1** There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Baptism does not save us. We pass from death to life when we believe in Jesus as He revealed in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and

believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

We are only baptized because we believe. But in Augustine's time, you were "regenerated by baptism", that is, "by this laver of regeneration". This was the belief in the Catholic Church. He continues, "Nay, in the Lord's Prayer itself, which is our daily cleansing, of what avail or advantage would it be for that petition to be uttered, "Forgive us our debts," (Matthew 6:12) unless it be by such as have been baptized?"

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

In principle, what he is saying is correct. After one is washed, that is cleansed of sin, when he or she is regenerated by faith in Jesus Christ, we only need to wash our feet as Jesus taught in **John 13 (KJV):10** Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

He continues, "And in like manner, how great soever be the liberality and kindness of a man's alms, what, I ask, would they profit him towards the remission of his sins if he had not been baptized?"

The giving of alms in Augustine's time was thought to profit one "towards the remission of his sins", if he had been baptized. But neither baptism, nor the giving of alms profits anyone for the remission of sins. It is by grace that we are saved, not of works, as Paul reveals in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We will be rewarded for good works at the judgment seat of Christ, but we are not saved by our works. Augustine concludes, "In short, on whom but on the baptized shall be bestowed the very felicities of the kingdom of heaven; where the Church shall have no spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; where there shall be nothing blameworthy, nothing unreal; where there shall be not only no guilt for sin, but no concupiscence to excite it?"

Baptism is merely a ritual that is only a token of what has been done for us. Jesus promised that He would build His Church on the rock of Peter's testimony that He is the Christ in **Matthew 16 (KJV):15** He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

It is by simple faith that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, that we are saved. We are then baptized as a token, a testimony of our faith, in obedience to the Lord's command. We are not justified by baptism, but by faith as we read again in **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Chapter 39 [XXXIV.]—By the Holiness of Baptism, Not Sins Only, But All Evils Whatsoever, Have to Be Removed. The Church is Not Yet Free from All Stain.

And thus not only all the sins, but all the ills of men of what kind soever, are in course of removal by the holiness of that Christian laver whereby Christ cleanses His Church, that He may present it to Himself, not in this world, but in that which is to come, as not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Now there are some who maintain that such is the Church even now, and yet they are in it. Well then, since they confess that they have some sins themselves, if they say the truth in this (and, of course, they do, as they are not free from sins), then the Church has “a spot” in them; whilst if they tell an untruth in their confession (as speaking from a double heart), then the Church has in them “a wrinkle.” If, however, they assert that it is themselves, and not the Church, which has all this, they then as good as acknowledge that they are not its members, nor belong to its body, so that they are even condemned by their own confession.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “And thus not only all the sins, but all the ills of men of what kind soever, are in course of removal by the holiness of that Christian laver whereby Christ cleanses His Church, that He may present it to Himself, not in this world, but in that which is to come, as not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.”

He refers in context to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):26** That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, **27** That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

But it is the word of God that cleanses us, and not baptism, as Jesus revealed in **John 15 (KJV):3** Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

And in **John 17 (KJV):17** Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

And in **Psalms 119 (KJV):9** Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

Augustine continues, “Now there are some who maintain that such is the Church even now, and yet they are in it. Well then, since they confess that they have some sins themselves, if they say the truth in this (and, of course, they do, as they are not free from sins), then the Church has “a spot” in them; whilst if they tell an untruth in their confession (as speaking from a double heart), then the Church has in them “a wrinkle.” If, however, they assert that it is themselves, and not the Church, which has all this, they then as good as acknowledge that they are not its members, nor belong to its body, so that they are even condemned by their own confession.”

We can agree with Augustine that the Church is not what it will be when Jesus presents it to Himself, as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

He is still working on it, as Paul reveals in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Let us continue to the next paragraph.

Chapter 40 [XXXV.]—Refutation of the Pelagians by the Authority of St. Ambrose, Whom They Quote to Show that the Desire of the Flesh is a Natural Good.

In respect, however, to this concupiscence of the flesh, we have striven in this lengthy



discussion to distinguish it accurately from the goods of marriage. This we have done on account of our modern heretics, who cavil whenever concupiscence is censured, as if it involved a censure of marriage. Their object is to praise concupiscence as a natural good, that so they may defend their own baneful dogma, which asserts that those who are born by its means do not contract original sin. Now the blessed Ambrose, bishop of Milan, by whose priestly office I received the washing of regeneration, briefly spoke on this matter, when, expounding the prophet Isaiah, he gathered from him the nativity of Christ in the flesh: “Thus,” says the bishop, “He was both tempted in all points as a man. (Hebrews 4:15) and in the likeness of man He bare all things; but inasmuch as He was born of the Spirit, He kept Himself from sin. For every man is a liar; and there is none without sin but God alone. It has, therefore, been ever firmly maintained, that it is clear that no man from husband and wife, that is to say, by means of that conjunction of their persons, is free from sin. He who is free from sin is also free from conception of this kind.” Well now, what is it which St. Ambrose has here condemned in the true doctrine of this deliverance?—is it the goodness of marriage, or not rather the worthless opinion of these heretics, although they had not then come upon the stage? I have thought it worth while to adduce this testimony, because Pelagius mentions Ambrose with such commendation as to say: “The blessed Bishop Ambrose, in whose writings more than anywhere else the Roman faith is clearly stated, has flourished like a beautiful flower among the Latin writers. His fidelity and extremely pure perception of the sense of Scripture no opponent even has ever ventured to impugn.” I hope he may regret having entertained opinions opposed to Ambrose, but not that he has bestowed this praise on that holy man.

Here, then, you have my book, which, owing to its tedious length and difficult subject, it has been as troublesome for me to compose as for you to read, in those little snatches of time in which you have been able (or at least, as I suppose, have been able) to find yourself at leisure. Although it has been indeed drawn up with considerable labour amidst my ecclesiastical duties, as God has vouchsafed to give me His help, I should hardly have intruded it on your notice, with all your public cares, if I had not been informed by a godly man, who has an intimate knowledge of you, that you take such pleasure in reading as to lie awake by the hour, night after night, spending the precious time in your favourite pursuit.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “In respect, however, to this concupiscence of the flesh, we have striven in this lengthy discussion to distinguish it accurately from the goods of marriage.”

At least he tried. He continues, “This we have done on account of our modern heretics, who cavil whenever concupiscence is censured, as if it involved a censure of marriage. Their object is to praise concupiscence as a natural good, that so they may defend their own baneful dogma, which asserts that those who are born by its means do not contract original sin. Now the blessed Ambrose, bishop of Milan, by whose priestly office I received the washing of regeneration, briefly spoke on this matter, when, expounding the prophet Isaiah, he gathered from him the nativity of Christ in the flesh: “Thus,” says the bishop, “He was both tempted in all points as a man. (Hebrews 4:15) and in the likeness of man He bare all things; but inasmuch as He was born of the Spirit, He kept Himself from sin. For every man is a liar; and there is none without sin but God alone.”

He gives us a window into the Church in his time. The bishop of Milan, Ambrose, was a



priest, and Augustine's mentor. So we see that Augustine's thinking on baptism, or “**the washing of regeneration**”, as he says, was taught to him by Ambrose. Augustine was following obediently in his mentor's steps.

Augustine refers to Ambrose' mention of **Hebrews 4 (KJV):15** For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Every man is a liar as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):4** God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

And all have sinned as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Augustine continues, “It has, therefore, been ever firmly maintained, that it is clear that no man from husband and wife, that is to say, by means of that conjunction of their persons, is free from sin. He who is free from sin is also free from conception of this kind.” Well now, what is it which St. Ambrose has here condemned in the true doctrine of this deliverance?—is it the goodness of marriage, or not rather the worthless opinion of these heretics, although they had not then come upon the stage?”

The opinion of the heretics was, as Augustine states above, that there is no such thing as original sin. This is heresy. The Scriptures are clear that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Augustine continues, “I have thought it worth while to adduce this testimony, because Pelagius mentions Ambrose with such commendation as to say: “The blessed Bishop Ambrose, in whose writings more than anywhere else the Roman faith is clearly stated, has flourished like a beautiful flower among the Latin writers. His fidelity and extremely pure perception of the sense of Scripture no opponent even has ever ventured to impugn.” I hope he may regret having entertained opinions opposed to Ambrose, but not that he has bestowed this praise on that holy man.”

We can agree with Augustine here. He then concludes, “Here, then, you have my book, which, owing to its tedious length and difficult subject, it has been as troublesome for me to compose as for you to read, in those little snatches of time in which you have been able (or at least, as I suppose, have been able) to find yourself at leisure. Although it has been indeed drawn up with considerable labour amidst my ecclesiastical duties, as God has vouchsafed to give me His help, I should hardly have intruded it on your notice, with all your public cares, if I had not been informed by a godly man, who has an intimate knowledge of you, that you take such pleasure in reading as to lie awake by the hour, night after night, spending the precious time in your favourite pursuit.”

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Marriage and Concupiscence, Book II, Chapter 14-15, page 288-289**

Chapter 14 [V.]—Concupiscence Alone, in Marriage, is Not of God.

You see the terms of his question to us: what the devil can find in the sexes to call his own, by reason of which they should be in his power, who are born of parents of whatsoever

kind, unless they be born again in Christ; he asks us, moreover, whether it is the difference in the sexes which we ascribe to the devil, or their union, or their very fruitfulness. We answer, then, nothing of these qualities, inasmuch as the difference of sex belongs to “the vessels” of the parents; while the union of the two pertains to the procreation of children; and their fruitfulness to the blessing pronounced on the marriage institution. But all these things are of God; yet amongst them he was unwilling to name that “lust of the flesh, which is not of the Father, but is of the world;” (1 John 2:16) and “of this world” the devil is said to be “the prince.” (John 14:30) Now, the devil found no carnal concupiscence in the Lord, because the Lord did not come as a man to men by its means. Accordingly, He says Himself: “The prince of this world cometh, and findeth nothing in me” (John 14:30)—nothing, that is, of sin; neither that which is derived from birth, nor that which is added during life. Among all the natural goods of procreation which he mentioned, he was, I repeat, unwilling to name this particular fact of concupiscence, over which even marriage blushes, which glories in all these before mentioned goods. **For why is the especial work of parents withdrawn and hidden even from the eyes of their children, except that it is impossible for them to be occupied in laudable procreation without shameful lust? Because of this it was that even they were ashamed who first covered their nakedness. (Genesis 3:7)** These portions of their person were not suggestive of shame before, but deserved to be commended and praised as the work of God. They put on their covering when they felt their shame, and they felt their shame when, after their own disobedience to their Maker, they felt their members disobedient to themselves. Our quoter of extracts likewise felt ashamed of this concupiscence. For he mentioned the difference of the sexes; he mentioned also their union, and he mentioned their fertility; but this last concomitant of lust he blushed to mention. And no wonder if mere talkers are ashamed of that which we see parents themselves, so interested in their function, blush to think of.

**Commentary:** Augustine is writing against Pelagius. He begins as he says, “You see the terms of his question to us: what the devil can find in the sexes to call his own, by reason of which they should be in his power, who are born of parents of whatsoever kind, unless they be born again in Christ; he asks us, moreover, whether it is the difference in the sexes which we ascribe to the devil, or their union, or their very fruitfulness. We answer, then, nothing of these qualities, inasmuch as the difference of sex belongs to “the vessels” of the parents; while the union of the two pertains to the procreation of children; and their fruitfulness to the blessing pronounced on the marriage institution. But all these things are of God; yet amongst them he was unwilling to name that “lust of the flesh, which is not of the Father, but is of the world;” (1 John 2:16) and “of this world” the devil is said to be “the prince.” (John 14:30)”

He refers to **1 John 2 (KJV):16** For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And to **John 14 (KJV):30** Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

And the devil is named the “prince of the power of the air” in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Augustine continues, “Now, the devil found no carnal concupiscence in the Lord, because the Lord did not come as a man to men by its means. Accordingly, He says Himself:

“The prince of this world cometh, and findeth nothing in me” (John 14:30)—nothing, that is, of sin; neither that which is derived from birth, nor that which is added during life.”

He is correct as we read in **Matthew 1 (KJV):18** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

And in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):21** For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

And he continues, “Among all the natural goods of procreation which he mentioned, he was, I repeat, unwilling to name this particular fact of concupiscence, over which even marriage blushes, which glories in all these before mentioned goods. **For why is the especial work of parents withdrawn and hidden even from the eyes of their children, except that it is impossible for them to be occupied in laudable procreation without shameful lust? Because of this it was that even they were ashamed who first covered their nakedness. (Genesis 3:7)”**

He refers to **Genesis 3 (KJV):7** And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Augustine asks and answers in due course. Augustine does not seem to know the love of marriage. To him, marital love is “**shameful lust**” because it is done in private. But the marriage relationship can be based on love, that is, the love of God. And when love is present, there is intimacy. But parental love and intimacy is not something to be shared with children for their protection. When they are of age, these things can be explained, but not before.

Also, Adam and Eve became aware of good and evil when they sinned. Had they been obedient to God, they would have gained this knowledge another way, that is, by obedience. Sin was already in the universe, and man had to be tested in order that his obedience might be proven.

Augustine concludes, “These portions of their person were not suggestive of shame before, but deserved to be commended and praised as the work of God. They put on their covering when they felt their shame, and they felt their shame when, after their own disobedience to their Maker, they felt their members disobedient to themselves. Our quoter of extracts likewise felt ashamed of this concupiscence. For he mentioned the difference of the sexes; he mentioned also their union, and he mentioned their fertility; but this last concomitant of lust he blushed to mention. And no wonder if mere talkers are ashamed of that which we see parents themselves, so interested in their function, blush to think of.”

Those who are led by the Spirit have control over the flesh, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

We are told to love our wives as Christ loved the Church in **Ephesians 5 (KJV):25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

We can love our spouse with the love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts as in **Romans 5 (KJV):5** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

When we love in this way, our flesh is obedient to the Spirit of God. It is not lust to love our spouse, and be intimate.

Augustine had a lot of emotional guilt because of his past profligacy. He was never able to resolve this, most likely because the Catholic Church already had traditions that hindered his understanding of the freedom in Christ.

Chapter 15.—Man, by Birth, is Placed Under the Dominion of the Devil Through Sin; We Were All One in Adam When He Sinned.

He then proceeds to ask: “Why, then, are they in the devil’s power whom God created?” And he finds an answer to his own question apparently from a phrase of mine. “Because of sin,” says he, “not because of nature.” Then framing his answer in reference to mine, he says: “But as there cannot be offspring without the sexes, so there cannot be sin without the will.” Yes, indeed, such is the truth. **For even as “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so also has death passed through to all men, for in him all have sinned.” (Romans 5:12) By the evil will of that one man all sinned in him, since all were that one man, from whom, therefore, they individually derived original sin. “For you allege,” says he, “that the reason why they are in the devil’s power is because they are born of the union of the two sexes.” I plainly aver that it is by reason of transgression that they are in the devil’s power, and that their participation, moreover, of this transgression is due to the circumstance that they are born of the said union of the sexes, which cannot even accomplish its own honourable function without the incident of shameful lust. This has also, in fact, been said by Ambrose, of most blessed memory, bishop of the church in Milan, when he gives as the reason why Christ’s birth in the flesh was free from all sinful fault, that His conception was not the result of a union of the two sexes; whereas there is not one among human beings conceived in such union who is without sin.** These are his precise words: “On that account, and being man, He was tried by every sort of temptation, and in the likeness of man He bore them all; inasmuch, however, as He was born of the Spirit, He abstained from all sin. For every man is a liar, and none is without sin, but God only. It has accordingly,” adds he, “been constantly observed, that clearly no one who is born of a man and a woman, that is to say, through the union of their bodies, is free from sin; for whoever is free from sin is free also from conception of this kind.” **Well now, will you dare, ye disciples of Pelagius and Cœlestius, to call this man a Manichean? as the heretic Jovinian did, when the holy bishop maintained the permanent virginity of the blessed Mary even after childbearing, in opposition to this man’s impiety.** If, however, you do not dare to call him a Manichean, why do you call us Manicheans when we defend the Catholic faith in the selfsame cause and with the selfsame opinions? But if you will taunt that most faithful man with having entertained Manichean error in this matter, there is no help for it, you must enjoy your taunts as best you may, and so fill up Jovinian’s measure more fully; as for ourselves, we can patiently endure along with such a man of God your taunts and jibes. And yet your heresiarch Pelagius commends Ambrose’s faith and extreme purity in the knowledge of the Scriptures so greatly, as to declare that not even an enemy could venture to find fault with him. Observe, then, to what

length you have gone, and refrain from following any further in the audacious steps of Jovinian. And yet that man, although by his excessive commendation of marriage he put it on a par with holy virginity, never denied the necessity of Christ to save those who are born of marriage even fresh from their mother's womb, and to redeem them from the power of the devil. This, however, you deny; and because we oppose you in defense of those who cannot yet speak for themselves, and in defense of the very foundations of the Catholic faith, you taunt us, with being Manicheans. But let us now see what comes next.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "He then proceeds to ask: "Why, then, are they in the devil's power whom God created?" And he finds an answer to his own question apparently from a phrase of mine. "Because of sin," says he, "not because of nature." Then framing his answer in reference to mine, he says: "But as there cannot be offspring without the sexes, so there cannot be sin without the will." Yes, indeed, such is the truth. **For even as "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so also has death passed through to all men, for in him all have sinned."** (Romans 5:12)"

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

But the Scripture says we were all by nature children of wrath as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Augustine is speaking against Pelagius. Based on Romans 5:12, he continues, **"By the evil will of that one man all sinned in him, since all were that one man, from whom, therefore, they individually derived original sin."**

And in Adam all die as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):21** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

He then quotes Pelagius, as he continues, **"For you allege," says he, "that the reason why they are in the devil's power is because they are born of the union of the two sexes."**

Augustine then responds, **"I plainly aver that it is by reason of transgression that they are in the devil's power, and that their participation, moreover, of this transgression is due to the circumstance that they are born of the said union of the sexes, which cannot even accomplish its own honourable function without the incident of shameful lust."**

Augustine thought that sexual intercourse, even in the marriage of believers, involved **"shameful lust"**.

He continues, **"This has also, in fact, been said by Ambrose, of most blessed memory, bishop of the church in Milan, when he gives as the reason why Christ's birth in the flesh was free from all sinful fault, that His conception was not the result of a union of the two sexes; whereas there is not one among human beings conceived in such union who is without sin."**

But it is the sin nature in our flesh that is passed down from Adam. Marriage is honorable in all, even though conception results in a child who must be born again to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Because married people embrace in love does not mean that it is **"shameful lust"**. There may be things in the lives of the individuals who are married that need to be cleansed. But as long as their union remains in marriage, they do not sin.



Augustine continues, “These are his precise words: “On that account, and being man, He was tried by every sort of temptation, and in the likeness of man He bore them all; inasmuch, however, as He was born of the Spirit, He abstained from all sin. For every man is a liar, and none is without sin, but God only. It has accordingly,” adds he, “been constantly observed, that clearly no one who is born of a man and a woman, that is to say, through the union of their bodies, is free from sin; for whoever is free from sin is free also from conception of this kind.”

He speaks of Ambrose here. He continues, “Well now, will you dare, ye disciples of Pelagius and Cœlestius, to call this man a Manichean? as the heretic Jovinian did, when the holy bishop maintained the permanent virginity of the blessed Mary even after childbearing, in opposition to this man’s impiety.”

So we see that Augustine’s mentor, “the holy bishop” Ambrose, also believed in the “permanent virginity of the blessed Mary even after childbearing”.

Augustine continues, “If, however, you do not dare to call him a Manichean, why do you call us Manicheans when we defend the Catholic faith in the selfsame cause and with the selfsame opinions? But if you will taunt that most faithful man with having entertained Manichean error in this matter, there is no help for it, you must enjoy your taunts as best you may, and so fill up Jovinian’s measure more fully; as for ourselves, we can patiently endure along with such a man of God your taunts and jibes. And yet your heresiarch Pelagius commends Ambrose’s faith and extreme purity in the knowledge of the Scriptures so greatly, as to declare that not even an enemy could venture to find fault with him. Observe, then, to what length you have gone, and refrain from following any further in the audacious steps of Jovinian. And yet that man, although by his excessive commendation of marriage he put it on a par with holy virginity, never denied the necessity of Christ to save those who are born of marriage even fresh from their mother’s womb, and to redeem them from the power of the devil.”

Jovinian never denied original sin apparently. Augustine concludes, “This, however, you deny; and because we oppose you in defense of those who cannot yet speak for themselves, and in defense of the very foundations of the Catholic faith, you taunt us, with being Manicheans. But let us now see what comes next.”

Pelagius and his followers did deny original sin. And “Manichaeism taught an elaborate dualistic cosmology describing the struggle between a good, spiritual world of light, and an evil, material world of darkness. Through an ongoing process that takes place in human history, light is gradually removed from the world of matter and returned to the world of light, whence it came. Its beliefs were based on local Mesopotamian religious movements and Gnosticism.” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manichaeism>

Augustine was a Manichaen before he was saved, and gave it up in the course of his repentance.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Marriage and Concupiscence, Book II, Chapter 37, page 298**

Chapter 37 [XXII.]—If There is No Marriage Without Cohabitation, So There is No Cohabitation Without Shame.

“Show me,” he says, “any bodily marriage without sexual connection.” I do not show

him any bodily marriage without sexual connection; but then, neither does he show me any case of sexual connection which is without shame. In paradise, however, if sin had not preceded, there would not have been, indeed, generation without union of the sexes, but this union would certainly have been without shame; for in the sexual union there would have been a quiet acquiescence of the members, not a lust of the flesh productive of shame. Matrimony, therefore, is a good, in which the human being is born after orderly conception; the fruit, too, of matrimony is good, as being the very human being which is thus born; sin, however, is an evil with which every man is born. Now it was God who made and still makes man; but “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for in him all sinned.” (Romans 5:12)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Show me,” he says, “any bodily marriage without sexual connection.” I do not show him any bodily marriage without sexual connection; but then, neither does he show me any case of sexual connection which is without shame.”

Well, man is not like the animals who procreate in full view of all. Augustine came from a promiscuous lifestyle which he forsook, but he never really resolved all of the issues of his past in this area. So to Augustine, one could not have “sexual connection which is without shame.” But what God has cleansed, we are not to call common as we read in **Acts 10 (KJV):15** And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

He continues, “In paradise, however, if sin had not preceded, there would not have been, indeed, generation without union of the sexes, but this union would certainly have been without shame; for in the sexual union there would have been a quiet acquiescence of the members, not a lust of the flesh productive of shame.”

Lust was all Augustine had ever known in his promiscuity. He continues, “Matrimony, therefore, is a good, in which the human being is born after orderly conception; the fruit, too, of matrimony is good, as being the very human being which is thus born; sin, however, is an evil with which every man is born. Now it was God who made and still makes man; but “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for in him all sinned.” (Romans 5:12)

Augustine refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Augustine is right to uphold the Biblical truth of original sin. But his understanding of marriage needed some help. We feel shame when we have done something wrong, that is, when we have sinned. There is nothing wrong with embracing our spouse in marriage. Marriage is honorable in all.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Marriage and Concupiscence, Book II, Chapter 42, page 299**

Chapter 42.—The Pelagians Try to Get Rid of Original Sin by Their Praise of God’s Works; Marriage, in Its Nature and by Its Institution, is Not the Cause of Sin.

I have an answer ready for all this; but before I give it, I wish the reader carefully to

notice, that the result of the opinions of these persons is, that no Saviour is necessary for infants, whom they deem to be entirely without any sins to be saved from. **This vast perversion of the truth, so hostile to God's great grace, which is given through our Lord Jesus Christ, who "came to seek and to save what was lost," (Luke 19:10) tries to insinuate its way into the hearts of the unintelligent by eulogizing the works of God; that is, by its eulogy of human nature, of human seed, of marriage, of sexual intercourse, of the fruits of matrimony—which are all of them good things.** I will not say that he adds the praise of lust; because he too is ashamed even to name it, so that it is something else, and not it, which he seems to praise. By this method of his, not distinguishing between the evils which have accrued to nature and the goodness of nature's very self, he does not, indeed, show it to be sound (because that is untrue), but he does not permit its diseased condition to be healed. And, therefore, that first proposition of ours, to the effect that the good thing, even the human being, which is born of adultery, does not excuse the sin of adulterous connection, he allows to be true; and this point, which occasions no question to arise between us, he even defends and strengthens (as he well may) by his similitude of the thief who sows the seed which he stole, and out of which there arises a really good harvest. Our other proposition, however, that "the good of marriage cannot be blamed for the original sin which is derived from it," he will not admit to be true; if, indeed, he assented to it, he would not be a Pelagian heretic, but a Catholic Christian. "Certainly," says he, "if evil arises from marriage, it may be blamed, nay, cannot be excused; and you place its work and fruit under the devil's power, because everything which is the cause of evil is itself without good." And in addition to this, he contrived other arguments to show that good could not possibly be the cause of evil; and from this he drew the inference, that marriage, which is a good, is not the cause of evil; and that consequently from it no man could be born in a sinful state, and having need of a Saviour: just as if we said that marriage is the cause of sin, though it is true that the human being which is born in wedlock is not born without sin. **Marriage was instituted not for the purpose of sinning, but of producing children. Accordingly the Lord's blessing on the married state ran thus: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." (Genesis 1:28) The sin, however, which is derived to children from marriage does not belong to marriage, but to the evil which accrues to the human agents, from whose union marriage comes into being. The truth is, both the evil of shameful lust can exist without marriage, and marriage might have been without it. It appertains, however, to the condition of the body (not of that life, but) of this death, that marriage cannot exist without it though it may exist without marriage. Of course that lust of the flesh which causes shame has existence out of the married state, whenever it urges men to the commission of adultery, chambering and uncleanness, so utterly hostile to the purity of marriage; or again, when it does not commit any of these things, because the human agent gives no permission or assent to their commission, but still rises and is set in motion and creates disturbance, and (especially in dreams) effects the likeness of its own veritable work, and reaches the end of its own emotion. Well, now, this is an evil which is not even in the married state actually an evil of marriage; but it has this apparatus all ready in the body of this death, even against its own will, which is indispensable no doubt for the accomplishment of that which it does will. The evil in question, therefore, does not accrue to marriage from its own institution, which was blessed; but entirely from the circumstance that sin entered into the world by one man, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for in him all sinned. (Romans 5:12)**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “I have an answer ready for all this; but before I give it, I wish the reader carefully to notice, that the result of the opinions of these persons is, that no Saviour is necessary for infants, whom they deem to be entirely without any sins to be saved from.”

Augustine is referring to the Pelagians. He continues, “**This vast perversion of the truth, so hostile to God’s great grace, which is given through our Lord Jesus Christ, who “came to seek and to save what was lost,” (Luke 19:10) tries to insinuate its way into the hearts of the unintelligent by eulogizing the works of God; that is, by its eulogy of human nature, of human seed, of marriage, of sexual intercourse, of the fruits of matrimony—which are all of them good things.**”

He refers to **Luke 19 (KJV):10** For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

By “eulogizing”, he is saying that the Pelagians are praising these things. He then continues, “I will not say that he adds the praise of lust; because he too is ashamed even to name it, so that it is something else, and not it, which he seems to praise. By this method of his, not distinguishing between the evils which have accrued to nature and the goodness of nature’s very self, he does not, indeed, show it to be sound (because that is untrue), but he does not permit its diseased condition to be healed.”

That is, Pelagius by his false teaching, does not preach the true Gospel so that people may be saved from their “diseased condition”, by which he means original sin.

He continues, “And, therefore, that first proposition of ours, to the effect that the good thing, even the human being, which is born of adultery, does not excuse the sin of adulterous connection, he allows to be true; and this point, which occasions no question to arise between us, he even defends and strengthens (as he well may) by his similitude of the thief who sows the seed which he stole, and out of which there arises a really good harvest.”

Augustine agrees with Pelagius that whatever is born of adultery is still a human being, and a “good thing”.

He continues, “Our other proposition, however, that “the good of marriage cannot be blamed for the original sin which is derived from it,” he will not admit to be true; if, indeed, he assented to it, he would not be a Pelagian heretic, but a Catholic Christian.”

Pelagius did not believe in “original sin”, so he would “not admit to be true” this “proposition” of Augustine.

Augustine continues, ““Certainly,” says he, “if evil arises from marriage, it may be blamed, nay, cannot be excused; and you place its work and fruit under the devil’s power, because everything which is the cause of evil is itself without good.” And in addition to this, he contrived other arguments to show that good could not possibly be the cause of evil; and from this he drew the inference, that marriage, which is a good, is not the cause of evil; and that consequently from it no man could be born in a sinful state, and having need of a Saviour: just as if we said that marriage is the cause of sin, though it is true that the human being which is born in wedlock is not born without sin.”

Pelagius did not believe in “original sin”, so he did not believe that infants needed a Savior.

Augustine then continues, “**Marriage was instituted not for the purpose of sinning, but of producing children. Accordingly the Lord’s blessing on the married state ran thus: “Be fruitful,**

and multiply, and replenish the earth.” (Genesis 1:28)”

Augustine bases his assertion that the purpose of marriage is for “producing children” on **Genesis 1 (KJV):28** And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

But the reason that God made a woman for man was because it was not good for him to be alone, as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):18** And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

Augustine then concludes, “The sin, however, which is derived to children from marriage does not belong to marriage, but to the evil which accrues to the human agents, from whose union marriage comes into being.”

He assigns the passing of the Adamic sin nature to children to the “the human agents, from whose union marriage comes into being.”

He then explains, “The truth is, both the evil of shameful lust can exist without marriage, and marriage might have been without it. It appertains, however, to the condition of the body (not of that life, but) of this death, that marriage cannot exist without it though it may exist without marriage. Of course that lust of the flesh which causes shame has existence out of the married state, whenever it urges men to the commission of adultery, chambering and uncleanness, so utterly hostile to the purity of marriage;”

So, according to Augustine, “marriage cannot exist without it”, that is, “the lust of the flesh which causes shame”, and “the lust of the flesh which cause shame” also “may exist without marriage”.

He continues, “or again, when it does not commit any of these things, because the human agent gives no permission or assent to their commission, but still rises and is set in motion and creates disturbance, and (especially in dreams) effects the likeness of its own veritable work, and reaches the end of its own emotion.”

He never knew what confession and forgiveness could do for himself in this area of his life. He felt so guilty for his past relationships with women that he was never able to resolve the guilt associated with it. Those who have been hooked by pornography, or have been promiscuous must, when they come to the Lord, go through a process of confession and forgiveness in order to be free of the sins of their past. When we accept Christ, we are given a standing before the Lord as righteous, but our character may need a lot of work. The change in our character comes as we process the feelings of the past, and confess and forsake the sin. This is a progressive sanctification in our souls that occurs as we grow in grace and knowledge.

Augustine then continues, “Well, now, this is an evil which is not even in the married state actually an evil of marriage; but it has this apparatus all ready in the body of this death, even against its own will, which is indispensable no doubt for the accomplishment of that which it does will. The evil in question, therefore, does not accrue to marriage from its own institution, which was blessed; but entirely from the circumstance that sin entered into the world by one man, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for in him all sinned. (Romans 5:12)”

Again he refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

But he oversimplifies. The problem for him is that he thought forgiveness occurred at baptism, and therefore all of the sins of the past were gone. His perception was that, after



baptism, there should be nothing left to deal with as far as sin is concerned. What he didn't realize is that there is complete forgiveness when we accept Christ, but the change in our character does not happen instantaneously. We grow in grace and knowledge. As we do this, we become aware of sin in our life. As we confess this sin, we are cleansed and become free. As we then receive more light from the knowledge of His word, we will find more to confess. In this way we are changed, and go from glory to glory as we read in **2 Corinthians 3 (KJV):18** But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

This is a process of a progressive sanctification that goes on in our life until we see Him, and are made like Him, when we are glorified.

It is after we are born again that we are to present ourselves a living sacrifice as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. **2** And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The word "transformed" in the Greek is **μεταμορφώω** (pronounced me-tä-mor-fo'-ō), which is used here in the present, passive, imperative tense.

Vine says it means, "to change into another form" (*meta*, implying change, and *morphe*, "form:" see FORM, No. 1), is used in the Passive Voice... of believers, Rom 12:2, "be ye transformed," the obligation being to undergo a complete change which, under the power of God, will find expression in character and conduct; *morphe* lays stress on the inward change, *schema* (see the preceding verb in that verse, *suschematizo*) lays stress on the outward change (see FASHION, No. 3, FORM, No. 2); the present continuous tenses indicate a process; 2 Corinthians 3:18 describes believers as being "transformed (RV) into the same image" (i.e., of Christ in all His moral excellencies), the change being effected by the Holy Spirit." **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. IV, page 148.**

The word "conformed" in the Greek is **συσχηματίζω** (pronounced sü-skhā-mä-tē'-zō, *suschematizo*). Vine says it means, "to fashion or shape one thing like another," is translated "conformed" in Rom 12:2, AV; RV, "fashioned;" **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. IV, page 148.**

So we were conformed or fashioned to the world. But now we are being transformed, or changed into another form, relating to our character, or how we live our lives. This is a process, a progression. As we walk in the light we get more light.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Marriage and Concupiscence, Book II, Chapters 54-55, page 305-306**

Chapter 54 [XXXII.]—How Marriage is Now Different Since the Existence of Sin.

God forbid that we should say, what this man pretends we say, "Such marriages as are now enacted are the invention of the devil." Why, they are absolutely the same marriages as God made at the very first. For this blessing of His, which He appointed for the procreation of mankind, He has not taken away even from men under condemnation, any more than He has deprived them of their senses and bodily limbs, which are no doubt His gifts, although they are

condemned to die by an already incurred retribution. This, I say, is the marriage whereof it was said (only excepting the great sacrament of Christ and the Church, which the institution prefigured): “For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh.” (Matthew 19:5) **For this, no doubt, was said before sin; and if no one had sinned, it might have been done without shameful lust. And now, although it is not done without that, in the body of this death, there is that nevertheless which does not cease to be done so that a man may cleave to his wife, and they twain be one flesh.** When, therefore, it is alleged that marriage is now one thing, but might have been another had no one sinned, this is not predicated of its nature, but of a certain quality which has undergone a change for the worse. Just as a man is said to be different, though he is actually the same individual, when he has changed his manner of life either for the better or the worse; for as a righteous man he is one thing, and as a sinful man another, though the man himself be really the same individual. In like manner, marriage without shameful lust is one thing, and marriage with shameful lust is another. **When, however, a woman is lawfully united to her husband in accordance with the true constitution of wedlock, and fidelity to what is due to the flesh is kept free from the sin of adultery, and so children are lawfully begotten, it is actually the very same marriage which God instituted at first, although by his primeval inducement to sin, the devil inflicted a heavy wound, not, indeed, on marriage itself, but on man and woman by whom marriage is made, by his prevailing on them to disobey God,—a sin which is requited in the course of the divine judgment by the reciprocal disobedience of man’s own members. United in this matrimonial state, although they were ashamed of their nakedness, still they were not by any means able altogether to lose the blessedness of marriage which God appointed.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “God forbid that we should say, what this man pretends we say, “Such marriages as are now enacted are the invention of the devil.” Why, they are absolutely the same marriages as God made at the very first. For this blessing of His, which He appointed for the procreation of mankind, He has not taken away even from men under condemnation, any more than He has deprived them of their senses and bodily limbs, which are no doubt His gifts, although they are condemned to die by an already incurred retribution.”

We could also add that God made marriage so that man could have a help meet for him as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):18** And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

Augustine continues, “This, I say, is the marriage whereof it was said (only excepting the great sacrament of Christ and the Church, which the institution prefigured): “For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh.” (Matthew 19:5)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 19 (KJV):3** The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? 4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

He then says, **“For this, no doubt, was said before sin; and if no one had sinned, it might have been done without shameful lust. And now, although it is not done without that, in the**

body of this death, there is that nevertheless which does not cease to be done so that a man may cleave to his wife, and they twain be one flesh.”

He will not allow for the man and his wife to embrace without “shameful lust”, even between believers. But the Scripture describes the embrace between a man and a woman as a “natural use”, as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV):26** For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

Augustine did not understand this. He then continues, “When, therefore, it is alleged that marriage is now one thing, but might have been another had no one sinned, this is not predicated of its nature, but of a certain quality which has undergone a change for the worse. Just as a man is said to be different, though he is actually the same individual, when he has changed his manner of life either for the better or the worse; for as a righteous man he is one thing, and as a sinful man another, though the man himself be really the same individual. In like manner, marriage without shameful lust is one thing, and marriage with shameful lust is another. When, however, a woman is lawfully united to her husband in accordance with the true constitution of wedlock, and fidelity to what is due to the flesh is kept free from the sin of adultery, and so children are lawfully begotten, it is actually the very same marriage which God instituted at first, although by his primeval inducement to sin, the devil inflicted a heavy wound, not, indeed, on marriage itself, but on man and woman by whom marriage is made, by his prevailing on them to disobey God,—a sin which is requited in the course of the divine judgment by the reciprocal disobedience of man’s own members. United in this matrimonial state, although they were ashamed of their nakedness, still they were not by any means able altogether to lose the blessedness of marriage which God appointed.”

Man’s own members do not disobey if the man is being led by the Spirit, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):2** For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

There is no sin in being “one flesh” with one’s spouse. We are to love our spouse with God’s love.

Chapter 55 [XXXIII.]—Lust is a Disease; The Word “Passion” In the Ecclesiastical Sense.

He then passes on from those who are united in marriage to those who are born of it. It is in relation to these that we have to encounter the most laborious discussions with the new heretics in connection with our subject. Impelled by some hidden instinct from God, he makes avowals which go far to untie the whole knot. For in his desire to raise greater odium against us, because we had said that infants are born in sin even of lawful wedlock, he makes the following observation: “You assert that they, indeed, who have not been ever born might possibly have been good; those, however, who have peopled the world, and for whom Christ died, you decide to be the work of the devil, born in a disordered state, and guilty from the beginning.

Therefore”, he continues, “I have shown that you are doing nothing else than denying that God is the Creator of the men who actually exist.” **I beg to say, that I declare none but God to be the Creator of all men, however true it be that all are born in sin, and must perish unless born again.** It was, indeed, the sinful corruption which had been sown in them by the devil’s persuasion that became the means of their being born in sin; not the created nature of which men are composed. **Shameful lust, however, could not excite our members, except at our own will, if it were not a disease. Nor would even the lawful and honourable cohabiting of husband and wife raise a blush, with avoidance of any eye and desire of secrecy, if there were not a diseased condition about it. Moreover, the apostle would not prohibit the possession of wives in this disease, did not disease exist in it.** The phrase in the Greek text, ἐν πάθει ἐπιθυμίας, is by some rendered in Latin, *in morbo desiderii* vel *concupiscentiæ*, in the disease of desire or of concupiscence; by others, however, *in passione concupiscentiæ*, in the passion of concupiscence; or however it is found otherwise in different copies: at any rate, the Latin equivalent *passio* (passion), especially in the ecclesiastical use, is usually understood as a term of censure.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “He then passes on from those who are united in marriage to those who are born of it. It is in relation to these that we have to encounter the most laborious discussions with the new heretics in connection with our subject. Impelled by some hidden instinct from God, he makes avowals which go far to untie the whole knot. **For in his desire to raise greater odium against us, because we had said that infants are born in sin even of lawful wedlock,** he makes the following observation: “You assert that they, indeed, who have not been ever born might possibly have been good; those, however, who have peopled the world, and for whom Christ died, you decide to be the work of the devil, born in a disordered state, and guilty from the beginning. Therefore”, he continues, “I have shown that you are doing nothing else than denying that God is the Creator of the men who actually exist.””

Augustine denies this, as he continues, **“I beg to say, that I declare none but God to be the Creator of all men, however true it be that all are born in sin, and must perish unless born again.** It was, indeed, the sinful corruption which had been sown in them by the devil’s persuasion that became the means of their being born in sin; not the created nature of which men are composed.”

And the Scripture confirms this as we read in **Psalms 51 (KJV):5** Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Augustine is correct when he says, **“that infants are born in sin even of lawful wedlock”.**

He continues, **“Shameful lust, however, could not excite our members, except at our own will, if it were not a disease.”**

But the old Adamic sin nature in our flesh is not a disease but a nature which we inherited from Adam. And Paul teaches us in **Galatians 5 (KJV):16** This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. 18 But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

So in our marriage, if we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Or to say it another way, if we walk in the Spirit, we will love our husbands or wives as God loves them. It is natural for husband and wife to come together. It is not lust as Augustine calls it. For him, that was all he knew. There was much in his past that went unresolved, and the Catholic

Church in his time did not facilitate any sort of recovery from damaged emotions. Instead, they required the clergy to be celibate when the Scriptures specifically require a bishop, that is, an elder, or overseer, to be the husband of one wife as in **1 Timothy 3 (KJV):2** A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

And in **Titus 1 (KJV):6** For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: 6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

Augustine continues, “Nor would even the lawful and honourable cohabiting of husband and wife raise a blush, with avoidance of any eye and desire of secrecy, if there were not a diseased condition about it.”

Sin was already in the universe because of the devil. The tree of knowledge of good and evil would have given men and women that knowledge if they would have been obedient. They were tested by God to know if they would be obedient, because sin was already in the universe by Satan. Now we have the knowledge of good and evil, and we cover ourselves, which we will also do in heaven as we read in **Revelation 7 (KJV):9** After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with whiterobes, and palms in their hands;

And in **Revelation 7 (KJV):13** And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? 14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Augustine concludes, “Moreover, the apostle would not prohibit the possession of wives in this disease, did not disease exist in it.”

The Scripture only prohibits the marriage to an unbeliever as we read in **2 Corinthians 6 (KJV):14** Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? 15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? 16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Instruction about marriage to unbelievers is also given by Paul in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):12** But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. 16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or



how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.  
**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings**  
**Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, Book I, Chapters 31-33, page 386-387**

Chapter 31.—Thirdly, of Conjugal Intercourse.

“We say,” says he, “that the sexual impulse—that is, that the virility itself, without which there can be no intercourse—is ordained by God.” **To this I reply that the sexual impulse, and, to make use of his word, virility, without which there can be no intercourse, was so appointed by God that there was in it nothing to be ashamed of. For it was not fit that His creature should blush at the work of his Creator; but by a just punishment the disobedience of the members was the retribution to the disobedience of the first man, for which disobedience they blushed when they covered with fig-leaves those shameful parts which previously were not shameful.**

**Commentary:** In summary, even the Son of Man was wearing a robe down to the foot in John’s vision in heaven in **Revelation 1 (KJV):13** And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

And all of the righteous who had been beheaded for the sake of the Gospel are wearing white robes in heaven as we read in **Revelation 6 (KJV):9** And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

They have now reached perfection, and yet they wear white robes. Could it not be that in our standing as righteous ones before God, and having the Spirit of God in us to lead us, we are able to love our wives without the lust of the flesh when we walk in the Spirit? Augustine never went there because he was so bound to the oaths of the clergy in his time to be celibate. He only spoke from his past experiences, and not from the renewal he received when he was born again.

Chapter 32 [XVI.]—The Aprons Which Adam and Eve Wore.

For they did not use for themselves tunics to cover their whole bodies after their sin, but aprons, (Genesis 3:7) which some of the less careful of our translators have translated as “coverings.” And this indeed is true; but “covering” is a general name, by which may be understood every kind of clothing and veil. And ambiguity ought to be avoided, so that, as the Greek called them **περιζώματα** (pronounce peri-dzom-ata), by which only the shameful parts of the body are covered, so also the Latin should either use the Greek word itself, because now custom has come to use it instead of the Latin, or, as some do, use the word aprons, or, as others have better named them, wrestling aprons. Because this name is taken from that ancient Roman custom whereby the youth covered their shameful parts when they were exercised naked in the

field; whence even at this day they are called *campestrati*, since they cover those members with the girdle. Although, if those members by which sin was committed were to be covered after the sin, men ought not indeed to have been clothed in tunics, but to have covered their hand and mouth, because they sinned by taking and eating. What, then, is the meaning, when the prohibited food was taken, and the transgression of the precept had been committed, of the look turned towards those members? What unknown novelty is felt there, and compels itself to be noticed? And this is signified by the opening of the eyes. For their eyes were not closed, either when Adam gave names to the cattle and birds, or when Eve saw the trees to be beautiful and good; but they were made open—that is, attentive—to consider; as it is written of Agar, the handmaid of Sarah, that she opened her eyes and saw a well, (Genesis 21:19) although she certainly had not had them closed before. As, therefore, they were so suddenly ashamed of their nakedness, which they were daily in the habit of looking upon and were not confused, that they could now no longer bear those members naked, but immediately took care to cover them; did not they—he in the open, she in the hidden impulse—perceive those members to be disobedient to the choice of their will, which certainly they ought to have ruled like the rest by their voluntary command? And this they deservedly suffered, because they themselves also were not obedient to their Lord. **Therefore they blushed that they in such wise had not manifested service to their Creator, that they should deserve to lose dominion over those members by which children were to be procreated.**

**Commentary:** In summary, let us read in Genesis the account of man's sin to see what actually happened there.

Now the Lord had planted trees in the Garden of Eden as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):8** And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

The Lord put the man in the garden to dress it, and keep it in **Genesis 2 (KJV):15** And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Man was not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that he ate thereof he would surely die.

Now the opening of the eyes is mentioned in **Genesis 3 (KJV):1** Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

The serpent, the devil, lied to Adam and Eve, and deceived them, and so they ate of the tree as we continue in **Genesis 3 (KJV):6** And when the woman saw that the tree was good for

food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. 7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Their eyes were opened because they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is why they knew they were naked. Before this time, they were in a state of innocence. Since sin was already in the universe, they had to be tested in regards to their obedience. They had no knowledge of good and evil before they disobeyed God. They would have gained this knowledge if they would have continued in obedience to God's command. The knowledge of good and evil made them know that they were naked. Had they gained this knowledge through obedience, they would still have covered themselves, but without feeling the shame of sin.

He concludes above, **“Therefore they blushed that they in such wise had not manifested service to their Creator, that they should deserve to lose dominion over those members by which children were to be procreated.”**

Those who are saved still have **“dominion over those members by which children were to be procreated.”** Loving our wife or husband is not lustful. But if one or both were promiscuous before they were married, each will have to deal with their sin and confess it to God. This will bring about a cleansing in their souls by which God will bless their marriage.

The sexual relationship between man and woman is something that God created. Augustine only knew blushing and the involuntary movement of his members in his relationships before Christ. He was pressed to go into the clergy soon after he came to faith and was baptized, and he spoke of marriage as if his past experiences were the reality for believers. Evidently, he was never able to resolve the guilt of his past life.

### Chapter 33.—The Shame of Nakedness.

This kind of shame—this necessity of blushing—is certainly born with every man, and in some measure is commanded by the very laws of nature; so that, in this matter, even virtuous married people are ashamed. Nor can any one go to such an extreme of evil and disgrace, as, because he knows God to be the author of nature and the ordainer of marriage, to have intercourse even with his wife in any one's sight, or not to blush at those impulses and seek secrecy, where he can shun the sight not only of strangers, but even of all his own relatives. Therefore let human nature be permitted to acknowledge the evil that happens to it by its own fault, lest it should be compelled either not to blush at its own impulses, which is most shameless, or else to blush at the work of its Creator, which is most ungrateful. Of this evil, nevertheless, virtuous marriage makes good use for the sake of the benefit of the begetting of children. **But to consent to lust for the sake of carnal pleasure alone is sin, although it may be conceded to married people with permission.**

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine did not understand that the knowledge of good and evil was gained by sin, and not by obedience. The knowledge of good and evil made Adam and Eve to know that they were naked by their sin. Had they gained this knowledge through obedience, they would still have covered themselves, but without feeling the shame of sin.

He concludes, “**But to consent to lust for the sake of carnal pleasure alone is sin, although it may be conceded to married people with permission.**”

Does Augustine not realize what he just wrote? He just said it is okay for married people to sin. He calls it a venial sin, that is a permissible sin, which is not a damnable or mortal sin. To consent to lust is sin. But in marriage, it is not lust to desire intimacy with one’s spouse. That is, after all, what it is to be one flesh. The pleasure of intimacy is part of a healthy marriage.

Augustine never knew of the healthy relationship in a valid marriage where both are committed to walk with God in the Spirit, without shame. He associated the pleasure of marriage with carnal lust because that was all he knew in his experience. But when we accept Christ, God has made all things new as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Now Jesus spoke as in **Matthew 5 (KJV):28** But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

There is a warfare of the mind as we read in **2 Corinthians 10 (KJV):3** For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

We are empowered to do this by the new divine nature in our spirit, and the strength of the indwelling Holy Spirit as we read in **Ephesians 3 (KJV):16** That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God. 20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, 21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

And to be spiritually minded is life and peace as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

When we walk in the Spirit, and we are spiritually minded, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh, but we will love our spouse with God’s love. Marriage is not just for procreation, but so that we will not be alone. And marriage is honorable in all.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine  
Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, Chapters XV-XVI, paragraphs 41-46, page 18-20**

41. Therefore, if I were to ask any good Christian who has a wife, and even though he may still be having children by her, whether he would like to have his wife in that kingdom; mindful in any case of the promises of God, and of that life where this incorruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality: (Luke 14:26) though at present hesitating from the greatness, or at least from a certain degree of love, he would reply with execration that he is strongly averse to it. Were I to ask him again, whether he would like his wife to live with him there, after the resurrection, when she had undergone that angelic change which is promised to the saints, he would reply that he desired this as strongly as he reprobated the other. Thus a good Christian is found in one and the same woman to love the creature of God, whom he desires to be transformed and renewed; but to hate the corruptible and mortal conjugal connection and sexual intercourse: i.e. to love in her what is characteristic of a human being, to hate what belongs to her as a wife. So also he loves his enemy, not in as far as he is an enemy, but in as far as he is a man; so that he wishes the same prosperity to come to him as to himself, viz. that he may reach the kingdom of heaven rectified and renewed. This is to be understood both of father and mother and the other ties of blood, that we hate in them what has fallen to the lot of the human race in being born and dying, but that we love what can be carried along with us to those realms where no one says, My Father; but all say to the one God, "Our Father:" and no one says, My mother; but all say to that other Jerusalem, Our mother: and no one says, My brother; but each says respecting every other, Our brother. But in fact there will be a marriage on our part as of one spouse (when we have been brought together into unity), with Him who hath delivered us from the pollution of this world by the shedding of His own blood. It is necessary, therefore, that the disciple of Christ should hate these things which pass away, in those whom he desires along with himself to reach those things which shall for ever remain; and that he should the more hate these things in them, the more he loves themselves.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "Therefore, if I were to ask any good Christian who has a wife, and even though he may still be having children by her, whether he would like to have his wife in that kingdom; mindful in any case of the promises of God, and of that life where this incorruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality: (1 Corinthians 15:52-54) though at present hesitating from the greatness, or at least from a certain degree of love, he would reply with execration that he is strongly averse to it."

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):** 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

And the word "execration" means: the act of cursing or denouncing; also : the curse so uttered. (**Merriam Webster**)

So Augustine is saying that "any good Christian who has a wife" would definitely not "like to have his wife in that kingdom".

He continues, "Were I to ask him again, whether he would like his wife to live with him there, after the resurrection, when she had undergone that angelic change which is promised to



the saints, he would reply that he desired this as strongly as he reprobated the other. Thus a good Christian is found in one and the same woman to love the creature of God, whom he desires to be transformed and renewed; but to hate the corruptible and mortal conjugal connection and sexual intercourse: i.e. to love in her what is characteristic of a human being, to hate what belongs to her as a wife.”

Augustine did not understand the intimacy that God has designed for marriage, which includes the “conjugal connection and sexual intercourse”. It will pass away when we are resurrected and are like the angels in heaven as we read in **Matthew 22 (KJV):30** For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

But there is nothing mortal or corruptible about the intimacy of marriage now.

Augustine continues, “So also he loves his enemy, not in as far as he is an enemy, but in as far as he is a man; so that he wishes the same prosperity to come to him as to himself, viz. that he may reach the kingdom of heaven rectified and renewed. This is to be understood both of father and mother and the other ties of blood, that we hate in them what has fallen to the lot of the human race in being born and dying, but that we love what can be carried along with us to those realms where no one says, My Father; but all say to the one God, “Our Father:” and no one says, My mother; but all say to that other Jerusalem, Our mother:”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):9** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

And to **Galatians 4 (KJV):26** But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

He continues, “and no one says, My brother; but each says respecting every other, Our brother. But in fact there will be a marriage on our part as of one spouse (when we have been brought together into unity), with Him who hath delivered us from the pollution of this world by the shedding of His own blood.”

He refers to **Revelation 19 (KJV):7** Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

This refers to the Church which has been raptured, and is in heaven during the tribulation.

He concludes, “It is necessary, therefore, that the disciple of Christ should hate these things which pass away, in those whom he desires along with himself to reach those things which shall for ever remain; and that he should the more hate these things in them, the more he loves themselves.”

So Augustine would have us to hate the “conjugal connection and sexual intercourse” in our marriages because it is to him “corruptible and mortal”. Augustine was never able to be totally free from his past, though he was a son of God by faith in Jesus Christ. He continues in the next paragraph.

42. A Christian may therefore live in concord with his wife, whether with her providing for a fleshly craving, a thing which the apostle speaks by permission, not by commandment; or providing for the procreation of children, which may be at present in some degree praiseworthy;

or providing for a brotherly and sisterly fellowship, without any corporeal connection, having his wife as though he had her not, as is most excellent and sublime in the marriage of Christians: yet so that in her he hates the name of temporal relationship, and loves the hope of everlasting blessedness. For we hate, without doubt, that respecting which we wish at least, that at some time hereafter it should not exist; as, for instance, this same life of ours in the present world, which if we were not to hate as being temporal, we would not long for the future life, which is not conditioned by time. For as a substitute for this life the soul is put, respecting which it is said in that passage, “If a man hate not his own soul (Luke 14:26) also, he cannot be my disciple.” For that corruptible meat is necessary for this life, of which the Lord Himself says, “Is not the soul (Matthew 6:25) more than meat?” i.e. this life to which meat is necessary. And when He says that He would lay down His soul (John 10:15) for His sheep, He undoubtedly means this life, as He is declaring that He is going to die for us.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “A Christian may therefore live in concord with his wife, whether with her providing for a fleshly craving, a thing which the apostle speaks by permission, not by commandment; or providing for the procreation of children, which may be at present in some degree praiseworthy; or providing for a brotherly and sisterly fellowship, without any corporeal connection, having his wife as though he had her not, as is most excellent and sublime in the marriage of Christians: yet so that in her he hates the name of temporal relationship, and loves the hope of everlasting blessedness.”

He first refers in context to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):3** Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. 6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

Paul is not commanding people to marry, but is giving permission to marry without sin. He would rather that everyone remain single, as he was at the time. But Paul does not provide for any third option as Augustine asserts when he says, “or providing for a brotherly and sisterly fellowship, without any corporeal connection, having his wife as though he had her not, as is most excellent and sublime in the marriage of Christians.” Paul says to render due benevolence to your spouse, and not to defraud them of coming together except with consent for a time for fasting and prayer. But then he says to “come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency”.

To Augustine, all sexual intercourse was the product of the lust of the flesh, even in a Christian marriage. Apparently he never read **Proverbs 5 (KJV):18** Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. 19 Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. 20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger?

Augustine continues, “For we hate, without doubt, that respecting which we wish at least, that at some time hereafter it should not exist; as, for instance, this same life of ours in the

present world, which if we were not to hate as being temporal, we would not long for the future life, which is not conditioned by time. For as a substitute for this life the soul is put, respecting which it is said in that passage, “If a man hate not his own soul (Luke 14:26) also, he cannot be my disciple.”

He refers to **Luke 14 (KJV):26** If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

The word “life” in the Greek is **ψυχή** (pronounced psü-khā'), and means soul. What the Lord Jesus is saying is that God must come first in our lives.

Augustine continues, “For that corruptible meat is necessary for this life, of which the Lord Himself says, “Is not the soul (Matthew 6:25) more than meat?” i.e. this life to which meat is necessary.”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):25** Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

He continues, “And when He says that He would lay down His soul (John 10:15) for His sheep, He undoubtedly means this life, as He is declaring that He is going to die for us.”

He refers to **John 10 (KJV):15** As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

The word “life” in the Greek here is also **ψυχή** (pronounced psü-khā'), and means soul.

We are also commanded to love our neighbor as ourselves as Jesus taught a lawyer in **Matthew 22 (KJV):35** Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

## Chapter XVI.

43. Here there arises a second question, when the Lord allows a wife to be put away for the cause of fornication, in what latitude of meaning fornication is to be understood in this passage,—whether in the sense understood by all, viz. that we are to understand that fornication to be meant which is committed in acts of uncleanness; or whether, in accordance with the usage of Scripture in speaking of fornication (as has been mentioned above), as meaning all unlawful corruption, such as idolatry or covetousness, and therefore, of course, every transgression of the law on account of the unlawful lust [involved in it]. (See note below) But let us consult the apostle, that we may not say rashly. “And unto the married I command,” says he, “yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband.” For it may happen that she departs for that cause for which the Lord gives permission to do so. Or, if a woman is at liberty to put away her husband for other causes besides that of fornication, and the husband is not at liberty, what answer shall we give respecting this statement which he has made afterwards, “And let not the husband put away his wife”? Wherefore did he not add, saving for the cause of fornication, which the Lord permits, unless because he wishes a similar rule to be understood, that if he shall put away his wife (which he is permitted to do for the cause of fornication), he is to remain

without a wife, or be reconciled to his wife? For it would not be a bad thing for a husband to be reconciled to such a woman as that to whom, when nobody had dared to stone her, the Lord said, “Go, and sin no more.” (John 8:11) And for this reason also, because He who says, It is not lawful to put away one’s wife saving for the cause of fornication, forces him to retain his wife, if there should be no cause of fornication: but if there should be, He does not force him to put her away, but permits him, just as when it is said, Let it not be lawful for a woman to marry another, unless her husband be dead; if she shall marry before the death of her husband, she is guilty; if she shall not marry after the death of her husband, she is not guilty, for she is not commanded to marry, but merely permitted. If, therefore, there is a like rule in the said law of marriage between man and woman, to such an extent that not merely of the woman has the same apostle said, “The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband;” but he has not been silent respecting him, saying, “And likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife;”—if, then, the rule is similar, there is no necessity for understanding that it is lawful for a woman to put away her husband, saving for the cause of fornication, as is the case also with the husband.

**Note:** Augustin expresses himself (Retract. I. xix. 6) as having misgivings about his own explanation of this matter here. He advises readers to go to his other writings on the subject of marriage and divorce, or to the works of other writers. He says all sin is not fornication (*omne peccatum fornicatio non est*); and to determine which sins are fornication, and when a wife may be dismissed, is a most broad (*latebrosissima*) question. He calls the question a most difficult (*difficillimam*) one, and says, “But verily I feel that I have not come to the perfect conclusion of this matter (*imo non me pervenisse ad hujus rei perfectionem sentio*.” Retract. ii. 57). Some of his treatises on the marriage relation: *De Bono Conjugali*; *De Conjugiis Adulterinis*; *De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia*.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Here there arises a second question, when the Lord allows a wife to be put away for the cause of fornication, in what latitude of meaning fornication is to be understood in this passage,—whether in the sense understood by all, viz. that we are to understand that fornication to be meant which is committed in acts of uncleanness; or whether, in accordance with the usage of Scripture in speaking of fornication (as has been mentioned above), as meaning all unlawful corruption, such as idolatry or covetousness, and therefore, of course, every transgression of the law on account of the unlawful lust [involved in it].” (See note below)”

Augustine does not seem to understand the root meaning of the word “fornication”.

We read in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):** 1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

The word “fornication” in verse 2 in the Greek is **πορνεία** (pronounced *por-nā'-ä*), and means “harlotry (including adultery and incest); figuratively, idolatry:—fornication.”

**Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4202.**

This Greek word is derived from the Greek word **πορνεύω** (pronounced *or-nyü'-ō*), and means “to act the harlot, i.e. (literally) indulge unlawful lust (of either sex), or (figuratively) practise idolatry:—commit (fornication).” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4203.**

In 1 Corinthians 7:1-2, by the context we understand it to mean any unlawful sexual intercourse between a man and a woman who are not married to the one they are having sexual relations with. It does not relate to “acts of uncleanness”, such as touching a dead animal, or any “unlawful corruption, such as idolatry or covetousness, and therefore, of course, every transgression of the law on account of the unlawful lust”. Paul is speaking specifically of sexual intercourse between a man or a woman to whom they are not married.

In the Old Testament it also referred to as the worship of other gods, other than the Lord God, who made the heavens and the earth, as in **2 Chronicles 21 (KJV):11** Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto. 12 And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, 13 But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself:

The word “whoredoms” in Hebrew is **זָנָה** (pronounced zä·nä'), and means “a primitive root [highly fed and therefore wanton]; to commit adultery (usually of the female, and less often of simple fornication, rarely of involuntary ravishment); figuratively, to commit idolatry (the Jewish people being regarded as the spouse of Jehovah):—(cause to) commit fornication, continually, great, (be an, play the) harlot, (cause to be, play the) whore, (commit, fall to) whoredom, (cause to) go a-whoring, whorish.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H2181.**

But Augustine is not abiding in the context in which the word is used by Paul in 1 Corinthians, chapter 7.

We read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):4** Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

The word for “whoremonger” in the Greek is **πόρνος** (pronounced po'r-nos), from **πέρνημι** pérnēmi (to sell; akin to the base of G4097); a (male) prostitute (as venal), i.e. (by analogy) a debauchee (libertine):—fornicator, whoremonger. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4205.**

Augustine continues, “But let us consult the apostle, that we may not say rashly. “And unto the married I command,” says he, “yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):10** And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: 11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

He continues, “For it may happen that she departs for that cause for which the Lord gives permission to do so.”

He refers to the words of the Lord Jesus in **Matthew 19 (KJV):9** And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Augustine continues, “Or, if a woman is at liberty to put away her husband for other causes besides that of fornication, and the husband is not at liberty, what answer shall we give respecting this statement which he has made afterwards, “And let not the husband put away his



wife”?”

He refers again to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):11** But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

Augustine continues, “Wherefore did he not add, saving for the cause of fornication, which the Lord permits, unless because he wishes a similar rule to be understood, that if he shall put away his wife (which he is permitted to do for the cause of fornication), he is to remain without a wife, or be reconciled to his wife? For it would not be a bad thing for a husband to be reconciled to such a woman as that to whom, when nobody had dared to stone her, the Lord said, “Go, and sin no more.” (John 8:11)”

He refers in context to **John 8 (KJV):3** And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, **4** They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. **5** Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? **6** This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. **7** So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. **8** And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. **9** And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. **10** When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? **11** She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Augustine concludes, “And for this reason also, because He who says, It is not lawful to put away one’s wife saving for the cause of fornication, forces him to retain his wife, if there should be no cause of fornication: but if there should be, He does not force him to put her away, but permits him, just as when it is said, Let it not be lawful for a woman to marry another, unless her husband be dead; if she shall marry before the death of her husband, she is guilty; if she shall not marry after the death of her husband, she is not guilty, for she is not commanded to marry, but merely permitted. If, therefore, there is a like rule in the said law of marriage between man and woman, to such an extent that not merely of the woman has the same apostle said, “The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband;” but he has not been silent respecting him, saying, “And likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife;”—if, then, the rule is similar, there is no necessity for understanding that it is lawful for a woman to put away her husband, saving for the cause of fornication, as is the case also with the husband.”

Fornication is not the only valid reason for divorce as we shall see. The rule in Scripture, as Jesus taught, is the same for a husband as for a wife.

44. It is therefore to be considered in what latitude of meaning we ought to understand the word fornication, and the apostle is to be consulted, as we were beginning to do. For he goes on to say, “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord.” Here, first, we must see who are “the rest,” for he was speaking before on the part of the Lord to those who are married, but now, as from himself, he speaks to “the rest:” hence perhaps to the unmarried, but this does not follow. For thus he continues: “If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell

with him, let him not put her away.” Hence, even now he is speaking to those who are married. What, then, is his object in saying “to the rest,” unless that he was speaking before to those who were so united, that they were alike as to their faith in Christ; but that now he is speaking to “the rest,” i.e. to those who are so united, that they are not both believers? But what does he say to them? “If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not put him away.” If, therefore, he does not give a command as from the Lord, but advises as from himself, then this good result springs from it, that if any one act otherwise, he is not a transgressor of a command, just as he says a little after respecting virgins, that he has no command of the Lord, but that he gives his advice; and he so praises virginity, that whoever will may avail himself of it; yet if he shall not do so, he may not be judged to have acted contrary to a command. For there is one thing which is commanded, another respecting which advice is given, another still which is pardoned. A wife is commanded not to depart from her husband; and if she depart, to remain unmarried, or to be reconciled to her husband: therefore it is not allowable for her to act otherwise. But a believing husband is advised, if he has an unbelieving wife who is pleased to dwell with him, not to put her away: therefore it is allowable also to put her away, because it is no command of the Lord that he should not put her away, but an advice of the apostle: just as a virgin is advised not to marry; but if she shall marry, she will not indeed adhere to the advice, but she will not act in opposition to a command. It is pardoned when it is said, “But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.” And therefore, if it is allowable that an unbelieving wife should be put away, although it is better not to put her away, and yet not allowable, according to the commandment of the Lord, that a wife should be put away, saving for the cause of fornication, [then] unbelief itself also is fornication.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “It is therefore to be considered in what latitude of meaning we ought to understand the word fornication, and the apostle is to be consulted, as we were beginning to do. For he goes on to say, “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord.” Here, first, we must see who are “the rest,” for he was speaking before on the part of the Lord to those who are married, but now, as from himself, he speaks to “the rest:” hence perhaps to the unmarried, but this does not follow. For thus he continues: “If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):** 12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. 16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? 17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.

Augustine continues, “Hence, even now he is speaking to those who are married. What, then, is his object in saying “to the rest,” unless that he was speaking before to those who were

so united, that they were alike as to their faith in Christ; but that now he is speaking to “the rest,” i.e. to those who are so united, that they are not both believers?” But what does he say to them? “If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not put him away.” If, therefore, he does not give a command as from the Lord, but advises as from himself, then this good result springs from it, that if any one act otherwise, he is not a transgressor of a command, just as he says a little after respecting virgins, that he has no command of the Lord, but that he gives his advice; and he so praises virginity, that whoever will may avail himself of it; yet if he shall not do so, he may not be judged to have acted contrary to a command.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):12** But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

And to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):25** Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

He continues, “For there is one thing which is commanded, another respecting which advice is given, another still which is pardoned. A wife is commanded not to depart from her husband; and if she depart, to remain unmarried, or to be reconciled to her husband: therefore it is not allowable for her to act otherwise.”

He refers again to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):10** And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: 11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

He continues, “But a believing husband is advised, if he has an unbelieving wife who is pleased to dwell with him, not to put her away: therefore it is allowable also to put her away, because it is no command of the Lord that he should not put her away, but an advice of the apostle:”

Again, he refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):12** But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

The apostle says, “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord”, so it is not a command but an advisement.

Augustine continues, “just as a virgin is advised not to marry; but if she shall marry, she will not indeed adhere to the advice, but she will not act in opposition to a command.”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):25** Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. 26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.

That is, Paul is saying that it is good for a man to be a virgin.

We continue in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):27** Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. 28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

A virgin is one who has never married.

We continue in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV)**:29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; 30 And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; 31 And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. 32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: 33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. 34 There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. 35 And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. 36 But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. 37 Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. 38 So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.

So when Paul refers to the one who keeps “his virgin”, he means that he keeps his virginity.

Augustine continues, “It is pardoned when it is said, “But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.””

He refers again in context to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV)**:1 Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. 6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

Paul is not pardoning anyone or anything here. What he speaks by permission is allowable. That is, it is not a sin, venial, or otherwise.

Augustine then concludes, “And therefore, if it is allowable that an unbelieving wife should be put away, although it is better not to put her away, and yet not allowable, according to the commandment of the Lord, that a wife should be put away, saving for the cause of fornication, [then] unbelief itself also is fornication.”

What he is saying here is that, because it is allowable for a believing husband to put away his unbelieving wife, the wife’s unbelief is equal to the sin of fornication which is the only reason the Lord gave for divorce as we read again in **Matthew 19 (KJV)**:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

But Augustine is trying to justify his assertion in paragraph 43 that fornication may be considered as “every transgression of the law on account of the unlawful lust”.

Let us be careful how we hear.

45. For what sayest thou, O apostle? Surely, that a believing husband who has an unbelieving wife pleased to dwell with him is not to put her away? Just so, says he. When, therefore, the Lord also gives this command, that a man should not put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, why dost thou say here, “I speak, not the Lord”? For this reason, viz. that the idolatry which unbelievers follow, and every other noxious superstition, is fornication. Now, the Lord permitted a wife to be put away for the cause of fornication; but in permitting, He did not command it: He gave opportunity to the apostle for advising that whoever wished should not put away an unbelieving wife, in order that, perchance, in this way she might become a believer. “For,” says he, “the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother.” (1 Corinthians 7:14) I suppose it had already occurred that some wives were embracing the faith by means of their believing husbands, and husbands by means of their believing wives; and although not mentioning names, he yet urged his case by examples, in order to strengthen his counsel. Then he goes on to say, “Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.” For now the children were Christians, who were sanctified at the instance of one of the parents, or with the consent of both; which would not take place unless the marriage were broken up by one of the parties becoming a believer, and unless the unbelief of the spouse were borne with so far as to give an opportunity of believing. This, therefore, is the counsel of Him whom I regard as having spoken the words, “Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.” (Luke 10:35)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he then argues, “For what sayest thou, O apostle? Surely, that a believing husband who has an unbelieving wife pleased to dwell with him is not to put her away? Just so, says he. When, therefore, the Lord also gives this command, that a man should not put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, why dost thou say here, “I speak, not the Lord”? For this reason, viz. that the idolatry which unbelievers follow, and every other noxious superstition, is fornication.”

Idolatry is spiritual fornication as we read before in **2 Chronicles 21 (KJV):11** Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto.

But unbelief and “every other noxious superstition”, while it is sinful, is not the fornication that Paul is speaking of in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):2** Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.

Augustine continues, “Now, the Lord permitted a wife to be put away for the cause of fornication; but in permitting, He did not command it: He gave opportunity to the apostle for advising that whoever wished should not put away an unbelieving wife, in order that, perchance, in this way she might become a believer. “For,” says he, “the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother.” (1 Corinthians 7:14)”

He refers again to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):12** But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to



dwell with her, let her not leave him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. 16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? 17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.

Augustine then continues, “I suppose it had already occurred that some wives were embracing the faith by means of their believing husbands, and husbands by means of their believing wives; and although not mentioning names, he yet urged his case by examples, in order to strengthen his counsel.”

What Augustine is saying is that the husbands were believing for their wives and the wives for their husbands, as he then adds, “Then he goes on to say, “Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.” For now the children were Christians, who were sanctified at the instance of one of the parents, or with the consent of both;”

The word “holy” in 1 Corinthians 7:14 should be understood as “set apart”. They are not Christians by the faith of someone else, be they parents or others they may come in contact with. The unbelieving spouse must be understood to be sanctified by the believing spouse in the sense that the believing spouse is a cleansing influence in the home, and a witness of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Augustine continues, “which would not take place unless the marriage were broken up by one of the parties becoming a believer, and unless the unbelief of the spouse were borne with so far as to give an opportunity of believing.”

Yes, the believing spouse could be the means of the unbelieving one becoming a believer.

Augustine finishes, “This, therefore, is the counsel of Him whom I regard as having spoken the words, “Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.” (Luke 10:35)”

He refers in context to **Luke 10 (KJV):**33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, 34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

Showing grace to unbelievers is giving while expecting nothing in return.

46. Moreover, if unbelief is fornication, and idolatry unbelief, and covetousness idolatry, it is not to be doubted that covetousness also is fornication. Who, then, in that case can rightly separate any unlawful lust whatever from the category of fornication, if covetousness is fornication? And from this we perceive, that because of unlawful lusts, not only those of which one is guilty in acts of uncleanness with another’s husband or wife, but any unlawful lusts whatever, which cause the soul making a bad use of the body to wander from the law of God, and to be ruinously and basely corrupted, a man may, without crime, put away his wife, and a wife her husband, because the Lord makes the cause of fornication an exception; which fornication, in accordance with the above considerations, we are compelled to understand as

being general and universal.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he then concludes, “Moreover, if unbelief is fornication, and idolatry unbelief, and covetousness idolatry, it is not to be doubted that covetousness also is fornication.”

He is referring to **Colossians 3 (KJV):5** Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

He continues, “Who, then, in that case can rightly separate any unlawful lust whatever from the category of fornication, if covetousness is fornication?”

Covetousness is fornication in the sense that it is fixating on something which is not God, which is idolatry. But the Lord Jesus was very clear in what He said were grounds for divorce, and that was specifically the sin of fornication, as we read again in **Matthew 19 (KJV):9** And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Augustine then concludes, “And from this we perceive, that because of unlawful lusts, not only those of which one is guilty in acts of uncleanness with another’s husband or wife, but any unlawful lusts whatever, which cause the soul making a bad use of the body to wander from the law of God, and to be ruinously and basely corrupted, a man may, without crime, put away his wife, and a wife her husband, because the Lord makes the cause of fornication an exception; which fornication, in accordance with the above considerations, we are compelled to understand as being general and universal.”

We are not compelled to understand that fornication is “general and universal”. We must preserve the context in which the Scripture is written. The fornication the the Lord spoke of in Matthew 19:9, and that which Paul spoke of in 1 Corinthians 7:2, is having sexual intercourse with someone you are not married to. Augustine makes fornication just another sin. So by his conclusion, whoever wishes to divorce their spouse can do so if their spouse sins. We all must stand before the Lord at the judgment seat of Christ as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Let us rightly divide the word of God so that we will receive a full reward.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine Sermons on New Testament Lessons, Sermon I, paragraph 22, page 253**

Sermon I.

[LI. Benedictine Edition.]

Of the agreement of the evangelists Matthew and Luke in the generations of the Lord.

22. Hence, my brethren, understand the sense of Scripture concerning those our ancient fathers, whose sole design in their marriage was to have children by their wives. For those even who, according to the custom of their time and nation, had a plurality of wives, lived in such chastity with them, as not to approach their bed, but for the cause I have mentioned, thus treating them indeed with honour. But he who exceeds the limits which this rule prescribes for

the fulfilment of this end of marriage, acts contrary to the very contract (*Tabulas*) by which he took his wife. **The contract is read, read in the presence of all the attesting witnesses; and an express clause is there that they marry “for the procreation of children;” and this is called the marriage contract. (*Tabulæ matrimoniales*.)** If it was not for this that wives were given and taken to wife, what father could without blushing give up his daughter to the lust of any man? But now, that the parents may not blush, and that they may give their daughters in honourable marriage, not to shame, (*Ut sint soceri non lenones*.) the contract is read out. And what is read from it?—the clause, “for the sake of the procreation of children.” And when this is heard, the brow of the parent is cleared up and calmed. Let us consider again the feelings (*Frontem*.) of the husband who takes his wife. The husband himself would blush to receive her with any other view, if the father would blush with any other view to give her. Nevertheless, if they cannot contain (as I have said on other occasions), let them require what is due, and let them not go to any others than those from whom it is due. Let both the woman and the man seek relief for their infirmity in themselves. Let not the husband go to any other woman, nor the woman to any other man, for from this adultery gets its name, as though it were “a going to another.” (*Adulterium quasi ad alterum*.) And if they exceed the bounds of the marriage contract, let them not at least exceed those of conjugal fidelity. Is it not a sin in married persons to exact from one another more than this design of the “procreation of children” renders necessary? It is doubtless a sin, though a venial one. The Apostle saith, “But I speak this of allowance,” (1 Corinthians 7:6) when he was treating the matter thus. “Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” (1 Corinthians 7:5) What does this mean? That you do not impose upon yourselves any thing beyond your strength, that you do not by your mutual continence fall into adultery. “That Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” And that he might not seem to enjoin what he only allowed (for it is one thing to give precepts to strength of virtue, and another to make allowance to infirmity), he immediately subjoined; “But this I speak of allowance, not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself.” As though he would say, I do not command you to do this; but I pardon you if you do.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Hence, my brethren, understand the sense of Scripture concerning those our ancient fathers, whose sole design in their marriage was to have children by their wives.”

In the Old Testament, the Lord never said that the “sole design in their marriage was to have children by their wives.” This is not found in Scripture.

Augustine continues, “For those even who, according to the custom of their time and nation, had a plurality of wives, lived in such chastity with them, as not to approach their bed, but for the cause I have mentioned, thus treating them indeed with honour. But he who exceeds the limits which this rule prescribes for the fulfillment of this end of marriage, acts contrary to the very contract (*Tabulas*) by which he took his wife. **The contract is read, read in the presence of all the attesting witnesses; and an express clause is there that they marry “for the procreation of children;” and this is called the marriage contract. (*Tabulæ matrimoniales*.)**”

This was the contract in the Catholic Church in the time of Augustine, but there is never a mention of this anywhere in the Scriptures.

Augustine then argues, “If it was not for this that wives were given and taken to wife, what father could without blushing give up his daughter to the lust of any man? But now, that the parents may not blush, and that they may give their daughters in honourable marriage, not to shame, (*Ut sint soceri non lenones.*) the contract is read out. And what is read from it?—the clause, “for the sake of the procreation of children.” And when this is heard, the brow of the parent is cleared up and calmed.”

There is no reason for a father to blush when he gives up his daughter to be married to a man. God made both men and women so that they would not be alone. He made them to be one flesh as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):23** And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. 25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

The word “cleave” in verse 24 in the Hebrew is דָּבַק (pronounced dābaq), and means TO CLEAVE, TO ADHERE, specially firmly, as if with glue, TO BE GLUED. **Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, 1692, page 185.**

So the reason a man leaves father and mother is to cleave, to be glued to, his wife.

And we read in **Matthew 19 (KJV):4** And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

They are “no more twain, but one flesh”. God has joined them together.

Augustine continues, “Let us consider again the feelings (*Frontem.*) of the husband who takes his wife. The husband himself would blush to receive her with any other view, if the father would blush with any other view to give her. Nevertheless, if they cannot contain (as I have said on other occasions), let them require what is due, and let them not go to any others than those from whom it is due. Let both the woman and the man seek relief for their infirmity in themselves.”

Augustine viewed the desire for the wife and the wife for her husband as “infirmity in themselves”. We read in **Acts 10 (KJV):13** And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. 14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. 15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

The Lord spoke these words to Peter in a vision, cleansing all foods. This was to show him that the Gospel is for the Gentiles, but it speaks to us here.

God has given believers a standing as righteous ones before Him. He has washed us of our sins, and sanctified us as holy ones, or saints. There is nothing unclean in marriage, for in marriage, the man and the woman are one flesh. What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

Augustine continues, “Let not the husband go to any other woman, nor the woman to any other man, for from this adultery gets its name, as though it were “a going to another.” (*Adulterium quasi ad alterum.*) And if they exceed the bounds of the marriage contract, let them not at least exceed those of conjugal fidelity. Is it not a sin in married persons to exact from one

another more than this design of the “procreation of children” renders necessary? It is doubtless a sin, though a venial one.”

Augustine did not understand that there is no sin in married persons, not venial or other, when they want to have pleasure in marriage, just as Sarah had no sin when she had “pleasure” with Abraham as we read in **Genesis 18 (KJV):12** Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

The conjugal relationship was designed by God to give pleasure to both the man and the woman. And in the love relationship of the man and the woman in marriage, God also designed the procreation of children. But there is no sin in a love relationship between a man and a woman in marriage. Augustine had a lot of guilt because of his past relationships outside of marriage. And the Church in his time did not help him with this, as they forbade priests to marry. Augustine had become a priest, and a bishop.

Augustine continues, “The Apostle saith, “But I speak this of allowance,” (1 Corinthians 7:6) when he was treating the matter thus. “Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” (1 Corinthians 7:5) What does this mean? That you do not impose upon yourselves any thing beyond your strength, that you do not by your mutual continence fall into adultery. “That Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” And that he might not seem to enjoin what he only allowed (for it is one thing to give precepts to strength of virtue, and another to make allowance to infirmity), he immediately subjoined; “But this I speak of allowance, not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself.” As though he would say, I do not command you to do this; but I pardon you if you do.”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):1** Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

What does “due benevolence” mean, in the context of verse 3? The word “due benevolence” in the Greek are two words. The word translated “due” in the Greek is **ὀφείλω** (pronounced o-fā'-lō), “probably from the base of G3786 (through the idea of accruing); to owe (pecuniarily); figuratively, to be under obligation (ought, must, should); morally, to fail in duty:—behoove, be bound, (be) debt(-or), (be) due(-ty), be guilty (indebted), (must) need(-s), ought, owe, should. See also G3785.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 1515.**

The word translated “benevolence” in the Greek is **εὐνοια** (pronounced yū'-noi-ä, “from the same as G2132; kindness; euphemistically, conjugal duty:—benevolence, good will.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 2133.**

Let us continue to read in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):4** The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

He is here speaking of the conjugal relationship of those who are married. Paul continues in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):6** But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. 7 For I



would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

There is no mention of sin here. Permission does not mean that he is giving his okay to sin. This is something that Paul would never do. Paul is simply not commanding people to marry. He continues in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):8** I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. 9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

If we are burning, that is, with desire for a spouse, it is better to marry than to burn. Paul then adds in **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):27** Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. 28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

No mention is made of a marriage contract, or sin in marriage. Paul simply says, if you marry, you have not sinned. But there will be a challenge, or trouble in the flesh. Paul was probably married at one time. He was a Pharisee according to the strictest sect, and it was a requirement of those Pharisees to be married. Paul knew the challenges of marriage and he wanted to spare us. But there is no sin in conjugal fidelity in marriage.

Augustine reflects the teaching of the Catholic Church in his time, and his own “infirmity” of his past promiscuous lifestyle.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate IX. Chapter II. 1–11, paragraph 2, page 63**

2. The Lord, in that He came to the marriage to which He was invited, wished, apart from the mystical signification, to assure us that marriage was His own institution. For there were to be those of whom the apostle spoke, “forbidding to marry,” (1 Timothy 4:3) and asserting that marriage was an evil, and of the devil’s institution: notwithstanding the same Lord declares in the Gospel, on being asked whether it be lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause, that it is not lawful save for the cause of fornication. In His answer, if you remember, He said, “What God hath joined together let not man put asunder.” (Matthew 19:6) And they that are well instructed in the Catholic faith know that God instituted marriage; and as the union of man and wife is from God, so divorce is from the devil. But in the case of fornication it is lawful for a man to put away his wife, because she first chose to be no longer wife in not preserving conjugal fidelity to her husband. Nor are those women who vow virginity to God, although they hold a higher place of honor and sanctity in the Church, without marriage. For they too, together with the whole Church, attain to a marriage, a marriage in which Christ is the Bridegroom. And for this cause, therefore, did the Lord, on being invited, come to the marriage, to confirm conjugal chastity, and to show forth the sacrament of marriage. For the bridegroom in that marriage, to whom it was said, “Thou hast kept the good wine until now,” represented the person of the Lord. For the good wine—namely, the gospel—Christ has kept until now.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “The Lord, in that He came to the marriage to which He was invited, wished, apart from the mystical signification, to assure us that marriage was His own institution. For there were to be those of whom the apostle spoke, “forbidding to

marry,” (1 Timothy 4:3) and asserting that marriage was an evil, and of the devil’s institution: notwithstanding the same Lord declares in the Gospel, on being asked whether it be lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause, that it is not lawful save for the cause of fornication. In His answer, if you remember, He said, “What God hath joined together let not man put asunder.” (Matthew 19:6)”

He refers in context to **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):**1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

And to **Matthew 19 (KJV):**3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? 4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

And to **Matthew 19 (KJV):**9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

He continues, “And they that are well instructed in the Catholic faith know that God instituted marriage; and as the union of man and wife is from God, so divorce is from the devil. But in the case of fornication it is lawful for a man to put away his wife, because she first chose to be no longer wife in not preserving conjugal fidelity to her husband.”

Augustine correctly defines fornication here.

He continues, “Nor are those women who vow virginity to God, although they hold a higher place of honor and sanctity in the Church, without marriage. For they too, together with the whole Church, attain to a marriage, a marriage in which Christ is the Bridegroom. And for this cause, therefore, did the Lord, on being invited, come to the marriage, to confirm conjugal chastity, and to show forth the sacrament of marriage. For the bridegroom in that marriage, to whom it was said, “Thou hast kept the good wine until now,” represented the person of the Lord. For the good wine—namely, the gospel—Christ has kept until now.

He refers in context to **John 2 (KJV):**9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, 10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth goodwine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate XXX. Chapter VII. 19–24, paragraph 5, page 187-188**

5. Perhaps, indeed, that circumcision pointed to the Lord Himself, at whom they were indignant, because He worked cures and healing. For circumcision was commanded to be applied on the eighth day: and what is circumcision but the spoiling of the flesh? This circumcision, then, signified the removal of carnal lusts from the heart. Therefore not

without cause was it given, and ordered to be made in that member; since by that member the creature of mortal kind is procreated. By one man came death, just as by one man the resurrection of the dead; (1 Corinthians 15:21) and by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. (Romans 5:12) **Therefore every man is born with a foreskin, because every man is born with the vice of propagation; and God cleanses not, either from the vice with which we are born, or from the vices which we add thereto by ill living, except by the stony knife, the Lord Christ. For Christ was the Rock.** Now they used to circumcise with stone knives, and by the name of rock they prefigured Christ; and yet when He was present with them they did not acknowledge Him, but besides, they sought to kill Him. But why on the eighth day, unless because after the seventh day of the week the Lord rose again on the Lord's day? Therefore Christ's resurrection, which happened on the third day indeed of His passion, but on the eighth day in the days of the week, that same resurrection it is that doth circumcise us. Hear of those that were circumcised with the real stone, while the apostle admonishes them: "If then ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting on the right hand of God; set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." (Colossians 3:1-2) He speaks to the circumcised: Christ has risen; He has taken away from you carnal desires, evil lusts, the superfluity with which you were born, and that far worse which you had added thereto by ill living; being circumcised by the Rock, why do you still set your affections on the earth? And finally, for that "Moses gave you the law, and ye circumcise a man on the Sabbath day," understand that by this is signified the good work which I have done, in that I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day; because he was cured that he might be whole in body, and also he believed that he might be whole in soul.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "Perhaps, indeed, that circumcision pointed to the Lord Himself, at whom they were indignant, because He worked cures and healing. For circumcision was commanded to be applied on the eighth day: and what is circumcision but the spoiling of the flesh? This circumcision, then, signified the removal of carnal lusts from the heart."

Actually, it was a token of the covenant God made with Abraham as we read in **Genesis 17 (KJV):** 9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. 10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. 11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. 12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. 13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

Circumcision was a seal of the righteousness which Abraham had as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):** 9 Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the

uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: 12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. 13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Augustine continues, “Therefore not without cause was it given, and ordered to be made in that member; since by that member the creature of mortal kind is procreated. By one man came death, just as by one man the resurrection of the dead; (1 Corinthians 15:21) and by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. (Romans 5:12)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):21** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

And to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

He continues, “Therefore every man is born with a foreskin, because every man is born with the vice of propagation; and God cleanses not, either from the vice with which we are born, or from the vices which we add thereto by ill living, except by the stony knife, the Lord Christ. For Christ was the Rock.”

Christ is the Rock as we read in **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):4** And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

But propagation is never said to be a “vice” in Scripture, as he says above, “every man is born with the vice of propagation”. Having a desire for a certain food for dinner is not lust, or a vice. So having a desire for one’s spouse is not lustful, or a vice. Augustine was so damaged by his past promiscuity, that he did not see the goodness of marriage.

He continues, “Now they used to circumcise with stone knives, and by the name of rock they prefigured Christ; and yet when He was present with them they did not acknowledge Him, but besides, they sought to kill Him. But why on the eighth day, unless because after the seventh day of the week the Lord rose again on the Lord’s day? Therefore Christ’s resurrection, which happened on the third day indeed of His passion, but on the eighth day in the days of the week, that same resurrection it is that doth circumcise us.”

And Paul speaks of our circumcision in **Colossians 2 (KJV):11** In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Augustine continues, “Hear of those that were circumcised with the real stone, while the apostle admonishes them: “If then ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting on the right hand of God; set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” (Colossians 3:1-2)”

He refers to **Colossians 3 (KJV)**:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Circumcision is of the heart as Paul reveals in **Romans 2 (KJV)**:28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Augustine continues, “He speaks to the circumcised: Christ has risen; He has taken away from you carnal desires, evil lusts, the superfluity with which you were born, and that far worse which you had added thereto by ill living; being circumcised by the Rock, why do you still set your affections on the earth? And finally, for that “Moses gave you the law, and ye circumcise a man on the Sabbath-day,” understand that by this is signified the good work which I have done, in that I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath-day; because he was cured that he might be whole in body, and also he believed that he might be whole in soul.”

He refers to **John 7 (KJV)**:19 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. 19 Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? 20 The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? 21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. 22 Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. 23 If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? 24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

## Summary

Augustine clearly believed that marriage was only valid for the propagation of children. His only experience with women was in illicit relationships out of wedlock. Before he was saved, he had a son, Adeodatus, out of wedlock. In addition, the Catholic Church in his time, made it a rule for clergy to be celibate.

Augustine wanted to maintain the unity of the Church, and so he defended the thinking of the Catholic Church in his time. He fought hard against heresy. In his defense of original sin, he fought hard against Pelagius and his followers who denied it. But in doing so, he confused the attributes of the soul with the attributes of the spirit. This didn't help his perception of man's nature. He thought of “the law of sin” mentioned by Paul in Romans, chapter 8, as a “disease” which could be gradually overcome. However, in marriage, the lust of concupiscence was always present, and, in his mind, it could only be completely overcome by abstinence.



Augustine knew the verse in Hebrews 13:4, that says that marriage is honorable in all, but fornicators and adulterers God will judge. But he understood the opening of Adam's and Eve's eyes to the knowledge of good and evil as a lack of control of their members. When they had to cover themselves with aprons of fig leaves in Genesis 3:7, this meant that they felt shame for their lack of control of their members. This became the basis of his thinking that the intimacy in marriage was permanently marred by the lust of concupiscence.

This thinking led him to believe that intimacy in marriage was only for the propagation of children. He then interprets Paul, in 1 Corinthians, chapter 7, to be giving his permission for any intimacy in marriage that was not for the propagation of children to be done as a venial sin. That is, it was not a damnable sin if one wanted to just have pleasure with their spouse, but it was a venial or permissible sin.

Augustine reflects the thinking of the Catholic Church in his time. Today, we must walk in the light of the word of God which says that marriage is honorable in all. There is no such command in the Scripture that intimacy in marriage is only for the propagation of children. We are to love our spouse with God's love, an unconditional love, and be thankful that God did not want us to be alone.

# Christ

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XVII, Chapter 9, page 349

Chapter 9.—How Like the Prophecy About Christ in the 89th Psalm is to the Things Promised in Nathan's Prophecy in the Books of Samuel.

Wherefore also in the 89th Psalm, of which the title is, "An instruction for himself by Ethan the Israelite," mention is made of the promises God made to king David, and some things are there added similar to those found in the Book of Samuel, such as this, "I have sworn to David my servant that I will prepare his seed forever." (Psalm 89:3-4) And again, "Then thou spakest in vision to thy sons, and saidst, I have laid help upon the mighty One, and have exalted the chosen One out of my people. I have found David my servant, and with my holy oil I have anointed him. For mine hand shall help him, and mine arm shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not prevail against him, and the son of iniquity shall harm him no more. And I will beat down his foes from before his face, and those that hate him will I put to flight. And my truth and my mercy shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the undertaker of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, high among the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him forevermore, and my covenant shall be faithful (sure) with him. **His seed also will I set for ever and ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.**" (Psalm 89:19-29) Which words, when rightly understood, are all understood to be about the Lord Jesus Christ, under the name of David, on account of the form of a servant, which the same Mediator assumed (Philippians 2:7) from the virgin of the seed of David. (Matthew 1:1,18, Luke 1:27) For immediately something is said about the sins of his children, such as is set down in the Book of Samuel, and is more readily taken as if of Solomon. For there, that is, in the Book of Samuel, he says, "And if he commit iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the sons of men; but my mercy will I not take away from him," (2 Samuel 7:14-15) meaning by stripes the strokes of correction. Hence that saying, "Touch ye not my christs." (Psalm 105:15) For what else is that than, Do not harm them? But in the psalm, when speaking as if of David, He says something of the same kind there too. "If his children," saith He, "forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they profane my righteousnesses, and keep not my commandments; I will visit their iniquities with the rod, and their faults with stripes: but my mercy I will not make void from him." (Psalm 89:30-33) He did not say "from them," although He spoke of his children, not of himself; but he said "from him," which means the same thing if rightly understood. **For of Christ Himself, who is the head of the Church,** there could not be found any sins which required to be divinely restrained by human correction, mercy being still continued; but they are found in His body and members, which is His people. Therefore in the Book of Samuel it is said, "iniquity of Him," but in the psalm, "of His children," that we may understand that what is said of His body is in some way said of Himself. Wherefore also, when Saul persecuted His body, that is, His believing people, He Himself saith from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why persecutes thou me?" (Acts 9:4) Then in the following words of

the psalm He says, “Neither will I hurt in my truth, nor profane my covenant, and the things that proceed from my lips I will not disallow. Once have I sworn by my holiness, if I lie unto David,” (Psalm 89:34-35)—that is, I will in no wise lie unto David; for Scripture is wont to speak thus. But what that is in which He will not lie, He adds, saying, “His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me, and as the moon perfected for ever, and a faithful witness in heaven.” (Psalm 89:36-37)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Wherefore also in the 89th Psalm, of which the title is, “An instruction for himself by Ethan the Israelite,” mention is made of the promises God made to king David, and some things are there added similar to those found in the Book of Samuel, such as this, “I have sworn to David my servant that I will prepare his seed forever.” (Psalm 89:3-4)”

He refers to **Psalm 89 (KJV):3** I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, 4 Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.

He continues, “And again, “Then thou spakest in vision to thy sons, and saidst, I have laid help upon the mighty One, and have exalted the chosen One out of my people. I have found David my servant, and with my holy oil I have anointed him. For mine hand shall help him, and mine arm shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not prevail against him, and the son of iniquity shall harm him no more. And I will beat down his foes from before his face, and those that hate him will I put to flight. And my truth and my mercy shall be with him, and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the undertaker of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, high among the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him forevermore, and my covenant shall be faithful (sure) with him. **His seed also will I set for ever and ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.” (Psalm 89:19-29)”**

He refers to **Psalm 89 (KJV):19** Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. 20 I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: 21 With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. 22 The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. 23 And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. 24 But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. 25 I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. 26 He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. 27 Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. 28 My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. 29 His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.

He continues, “**Which words, when rightly understood, are all understood to be about the Lord Jesus Christ, under the name of David, on account of the form of a servant, which the same Mediator assumed (Philippians 2:7) from the virgin of the seed of David. (Matthew 1:1,18, Luke 1:27)”**

And he refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):7** But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

And to **Matthew 1 (KJV):1** The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David,

the son of Abraham.

And in context to **Matthew 1 (KJV):18** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

And to **Luke 1 (KJV):27** To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

He continues, "For immediately something is said about the sins of his children, such as is set down in the Book of Samuel, and is more readily taken as if of Solomon. For there, that is, in the Book of Samuel, he says, "And if he commit iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the sons of men; but my mercy will I not take away from him," (2 Samuel 7:14-15) meaning by stripes the strokes of correction."

Yes it refers to Solomon. Nathan the prophet is speaking to King David, as we read in context in **2 Samuel 7 (KJV):12** And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. 14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: 15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

He continues, "Hence that saying, "Touch ye not my christs." (Psalm 105:15)"

He refers to **Psalm 105 (KJV):15** Saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

He continues, "For what else is that than, Do not harm them? But in the psalm, when speaking as if of David, He says something of the same kind there too. "If his children," saith He, "forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they profane my righteousnesses, and keep not my commandments; I will visit their iniquities with the rod, and their faults with stripes: but my mercy I will not make void from him." (Psalm 89:30-33)"

He refers to **Psalm 89 (KJV):30** If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; 31 If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; 32 Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. 33 Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.

He continues, "He did not say "from them," although He spoke of his children, not of himself; but he said "from him," which means the same thing if rightly understood. **For of Christ Himself, who is the head of the Church**, there could not be found any sins which required to be divinely restrained by human correction, mercy being still continued; but they are found in His body and members, which is His people. Therefore in the Book of Samuel it is said, "iniquity of Him," but in the psalm, "of His children," that we may understand that what is said of His body is in some way said of Himself. Wherefore also, when Saul persecuted His body, that is, His believing people, He Himself saith from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why persecutes thou

me?” (Acts 9:4)”

He refers to **Acts 9 (KJV):4** And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

He continues, “Then in the following words of the psalm He says, “Neither will I hurt in my truth, nor profane my covenant, and the things that proceed from my lips I will not disallow. Once have I sworn by my holiness, if I lie unto David,” (Psalm 89:34-35)—that is, I will in no wise lie unto David; for Scripture is wont to speak thus. But what that is in which He will not lie, He adds, saying, “His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me, and as the moon perfected for ever, and a faithful witness in heaven.” (Psalm 89:36-37)”

He refers to **Psalms 89 (KJV):34** My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. **35** Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. **36** His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. **37** It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.

## Jesus Is God

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate VIII. Chapter II. 1–4, paragraphs 1-3, page 57-58

1. The miracle indeed of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby He made the water into wine, is not marvellous to those who know that it was God’s doing. For He who made wine on that day at the marriage feast, in those six waterpots, which He commanded to be filled with water, the self-same does this every year in vines. For even as that which the servants put into the waterpots was turned into wine by the doing of the Lord, so in like manner also is what the clouds pour forth changed into wine by the doing of the same Lord. But we do not wonder at the latter, because it happens every year: it has lost its marvellousness by its constant recurrence. And yet it suggests a greater consideration than that which was done in the waterpots. For who is there that considers the works of God, whereby this whole world is governed and regulated, who is not amazed and overwhelmed with miracles? If he considers the vigorous power of a single grain of any seed whatever, it is a mighty thing, it inspires him with awe. But since men, intent on a different matter, have lost the consideration of the works of God, by which they should daily praise Him as the Creator, God has, as it were, reserved to Himself the doing of certain extraordinary actions, that, by striking them with wonder, He might rouse men as from sleep to worship Him. A dead man has risen again; men marvel: so many are born daily, and none marvels. If we reflect more considerately, it is a matter of greater wonder for one to be who was not before, than for one who was to come to life again. **Yet the same God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, doeth by His word all these things; and it is He who created that governs also. The former miracles He did by His Word, God with Himself; the latter miracles He did by the same Word incarnate, and for us made man. As we wonder at the things which were done by the man Jesus, so let us wonder at the things which were done by Jesus God. By Jesus God were made heaven, and earth, and the sea, all the garniture of heaven, the abounding riches of the earth, and the fruitfulness of the sea;—all these things which lie within the reach of our eyes were made by Jesus God.** And we look at these things, and if His



own spirit is in us they in such manner please us, that we praise Him that contrived them; not in such manner that turning ourselves to the works we turn away from the Maker, and, in a manner, turning our face to the things made and our backs to Him that made them.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “The miracle indeed of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby He made the water into wine, is not marvellous to those who know that it was God’s doing.”

He refers to **John 2 (KJV)**:1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: 2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. 3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. 4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come. 5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. 6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. 9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, 10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. 11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

He continues, “For He who made wine on that day at the marriage feast, in those six waterpots, which He commanded to be filled with water, the selfsame does this every year in vines. For even as that which the servants put into the waterpots was turned into wine by the doing of the Lord, so in like manner also is what the clouds pour forth changed into wine by the doing of the same Lord. But we do not wonder at the latter, because it happens every year: it has lost its marvellousness by its constant recurrence. And yet it suggests a greater consideration than that which was done in the waterpots. For who is there that considers the works of God, whereby this whole world is governed and regulated, who is not amazed and overwhelmed with miracles? If he considers the vigorous power of a single grain of any seed whatever, it is a mighty thing, it inspires him with awe. But since men, intent on a different matter, have lost the consideration of the works of God, by which they should daily praise Him as the Creator, God has, as it were, reserved to Himself the doing of certain extraordinary actions, that, by striking them with wonder, He might rouse men as from sleep to worship Him. A dead man has risen again; men marvel: so many are born daily, and none marvels. If we reflect more considerately, it is a matter of greater wonder for one to be who was not before, than for one who was to come to life again.”

And we can agree with Augustine here, that the works of the Lord are marvelous. Even the invisible things as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV)**:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

He continues, as he now testifies, “Yet the same God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, doeth by His word all these things; and it is He who created that governs also. The former miracles He did by His Word, God with Himself; the latter miracles He did by the same Word

incarnate, and for us made man. As we wonder at the things which were done by the man Jesus, so let us wonder at the things which were done by Jesus God. By Jesus God were made heaven, and earth, and the sea, all the garniture of heaven, the abounding riches of the earth, and the fruitfulness of the sea;—all these things which lie within the reach of our eyes were made by Jesus God.”

The Scripture supports his testimony as we read in **John 1 (KJV):** 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And in **John 1 (KJV):** 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

He continues, “And we look at these things, and if His own spirit is in us they in such manner please us, that we praise Him that contrived them; not in such manner that turning ourselves to the works we turn away from the Maker, and, in a manner, turning our face to the things made and our backs to Him that made them.”

He continues in the next paragraph.

2. And these things indeed we see; they lie before our eyes. But what of those we do not see, as angels, virtues, powers, dominions, and every inhabitant of this fabric which is above the heavens, and beyond the reach of our eyes? Yet angels, too, when necessary, often showed themselves to men. Has not God made all these too by His Word, that is, by His only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ? What of the human soul itself, which is not seen, and yet by its works shown in the flesh excites great admiration in those that duly reflect on them,—by whom was it made, unless by God? And through whom was it made, unless through the Son of God? Not to speak as yet of the soul of man: the soul of any brute whatever, see how it regulates the huge body, puts forth the senses, the eyes to see, the ears to hear, the nostrils to smell, the taste to discern flavors—the members, in short, to execute their respective functions! Is it the body, not the soul, namely the inhabitant of the body, that doeth these things? The soul is not apparent to the eyes, nevertheless it excites admiration by these its actions. Direct now thy consideration to the soul of man, on which God has bestowed understanding to know its Creator, to discern and distinguish between good and evil, that is, between right and wrong: see how many things it does through the body! Observe this whole world arranged in the same human commonwealth, with what administrations, with what orderly degrees of authority, with what conditions of citizenship, with what laws, manners, arts! The whole of this is brought about by the soul, and yet this power of the soul is not visible. When withdrawn from the body, the latter is a mere carcase: first, it in a manner preserves it from rottenness. For all flesh is corruptible, and falls off into putridity unless preserved by the soul as by a kind of seasoning. But the human soul has this quality in common with the soul of the brute; those qualities rather are to be admired which I have stated, such as belong to the mind and intellect, wherein also it is renewed after the image of its Creator, after whose image man was formed. (Colossians 3:10) What will this power of the soul be when this body shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality? (1 Corinthians 15:54) If such is its power, acting through corruptible flesh, what shall be its power through a spiritual body, after the resurrection of the dead? **Yet this soul, as I have said, of admirable nature and substance, is a thing invisible, intellectual; this soul**

also was made by God Jesus, for He is the Word of God. “All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made.”

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “And these things indeed we see; they lie before our eyes. But what of those we do not see, as angels, virtues, powers, dominions, and every inhabitant of this fabric which is above the heavens, and beyond the reach of our eyes? Yet angels, too, when necessary, often showed themselves to men. Has not God made all these too by His Word, that is, by His only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ?”

And we read in **Psalms 33 (ESV):9** For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

He continues, “What of the human soul itself, which is not seen, and yet by its works shown in the flesh excites great admiration in those that duly reflect on them,—by whom was it made, unless by God? And through whom was it made, unless through the Son of God? Not to speak as yet of the soul of man: the soul of any brute whatever, see how it regulates the huge body, puts forth the senses, the eyes to see, the ears to hear, the nostrils to smell, the taste to discern flavors—the members, in short, to execute their respective functions! Is it the body, not the soul, namely the inhabitant of the body, that doeth these things? The soul is not apparent to the eyes, nevertheless it excites admiration by these its actions. Direct now thy consideration to the soul of man, on which God has bestowed understanding to know its Creator, to discern and distinguish between good and evil, that is, between right and wrong: see how many things it does through the body! Observe this whole world arranged in the same human commonwealth, with what administrations, with what orderly degrees of authority, with what conditions of citizenship, with what laws, manners, arts! The whole of this is brought about by the soul, and yet this power of the soul is not visible. When withdrawn from the body, the latter is a mere carcase: first, it in a manner preserves it from rottenness. For all flesh is corruptible, and falls off into putridity unless preserved by the soul as by a kind of seasoning. But the human soul has this quality in common with the soul of the brute; those qualities rather are to be admired which I have stated, such as belong to the mind and intellect, wherein also it is renewed after the image of its Creator, after whose image man was formed. (Colossians 3:10)”

He refers to **Colossians 3 (KJV):10** And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

And the greatest testimony to this fact is the threefold nature of man mentioned in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That man has three parts to his being is a testimony to his being made in the image of God, who is a trinity of persons, the Father, who decides what shall be, the Son who executes the Father’s decisions, and the Holy Spirit who brings them to completion.

He continues, “What will this power of the soul be when this body shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality? (1 Corinthians 15:54)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):54** So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

He continues, “If such is its power, acting through corruptible flesh, what shall be its

power through a spiritual body, after the resurrection of the dead? Yet this soul, as I have said, of admirable nature and substance, is a thing invisible, intellectual; this soul also was made by God Jesus, for He is the Word of God. “All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made.””

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):3** All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

3. When we see, therefore, such deeds wrought by Jesus God, why should we wonder at water being turned into wine by the man Jesus? For He was not made man in such manner that He lost His being God. Man was added to Him, God not lost to Him. This miracle was wrought by the same who made all those things. Let us not therefore wonder that God did it, but love Him because He did it in our midst, and for the purpose of our restoration. For He gives us certain intimations by the very circumstances of the case. I suppose that it was not without cause He came to the marriage. The miracle apart, there lies something mysterious and sacramental in the very fact. Let us knock, that He may open to us, and fill us with the invisible wine: for we were water, and He made us wine, made us wise; for He gave us the wisdom of His faith, whilst before we were foolish. And it appertains, it may be, to this wisdom, together with the honor of God, and with the praise of His majesty, and with the charity of His most powerful mercy, to understand what was done in this miracle.

**Commentary:** In summary, We can agree with Augustine here. That Jesus is God is also testified by Paul in **Romans 9 (KJV):5** Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

And in **Philippians 2 (KJV):5** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

That Jesus Christ would humble Himself in this way is so incredible. He is our example, as He reveals in **John 13 (KJV):12** So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. 14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. 16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. 17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

And we read also in **Luke 22 (KJV):25** And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. 26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. 27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that



serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth.

And in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):21** For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate VIII. Chapter II. 1–4, paragraph 9, page 61**

9. Why, then, said the Son to the mother, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come?” **Our Lord Jesus Christ was both God and man. According as He was God, He had not a mother; according as He was man, He had. She was the mother, then, of His flesh, of His humanity, of the weakness which for our sakes He took upon Him.** But the miracle which He was about to do, He was about to do according to His divine nature, not according to His weakness; according to that wherein He was God not according to that wherein He was born weak. But the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Corinthians 1:25) His mother then demanded a miracle of Him; but He, about to perform divine works, so far did not recognize a human womb; saying in effect, “That in me which works a miracle was not born of thee, thou gavest not birth to my divine nature; but because my weakness was born of thee, I will recognize thee at the time when that same weakness shall hang upon the cross.” This, indeed, is the meaning of “Mine hour is not yet come.” For then it was that He recognized, who, in truth, always did know. He knew His mother in predestination, even before He was born of her; even before, as God, He created her of whom, as man, He was to be created, He knew her as His mother: but at a certain hour in a mystery He did not recognize her; and at a certain hour which had not yet come, again in a mystery, He does recognize her. For then did He recognize her, when that to which she gave birth was a-dying. That by which Mary was made did not die, but that which was made of Mary; not the eternity of the divine nature, but the weakness of the flesh, was dying. He made that answer therefore, making a distinction in the faith of believers, between the *who*; and the *how*, He came. For while He was God and the Lord of heaven and earth, He came by a mother who was a woman. In that He was Lord of the world, Lord of heaven and earth, He was, of course, the Lord of Mary also; but in that wherein it is said, “Made of a woman, made under the law,” He was Mary’s son. The same both the Lord of Mary and the son of Mary; the same both the Creator of Mary and created from Mary. Marvel not that He was both son and Lord. For just as He is called the son of Mary, so likewise is He called the son of David; and son of David because son of Mary. Hear the apostle openly declaring, “Who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” (Romans 1:3) **Hear Him also declared the Lord of David; let David himself declare this: “The Lord said to my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand.” (Psalm 110:1) And this passage Jesus Himself brought forward to the Jews, and refuted them from it. (Matthew 22:45) How then was He both David’s son and David’s Lord? David’s son according to the flesh, David’s Lord according to His divinity; so also Mary’s son after the flesh, and Mary’s Lord after His majesty.** Now as she was not the mother of His divine nature, whilst it was by His divinity the miracle she asked for would be wrought, therefore He answered her, “Woman, what have I to do with thee?” But think not that I deny thee to be my mother: “Mine hour is not yet come;” for in that hour I will acknowledge thee, when the weakness of which thou art the mother comes to hang on the cross. Let us prove the truth of this. When the Lord suffered, the same evangelist tells us, who knew the mother of the Lord,



and who has given us to know about her in this marriage feast,—the same, I say, tells us, “There was there near the cross the mother of Jesus; and Jesus saith to His mother, Woman, behold thy son! and to the disciple, Behold thy mother!” (John 19:25-27) He commends His mother to the care of the disciple; commends His mother, as about to die before her, and to rise again before her death. The man commends her a human being to man’s care. This humanity had Mary given birth to. That hour had now come, the hour of which He had then said, “Mine hour is not yet come.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Why, then, said the Son to the mother, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come?””

He refers to **John 2 (KJV):4** Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.

The verse in the Greek is as follows:

λέγει αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς Τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί γύναι οὐπω ἦκει ἡ ὥρα μου  
He says to her Jesus What to me and to thee, woman not yet is come the hour of me

**The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, Marshall’s literal English translation with the Nestle Greek text, page 361, third edition 1974.**

So the literal translation is, “Jesus says to her, “What is it to me and you, woman?” My hour is not yet come”.

He continues, as he testifies, “Our Lord Jesus Christ was both God and man. According as He was God, He had not a mother; according as He was man, He had. She was the mother, then, of His flesh, of His humanity, of the weakness which for our sakes He took upon Him. But the miracle which He was about to do, He was about to do according to His divine nature, not according to His weakness; according to that wherein He was God not according to that wherein He was born weak. But the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Corinthians 1:25)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):25** Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Jesus was about to do a working of miracles by the Holy Spirit. Jesus humbled Himself as a man, and did not exercise His Godhood as a man.

He continues, “His mother then demanded a miracle of Him; but He, about to perform divine works, so far did not recognize a human womb; saying in effect, “That in me which works a miracle was not born of thee, thou gavest not birth to my divine nature; but because my weakness was born of thee, I will recognize thee at the time when that same weakness shall hang upon the cross.”

But Jesus was saying that it was not the time for Him to begin to work miracles, that is, to begin His ministry of preaching the good news. Augustine misinterprets the verse in John 2:4.

He continues, “This, indeed, is the meaning of “Mine hour is not yet come.” For then it was that He recognized, who, in truth, always did know. He knew His mother in predestination, even before He was born of her; even before, as God, He created her of whom, as man, He was

to be created, He knew her as His mother: but at a certain hour in a mystery He did not recognize her; and at a certain hour which had not yet come, again in a mystery, He does recognize her.”

The verse in John 2:4 actually reads, in other words, What does it have to do with us? Or, why is it our problem? It is correctly translated in the Latin Vulgate, as we read in **John 2 (Douay Rheims):4** And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is that to me and to thee? My hour is not yet come.

So we could read it as, “What is that to you and me, woman?” That is, it is not our concern, or problem. It’s their problem.

He continues, “For then did He recognize her, when that to which she gave birth was a-dying.”

However, Jesus did also recognize His mother as we read more in context in **John 2 (KJV):4** Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come. 5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. 6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. 9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, 10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. 11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

Augustine continues, “That by which Mary was made did not die, but that which was made of Mary; not the eternity of the divine nature, but the weakness of the flesh, was dying. He made that answer therefore, making a distinction in the faith of believers, between the *who*; and the *how*, He came. For while He was God and the Lord of heaven and earth, He came by a mother who was a woman. In that He was Lord of the world, Lord of heaven and earth, He was, of course, the Lord of Mary also; but in that wherein it is said, “Made of a woman, made under the law,” He was Mary’s son. The same both the Lord of Mary and the son of Mary; the same both the Creator of Mary and created from Mary. Marvel not that He was both son and Lord. For just as He is called the son of Mary, so likewise is He called the son of David; and son of David because son of Mary. Hear the apostle openly declaring, “Who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.” (Romans 1:3)”

He refers to **Romans 1 (KJV):3** Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;

He continues, “**Hear Him also declared the Lord of David; let David himself declare this: “The Lord said to my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand.” (Psalm 110:1)”**

He refers to **Psalm 110 (KJV):1** The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

He continues, “**And this passage Jesus Himself brought forward to the Jews, and refuted them from it. (Matthew 22:45)”**

He refers in context to **Matthew 22 (KJV):41** While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say

unto him, The son of David. 43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, 44 The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? 45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? 46 And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

He continues, “How then was He both David’s son and David’s Lord? David’s son according to the flesh, David’s Lord according to His divinity; so also Mary’s son after the flesh, and Mary’s Lord after His majesty. Now as she was not the mother of His divine nature, whilst it was by His divinity the miracle she asked for would be wrought, therefore He answered her, “Woman, what have I to do with thee?””

But Jesus did not work this by His divinity, but by the Holy Spirit. This is why the Holy Spirit descended on Him as we read in **Matthew 3 (KJV):16** And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

And Jesus says in **John 14 (KJV):12** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. 13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

The disciples were also empowered by the same Holy Spirit, as we read in **Acts 1 (KJV):4** And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. 6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

This promise of the Holy Spirit is for all believers as Peter reveals in **Acts 2 (KJV):38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

He continues, “But think not that I deny thee to be my mother: “Mine hour is not yet come;” for in that hour I will acknowledge thee, when the weakness of which thou art the mother comes to hang on the cross. Let us prove the truth of this. When the Lord suffered, the same evangelist tells us, who knew the mother of the Lord, and who has given us to know about her in this marriage feast,—the same, I say, tells us, “There was there near the cross the mother of Jesus; and Jesus saith to His mother, Woman, behold thy son! and to the disciple, Behold thy mother!” (John 19:25-27)”

He refers to **John 19 (KJV):25** Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! 27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

He concludes, “He commends His mother to the care of the disciple; commends His mother, as about to die before her, and to rise again before her death. The man commends her a human being to man’s care. This humanity had Mary given birth to. That hour had now come, the hour of which He had then said, “Mine hour is not yet come.””

But Augustine misunderstands. What Jesus was referring to when He said, “Mine hour is not yet come,” was the time when He would begin His ministry, as we read in **John 2 (KJV):11** This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

But Augustine understands the divinity of Jesus.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate IX. Chapter II. 1–11, paragraphs 3-5, page 63-65**

3. For now let us begin to uncover the hidden meanings of the mysteries, so far as He in whose name we made you the promise may enable us. In the ancient times there was prophecy, and no times were left without the dispensation of prophecy. But the prophecy, since Christ was not understood therein, was water. For in water wine is in some manner latent. The apostle tells us what we are to understand by this water: “Even unto this day,” saith he, “whilst Moses is read, that same veil is upon their heart; that it is not unveiled because it is done away in Christ. And when thou shalt have passed over,” saith he, “to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.” (2 Corinthians 3:14-16) By the veil he means the covering over of prophecy, so that it was not understood. When thou hast passed over to the Lord, the veil is taken away; so likewise is tastelessness taken away when thou hast passed over to the Lord; and what was water now becomes wine to thee. Read all the prophetic books; and if Christ be not understood therein, what canst thou find so insipid and silly? Understand Christ in them, and what thou readest not only has a taste, but even inebriates thee; transporting the mind from the body, so that forgetting the things that are past, thou reachest forth to the things that are before. (Philippians 3:13)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “For now let us begin to uncover the hidden meanings of the mysteries, so far as He in whose name we made you the promise may enable us. In the ancient times there was prophecy, and no times were left without the dispensation of prophecy. But the prophecy, since Christ was not understood therein, was water. For in water wine is in some manner latent. The apostle tells us what we are to understand by this water: “Even unto this day,” saith he, “whilst Moses is read, that same veil is upon their heart; that it is not unveiled because it is done away in Christ. And when thou shalt have passed over,” saith he, “to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.” (2 Corinthians 3:14-16)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 3 (KJV):14** But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which vail is done away in Christ. **15** But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. **16** Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.

He continues, as he explains, “By the veil he means the covering over of prophecy, so

that it was not understood. When thou hast passed over to the Lord, the veil is taken away; so likewise is tastelessness taken away when thou hast passed over to the Lord; and what was water now becomes wine to thee. Read all the prophetic books; and if Christ be not understood therein, what canst thou find so insipid and silly? Understand Christ in them, and what thou readest not only has a taste, but even inebriates thee; transporting the mind from the body, so that forgetting the things that are past, thou reachest forth to the things that are before. (Philippians 3:13)”

He refers to **Philippians 3 (KJV):13** Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before...

He continues in the next paragraph.

4. Wherefore, prophecy from ancient times, even from the time when the series of human births began to run onwards, was not silent concerning Christ; but the import of the prophecy was concealed therein, for as yet it was water. Whence do we prove that in all former times, until the age in which the Lord came, prophecy did not fail concerning Him? From the Lord’s own saying. For when He had risen from the dead, He found His disciples doubting concerning Himself whom they had followed. For they saw that He was dead, and they had no hope that He would rise again; all their hope was gone. On what ground was the thief, after receiving praise, deemed worthy to be that same day in Paradise? Because when bound on the cross he confessed Christ, while the disciples doubted concerning Him. Well, He found them wavering, and in a manner reproving themselves because they had looked for redemption in Him. Yet they sorrowed for Him as cut off without fault, for they knew Him to be innocent. And this is what the disciples themselves said, after His resurrection, when He had found certain of them in the way, sorrowful, “Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And He said unto them, What things? And they said, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deeds and words before God and all the people: how our priests and rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and bound Him to the cross. But we trusted that it was He who should have redeemed Israel; and today is now the third day since these things were done.” After one of the two whom He found in the way going to a neighboring village had spoken these and other words, Jesus answered and said, “O irrational, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered all these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning from Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” And likewise, in another place, when He would even have His disciples touch Him with their hands, that they might believe that He had risen in the body, He saith, “These are the words which I have spoken unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, that Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations,



beginning at Jerusalem.”

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Wherefore, prophecy from ancient times, even from the time when the series of human births began to run onwards, was not silent concerning Christ; but the import of the prophecy was concealed therein, for as yet it was water. Whence do we prove that in all former times, until the age in which the Lord came, prophecy did not fail concerning Him? From the Lord’s own saying. For when He had risen from the dead, He found His disciples doubting concerning Himself whom they had followed. For they saw that He was dead, and they had no hope that He would rise again; all their hope was gone. On what ground was the thief, after receiving praise, deemed worthy to be that same day in Paradise? Because when bound on the cross he confessed Christ, while the disciples doubted concerning Him. Well, He found them wavering, and in a manner reproving themselves because they had looked for redemption in Him. Yet they sorrowed for Him as cut off without fault, for they knew Him to be innocent. And this is what the disciples themselves said, after His resurrection, when He had found certain of them in the way, sorrowful, “Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And He said unto them, What things? And they said, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deeds and words before God and all the people: how our priests and rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and bound Him to the cross. But we trusted that it was He who should have redeemed Israel; and today is now the third day since these things were done.””

He refers to **Luke 24 (KJV):13** And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. 14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. 16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. 17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? 18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? 19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: 20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. 21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.

Augustine continues, “After one of the two whom He found in the way going to a neighboring village had spoken these and other words, Jesus answered and said, “O irrational, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered all these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning from Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.””

He refers in context, as we continue in **Luke 24 (KJV):22** Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; 23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said

that he was alive. 24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. 25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: 26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? 27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. 28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. 29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. 30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. 32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

Augustine continues, “And likewise, in another place, when He would even have His disciples touch Him with their hands, that they might believe that He had risen in the body, He saith, “These are the words which I have spoken unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, that Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

He refers in context to **Luke 24 (KJV)**: 33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, 34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. 35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. 36 And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. 38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. 40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? 42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. 43 And he took it, and did eat before them. 44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. 45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

5. When these words of the Gospel are understood, and they are certainly clear, all the mysteries which are latent in this miracle of the Lord will be laid open. Observe what He says, that it behooved the things to be fulfilled in Christ that were written of Him. Where

were they written? “In the law,” saith He, “and in the prophets, and in the Psalms.” He omitted no part of the Old Scriptures. These were water; and hence the disciples were called *irrational* by the Lord, because as yet they tasted to them as water, not as wine. And how did He make of the water wine? When He opened their understanding, and expounded to them the Scriptures, beginning from Moses, through all the prophets; with which being now inebriated, they said, “Did not our hearts burn within us in the way, when He opened to us the Scriptures?” For they understood Christ in those books in which they knew Him not before. Thus our Lord Jesus Christ changed the water into wine, and that has now taste which before had not, that now inebriates which before did not. For if He had commanded the water to be poured out of the waterpots, and so Himself had put in the wine from the secret repositories of the creature, whence He made bread when He satisfied so many thousands; for five loaves were not in themselves sufficient to satisfy five thousand men, nor even to fill twelve baskets, but the omnipotence of the Lord was, as it were, a fountain of bread; so likewise He might, on the water being poured out, have poured in wine: but had He done this, He would appear to have rejected the Old Scriptures. When, however, He turns the water itself into wine, He shows us that the Old Scripture also is from Himself, for at His own command were the waterpots filled. It is from the Lord, indeed, that the Old Scripture also is; but it has no taste unless Christ is understood therein.

**Commentary:** In summary, we can agree heartily with Augustine here. The Old Testament scriptures are proof positive of who Jesus is. Isaiah prophesied between 760 and 683 B.C. approximately, and yet the Gospels testify to the fulfillment of his prophecy to the letter, as we read in **Isaiah 53 (KJV):** 1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? 2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. 9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the

transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

And there are many more prophecies of Christ in the Old Testament. Augustine understood this.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XVII. Chapter IV. 1–18, paragraph 15, page 116**

15. Perhaps we can more appropriately say this, that in the saying, “God rested on the seventh day,” he signified by a great mystery the Lord and our Saviour Jesus Christ Himself, who spoke and said, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” **For the Lord Jesus is, of course, God. For He is the Word of God, and you have heard that “in the beginning was the Word;” and not any word whatsoever, but “the Word was God, and all things were made by Him.”** He was perhaps signified as about to rest on the seventh day from all His works. For, read the Gospel, and see what great works Jesus wrought. He wrought our salvation on the cross, that all things foretold by the prophets might be fulfilled in Him. He was crowned with thorns; He hung on the tree; said, “I thirst,” received vinegar on a sponge, that it might be fulfilled which was said, “And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” (Psalm 69:22) And when all His works were completed, on the sixth day of the week, He bowed His head and gave up the ghost, and on the Sabbath-day He rested in the tomb from all His works. Therefore it is as if He said to the Jews, “Why do ye expect that I should not work on the Sabbath? The Sabbath-day was ordained for you for a sign of me. You observe the works of God: I was there when they were made, by me were they all made; I know them. ‘My Father worketh hitherto.’ The Father made the light, but He spoke that there should be light; if He spoke, it was by His Word He made it: His Word I was, I am; by me was the world made in those works, by me the world is ruled in these works. My Father worked when He made the world, and hitherto now worketh while He rules the world: therefore by me He made when He made, and by me He rules while He rules.” This He said, but to whom? To men deaf, blind, lame, impotent, not acknowledging the physician, and as if in a frenzy they had lost their wits, wishing to slay Him.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Perhaps we can more appropriately say this, that in the saying, “God rested on the seventh day,” he signified by a great mystery the Lord and our Saviour Jesus Christ Himself, who spoke and said, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.””

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):16** And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. **17** But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. **18** Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

He continues, **“For the Lord Jesus is, of course, God. For He is the Word of God, and you have heard that “in the beginning was the Word;” and not any word whatsoever, but “the Word was God, and all things were made by Him.””**

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** The same was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were

made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

He continues, “He was perhaps signified as about to rest on the seventh day from all His works. For, read the Gospel, and see what great works Jesus wrought. He wrought our salvation on the cross, that all things foretold by the prophets might be fulfilled in Him. He was crowned with thorns; He hung on the tree; said, “I thirst,” received vinegar on a sponge, that it might be fulfilled which was said, “And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” (Psalm 69:22)”

He refers to **Psalm 69 (KJV):21** They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

He continues, “And when all His works were completed, on the sixth day of the week, He bowed His head and gave up the ghost, and on the Sabbath-day He rested in the tomb from all His works.”

The Sabbath he rested on was the day after the Passover, which was a Sabbath that began the feast of Unleavened Bread. The Passover day was the preparation day before the Sabbath of that began the feast of Unleavened Bread. This is the day when the Lord was crucified. The Jewish day began at dusk and ended at dusk the next day. This is why they had to get the bodies off the cross before dusk, when the Sabbath would begin. The knowledge of all of the Jewish feasts was not understood in the Church in Augustine’s time. The feast of Unleavened Bread lasted for seven days, and began with a Sabbath and ended with a Sabbath. This is mentioned in Leviticus 23:5-8.

Augustine continues, “Therefore it is as if He said to the Jews, “Why do ye expect that I should not work on the Sabbath? The Sabbath-day was ordained for you for a sign of me. You observe the works of God: I was there when they were made, by me were they all made; I know them. ‘My Father worketh hitherto.’ The Father made the light, but He spoke that there should be light; if He spoke, it was by His Word He made it: His Word I was, I am; by me was the world made in those works, by me the world is ruled in these works. My Father worked when He made the world, and hitherto now worketh while He rules the world: therefore by me He made when He made, and by me He rules while He rules.” This He said, but to whom? To men deaf, blind, lame, impotent, not acknowledging the physician, and as if in a frenzy they had lost their wits, wishing to slay Him.”

Augustine clearly acknowledges Jesus as God.

## **Of Whom Adam Is a Figure**

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate IX. Chapter II. 1–11, paragraph 10, page 66**

10. In the very beginning, Adam and Eve were the parents of all nations, not of the Jews only; and whatever was represented in Adam concerning Christ, undoubtedly concerned all nations, whose salvation is in Christ. What better can I say of the water of the first waterpot than what the apostle says of Adam and Eve? For no man will say that I misunderstand the meaning when I produce, not my own, but the apostle’s. How great a mystery, then, concerning Christ does that of which the apostle makes mention contain, when he says, “And the two shall be in one flesh: this is a great mystery!” (Ephesians 3:31-32) And lest any man should



understand that greatness of mystery to exist in the case of the individual men that have wives, he says, "But I speak concerning Christ and the Church." What great mystery is this, "the two shall be one flesh?" While Scripture, in the Book of Genesis, was speaking of Adam and Eve, it came to these words, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they two shall be one flesh." (Genesis 2:24) Now, if Christ cleave to the Church, so that the two should be one flesh, in what manner did He leave His Father and His mother? He left His Father in this sense, that when He was in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking to Him the form of a servant. (Philippians 2:6-7) In this sense He left His Father, not that He forsook or departed from His Father, but that He did not appear unto men in that form in which He was equal with the Father. But how did He leave His mother? By leaving the synagogue of the Jews, of which, after the flesh, He was born, and by cleaving to the Church which He has gathered out of all nations. Thus the first waterpot then held a prophecy of Christ; but so long as these things of which I speak were not preached among the peoples, the prophecy was water, it was not yet changed into wine. And since the Lord has enlightened us through the apostle, to show us what we were in search of, by this one sentence, "The two shall be one flesh; a great mystery concerning Christ and the Church;" we are now permitted to seek Christ everywhere, and to drink wine from all the waterpots. Adam sleeps, that Eve may be formed; Christ dies, that the Church may be formed. When Adam sleeps, Eve is formed from his side; when Christ is dead, the spear pierces His side, that the mysteries may flow forth whereby the Church is formed. Is it not evident to every man that in those things then done, things to come were foreshadowed, since the apostle says that Adam himself was the figure of Him that was to come? "Who is," saith he, "the figure of Him that was to come." (Romans 5:14) All was mystically prefigured. For, in reality, God could have taken the rib from Adam when he was awake, and formed the woman. Or was it, haply, necessary for him to sleep lest he should feel pain in his side when the rib was taken away? Who is there that sleeps so soundly that his bones may be torn from him without his awaking? Or was it because it was God that tore it out, that the man did not feel it? Well, He who could take it from him without pain when he was asleep, could do it also when he was awake. But, without doubt, the first waterpot was being filled, there was a dispensation of the prophecy of that time concerning this which was to be.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "In the very beginning, Adam and Eve were the parents of all nations, not of the Jews only; and whatever was represented in Adam concerning Christ, undoubtedly concerned all nations, whose salvation is in Christ. What better can I say of the water of the first waterpot than what the apostle says of Adam and Eve? For no man will say that I misunderstand the meaning when I produce, not my own, but the apostle's. How great a mystery, then, concerning Christ does that of which the apostle makes mention contain, when he says, "And the two shall be in one flesh: this is a great mystery!" (Ephesians 3:31-32)"

He refers to **Ephesians 3 (KJV):31** For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

He continues, "And lest any man should understand that greatness of mystery to exist in the case of the individual men that have wives, he says, "But I speak concerning Christ and the

Church.” What great mystery is this, “the two shall be one flesh?” While Scripture, in the Book of Genesis, was speaking of Adam and Eve, it came to these words, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they two shall be one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24)”

He refers to **Genesis 2 (KJV):24** Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

He continues, “Now, if Christ cleave to the Church, so that the two should be one flesh, in what manner did He leave His Father and His mother? He left His Father in this sense, that when He was in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking to Him the form of a servant. (Philippians 2:6-7)”

He refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):6** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

He continues, “In this sense He left His Father, not that He forsook or departed from His Father, but that He did not appear unto men in that form in which He was equal with the Father. But how did He leave His mother? By leaving the synagogue of the Jews, of which, after the flesh, He was born, and by cleaving to the Church which He has gathered out of all nations. Thus the first waterpot then held a prophecy of Christ; but so long as these things of which I speak were not preached among the peoples, the prophecy was water, it was not yet changed into wine. And since the Lord has enlightened us through the apostle, to show us what we were in search of, by this one sentence, “The two shall be one flesh; a great mystery concerning Christ and the Church;” we are now permitted to seek Christ everywhere, and to drink wine from all the waterpots. Adam sleeps, that Eve may be formed; Christ dies, that the Church may be formed. When Adam sleeps, Eve is formed from his side; when Christ is dead, the spear pierces His side, that the mysteries may flow forth whereby the Church is formed. Is it not evident to every man that in those things then done, things to come were foreshadowed, since the apostle says that Adam himself was the figure of Him that was to come? “Who is,” saith he, “the figure of Him that was to come.” (Romans 5:14)”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):14** Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

He continues, “All was mystically prefigured. For, in reality, God could have taken the rib from Adam when he was awake, and formed the woman. Or was it, haply, necessary for him to sleep lest he should feel pain in his side when the rib was taken away? Who is there that sleeps so soundly that his bones may be torn from him without his awaking? Or was it because it was God that tore it out, that the man did not feel it? Well, He who could take it from him without pain when he was asleep, could do it also when he was awake. But, without doubt, the first waterpot was being filled, there was a dispensation of the prophecy of that time concerning this which was to be.”

We can agree with Augustine in his analogy of Adam as a figure of Christ. This is also referred to in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

But the figure represented by Adam is better described when we continue to read the Scripture in **Romans 5 (KJV):14** Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over

them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. 15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. 16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. 17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) 18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. 20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us look at the figure.

1. ) **Romans 5 (KJV):** 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. 15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.
2. 16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.
3. 17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)
4. 18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.
5. 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.
6. 20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:
7. 21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

As to his analogy of the waterpots, which is taken from John 2:1-11 at the marriage in Cana, when Jesus turned the water in the six waterpots into wine, he seems to find some truth as he says, "What better can I say of the water of the first waterpot than what the apostle says of Adam and Eve?" By this he means the water of the word of the apostle is now understood, and so has become "wine" to fill one of the waterpots.

While his analogies are still good, they are not exactly referred to in the Scriptures.

## Prophecy

7. For it is from prophecy that we convince gainsaying pagans. Who is Christ? says the pagan. To whom we reply, He whom the prophets foretold. What prophets? asks he. We quote Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, and other holy prophets: we tell him that they came long before Christ, by what length of time they preceded His coming. We make this reply then: Prophets came before Him, and they foretold His coming. One of them answers: What prophets? We quote for him those which are daily read to us. And, said he, Who are these prophets? We answer: Those who also foretold the things which we see come to pass. And he urges: You have forged these for yourselves, you have seen them come to pass, and have written them in what books you pleased, as if their coming had been predicted. Here in opposition to pagan enemies the witness of other enemies offers itself. We produce books written by the Jews, and reply: Doubtless both you and they are enemies of our faith. Hence are they scattered among the nations, that we may convince one class of enemies by another. **Let the book of Isaiah be produced by the Jews, and let us see if it is not there we read, "He was led as a sheep to be slaughtered, and as a lamb before his shearer was dumb, so He opened not His mouth. In humility His judgment was taken away; by His bruises we are healed: all we as sheep went astray, and He was delivered up for our sins."** (Isaiah 53:5-8) Behold one lamp. Let another be produced, let the psalm be opened, and thence, too, let the foretold suffering of Christ be quoted: "They pierced my hands and my feet, they counted all my bones: but they considered me and gazed upon me, they parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture they cast the lot. My praise is with Thee; in the great assembly will I confess to Thee. All the ends of the earth shall be reminded, and be converted to the Lord: all countries of the nations shall worship in His sight; for the kingdom is the Lord's, and He shall have dominion over the nations." (Psalm 22:16-28) Let one enemy blush, for it is another enemy that gives me the book. But lo, out of the book produced by the one enemy, I have vanquished the other: nor let that same who produced me the book be left; let him produce that by which himself also may be vanquished. I read another prophet, and I find the Lord speaking to the Jews: "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord, nor will I accept sacrifice at your hands: for from the rising of the sun even to his going down, a pure sacrifice is offered to my name." (Malachi 1:10-11) Thou dost not come, O Jew, to a pure sacrifice; I prove thee impure.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "For it is from prophecy that we convince gainsaying pagans. Who is Christ? says the pagan. To whom we reply, He whom the prophets foretold. What prophets? asks he. We quote Isaiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, and other holy prophets: we tell him that they came long before Christ, by what length of time they preceded His coming. We make this reply then: Prophets came before Him, and they foretold His coming. One of them answers: What prophets? We quote for him those which are daily read to us. And, said he, Who are these prophets? We answer: Those who also foretold the things which we see come to pass. And he urges: You have forged these for yourselves, you have seen them come to pass, and have written them in what books you pleased, as if their coming had been predicted. Here in opposition to pagan enemies the witness of other enemies offers itself. We produce books written by the Jews, and reply: Doubtless both you and they are enemies of our faith.

Hence are they scattered among the nations, that we may convince one class of enemies by another. **Let the book of Isaiah be produced by the Jews, and let us see if it is not there we read, "He was led as a sheep to be slaughtered, and as a lamb before his shearer was dumb, so He opened not His mouth. In humility His judgment was taken away; by His bruises we are healed: all we as sheep went astray, and He was delivered up for our sins." (Isaiah 53:5-8)"**

He refers to **Isaiah 53 (KJV)**:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

He continues, "Behold one lamp. Let another be produced, let the psalm be opened, and thence, too, let the foretold suffering of Christ be quoted: "They pierced my hands and my feet, they counted all my bones: but they considered me and gazed upon me, they parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture they cast the lot. My praise is with Thee; in the great assembly will I confess to Thee. All the ends of the earth shall be reminded, and be converted to the Lord: all countries of the nations shall worship in His sight; for the kingdom is the Lord's, and He shall have dominion over the nations." (Psalm 22:16-28)"

He refers in context to **Psalms 22 (KJV)**:16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. 18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. 19 But be not thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, haste thee to help me. 20 Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. 21 Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns. 22 I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. 23 Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. 24 For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard. 25 My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. 26 The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever. 27 All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. 28 For the kingdom is the Lord's: and he is the governor among the nations.

He continues, "Let one enemy blush, for it is another enemy that gives me the book. But lo, out of the book produced by the one enemy, I have vanquished the other: nor let that same who produced me the book be left; let him produce that by which himself also may be vanquished. I read another prophet, and I find the Lord speaking to the Jews: "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord, nor will I accept sacrifice at your hands: for from the rising of the sun even to his going down, a pure sacrifice is offered to my name." (Malachi 1:10-11)"

He refers in context to **Malachi 1 (KJV)**:9 The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. 2 I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, 3 and I hated Esau, and laid his



mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. 4 Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever. 5 And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The Lord will be magnified from the border of Israel. 6 A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? And if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? 7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible. 8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts. 9 And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the Lord of hosts. 10 Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. 11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.

Augustine concludes, “Thou dost not come, O Jew, to a pure sacrifice; I prove thee impure.”

Augustine is correct in his reference to the prophecy in Isaiah. This is the greatest proof of the truth of the Scriptures, as we read in **Isaiah 45 (KJV):21** Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: Who hath declared this from ancient time? Who hath told it from that time? Have not I the Lord? And there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. 22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

And in **Isaiah 48 (KJV):5** I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.

## The Prince of the Apostles

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate LXXXIX. Chapter XV. 22, 23, paragraph 1, page 357-358**

1. The Lord had said above to His disciples, “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not Him that sent me.” And if we inquire of whom He so spake, we find that He was led on to these words from what He had said before, “If the world hate you, know ye that it hated me before [it hated] you;” and now in adding, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin,” He more expressly pointed to the Jews. Of them, therefore, He also uttered the words that precede, for so does the

context itself imply. For it is of the same parties that He said, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin;” of whom He also said, “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also; but all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not Him that sent me;” for it is to these words that He also subjoins the following: “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin.” The Jews, therefore, persecuted Christ, as the Gospel very clearly indicates, and Christ spake to the Jews, not to other nations; and it is they, therefore, that He meant to be understood by the world, that hateth Christ and His disciples; and, indeed, not those alone, but even these latter were shown by Him to belong to the same world. What, then, does He mean by the words, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin”? Was it that the Jews were without sin before Christ came to them in the flesh? Who, though he were the greatest fool, would say so? But it is some great sin, and not every sin, that He would have to be understood, as it were, under the general designation. For this is the sin wherein all sins are included; and whosoever is free from it, has all his sins forgiven him: and this it is, that they believed not on Christ, who came for the very purpose of enlisting their faith. From this sin, had He not come, they would certainly have been free. **His advent has become as much fraught with destruction to unbelievers, as it is with salvation to those that believe; for He, the Head and Prince of the apostles, has Himself, as it were, become what they declared of themselves, “to some, indeed, the savour of life unto life; and to some the savor of death unto death.” (2 Corinthians 2:16)**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “The Lord had said above to His disciples, “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not Him that sent me.” And if we inquire of whom He so spake, we find that He was led on to these words from what He had said before, “If the world hate you, know ye that it hated me before [it hated] you;” and now in adding, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin,””

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):** 18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. 21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.

He continues, “He more expressly pointed to the Jews. Of them, therefore, He also uttered the words that precede, for so does the context itself imply. For it is of the same parties that He said, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin;” of whom He also said, “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also; but all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not Him that sent me;” for it is to these words that He also subjoins the following: “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin.” The Jews, therefore, persecuted Christ, as the Gospel very clearly indicates, and Christ spake to the Jews, not to

other nations; and it is they, therefore, that He meant to be understood by the world, that hateth Christ and His disciples; and, indeed, not those alone, but even these latter were shown by Him to belong to the same world.”

However, Jesus sent them to teach all nations as we read in **Matthew 28 (KJV):18** And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

So He could not have “meant to be understood by the world” only the Jews, “that hateth Christ and His disciples; and, indeed, not those alone, but even these latter were shown by Him to belong to the same world”, but all unbelievers.

He continues, “What, then, does He mean by the words, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin”? Was it that the Jews were without sin before Christ came to them in the flesh? Who, though he were the greatest fool, would say so? But it is some great sin, and not every sin, that He would have to be understood, as it were, under the general designation. For this is the sin wherein all sins are included; and whosoever is free from it, has all his sins forgiven him: and this it is, that they believed not on Christ, who came for the very purpose of enlisting their faith. From this sin, had He not come, they would certainly have been free.”

For this sin, that is, for the sin of rejecting Christ, the Jews have been led away captive to all nations as Jesus prophesied in **Luke 21 (KJV):24** And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

But when the “times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”, God will again deal with Israel and they shall be saved, as we read in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV):6** Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

He continues, “His advent has become as much fraught with destruction to unbelievers, as it is with salvation to those that believe; for He, the Head and Prince of the apostles, has Himself, as it were, become what they declared of themselves, “to some, indeed, the savour of life unto life; and to some the savor of death unto death.” (2 Corinthians 2:16)”

He refers in context to **2 Corinthians 2 (KJV):15** For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: 16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

Augustine acknowledged Jesus as “the Head and Prince of the apostles”, and this agrees with Scripture as we read in **Hebrews 3 (KJV):1** Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

He is also a Prince as we read in **Acts 5 (KJV):31** Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

## The Head of the Church

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine  
On the Psalms, Psalm XVIII, paragraph 51, page 54**

51. “Magnifying the salvation of His King” (ver. 50). God, who magnifieth, so as to make wonderful, the salvation, which His Son giveth to believers. “And showing mercy to His Christ:” God, who showeth mercy to His Christ: “To David and to His seed for evermore:” to the Deliverer Himself strong of hand, who hath overcome this world; and to them whom, as believers in the Gospel, He hath begotten for evermore. **What things soever are spoken in this Psalm which cannot apply to the Lord Himself personally, that is to the Head of the Church, must be referred to the Church. For whole Christ speaks here, in whom are all His members.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Magnifying the salvation of His King” (ver. 50).”

He refers to **Psalm 18 (Septuagint):50** God magnifies the deliverances of his king; and deals mercifully with David his anointed, and his seed, for ever.

This is a Psalm of David, as we read in context in **Psalm 18 (KJV):46** The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted. 47 It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me. 48 He delivereth me from mine enemies: yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man. 49 Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name. 50 Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.

Augustine continues, “God, who magnifieth, so as to make wonderful, the salvation, which His Son giveth to believers. “And showing mercy to His Christ:” God, who showeth mercy to His Christ: “To David and to His seed for evermore:” to the Deliverer Himself strong of hand, who hath overcome this world; and to them whom, as believers in the Gospel, He hath begotten for evermore.”

Augustine’s method in his writing of the Psalms was to apply everything to the Church, as he then says, **“What things soever are spoken in this Psalm which cannot apply to the Lord Himself personally, that is to the Head of the Church, must be referred to the Church. For whole Christ speaks here, in whom are all His members.”**

However, we see that He believed **“the Lord Himself personally”** to be **“the Head of the Church”**.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine  
On the Psalms, Psalm CIV, paragraph 4, page 510**

4. “He hath founded the earth upon its firmness” (ver. 5). He hath founded the Church upon the firmness of the Church. What is the firmness of the Church, but the foundation of the Church. What is the foundation of the Church, but that of which the Apostle saith, “Other foundation can no man lay but that is laid, which is Christ Jesus.” (1 Corinthians 3:11) And therefore, grounded on such a foundation, what hath she deserved to hear? “It shall not be bowed forever and ever.” “He founded the earth on its firmness.” That is, He hath founded the Church upon Christ the foundation. The Church will totter if the foundation totter; but when

shall Christ totter, before whose coming unto us, and taking flesh on Him, “all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made;” (John 1:3) who holdeth all things by His Majesty, (Hebrews 1:3) and us by His goodness? Since Christ faileth not, “she shall not be bowed for ever and ever.” Where are they (Donatists) who say that the Church hath perished from the world, when she cannot even be bowed....

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““He hath founded the earth upon its firmness” (ver. 5).”

He refers to **Psalms 103 (Douay Rheims):5** Who hast founded the earth upon its own bases: it shall not be moved for ever and ever.

And to **Psalms 104 (KJV):5** Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.

He continues, “He hath founded the Church upon the firmness of the Church. What is the firmness of the Church, but the foundation of the Church. What is the foundation of the Church, but that of which the Apostle saith, “Other foundation can no man lay but that is laid, which is Christ Jesus.” (1 Corinthians 3:11)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

He continues, “And therefore, grounded on such a foundation, what hath she deserved to hear? “It shall not be bowed forever and ever.” “He founded the earth on its firmness.” That is, He hath founded the Church upon Christ the foundation. The Church will totter if the foundation totter; but when shall Christ totter, before whose coming unto us, and taking flesh on Him, “all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made;” (John 1:3) who holdeth all things by His Majesty, (Hebrews 1:3) and us by His goodness?”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):3** All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And to **Hebrews 1 (KJV):3** Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:

He concludes, “Since Christ faileth not, “she shall not be bowed for ever and ever.” Where are they (Donatists) who say that the Church hath perished from the world, when she cannot even be bowed....”

Augustine’s confession was that Christ is the foundation of the Church.

## One of Us

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm CXXXIX, paragraph 51, page 54

1. ...Our Lord Jesus Christ speaketh in the Prophets, sometimes in His own Name, sometimes in ours, because He maketh Himself one with us; as it is said, “they twain shall be one flesh.” Wherefore also the Lord saith in the Gospel, speaking of marriage, “therefore they are no more twain, but one flesh.” One flesh, because of our mortality He took flesh; not one



divinity, for He is the Creator, we the creature. Whatsoever then our Lord speaketh in the person of the Flesh He took upon Him, belongeth both to that Head which hath already ascended into heaven, and to those members which still toil in their earthly wandering. Let us hear then our Lord Jesus Christ speaking in prophecy. For the Psalms were sung long before the Lord was born of Mary, yet not before He was Lord: for from everlasting He was the Creator of all things, but in time He was born of His creature. Let us believe that Godhead, and, so far as we can, understand Him to be equal to the Father. But that Godhead equal to the Father was made partaker of our mortal nature, not of His own store, but of ours; that we too might be made partakers of His Divine Nature, not of our store, but of His.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "...Our Lord Jesus Christ speaketh in the Prophets, sometimes in His own Name, sometimes in ours, because He maketh Himself one with us; as it is said, "they twain shall be one flesh." Wherefore also the Lord saith in the Gospel, speaking of marriage, "therefore they are no more twain, but one flesh.""

He refers in context to **Matthew 19 (KJV):3** The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? 4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

He continues, "One flesh, because of our mortality He took flesh; not one divinity, for He is the Creator, we the creature. Whatsoever then our Lord speaketh in the person of the Flesh He took upon Him, belongeth both to that Head which hath already ascended into heaven, and to those members which still toil in their earthly wandering. Let us hear then our Lord Jesus Christ speaking in prophecy. For the Psalms were sung long before the Lord was born of Mary, yet not before He was Lord: for from everlasting He was the Creator of all things, but in time He was born of His creature. Let us believe that Godhead, and, so far as we can, understand Him to be equal to the Father. But that Godhead equal to the Father was made partaker of our mortal nature, not of His own store, but of ours; that we too might be made partakers of His Divine Nature, not of our store, but of His."

And this is according to Scripture, as we read in **Hebrews 2 (KJV):14** Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

And to **Philippians 2 (KJV):6** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at

the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

And “that we too might be made partakers of His Divine Nature, not of our store, but of His”, is also according to Scripture, as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):3** According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

## Summary

There is not doubt that Augustine believed that Jesus Christ is God. He was definitely a believer.

He believed that Adam was a figure of Jesus Christ. So there is the offence of one, Adam, but the free gift is to many by Jesus Christ. One sinned to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. By one offence death reigned, but by the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness they which receive reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Judgment came upon all men to condemnation, but by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners, but by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. The law entered, that the offence might abound, but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Sin reigned unto death, but grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

He believed that the prophecies in the Old Testament pointed to Christ, and he quotes correctly from Isaiah, chapter 53.

He believed that Jesus Christ is the prince of the apostles.

He believed that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. He also believed Him to be the foundation of the Church.

And he believed that Jesus Christ is God, but became one of us to save us.

# The Ages

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate IX. Chapter II. 1–11, paragraph 6, page 65

6. But observe what Himself saith, “The things which were written in the law, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me.” And we know that the law extends from the time of which we have record, that is, from the beginning of the world: “In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1) Thence down to the time in which we are now living are six ages, this being the sixth, as you have often heard and know. The first age is reckoned from Adam to Noah; the second, from Noah to Abraham; and, as Matthew the evangelist duly follows and distinguishes, the third, from Abraham to David; the fourth, from David to the carrying away into Babylon; the fifth, from the carrying away into Babylon to John the Baptist; (Matthew 1:17) the sixth, from John the Baptist to the end of the world. Moreover, God made man after His own image on the sixth day, because in this sixth age is manifested the renewing of our mind through the gospel, after the image of Him who created us; (Colossians 3:10) and the water is turned into wine, that we may taste of Christ, now manifested in the law and the prophets. Hence “there were there six waterpots,” which He bade be filled with water. Now the six waterpots signify the six ages, which were not without prophecy. And those six periods, divided and separated as it were by joints, would be as empty vessels unless they were filled by Christ. Why did I say, the periods which would run fruitlessly on, unless the Lord Jesus were preached in them? Prophecies are fulfilled, the waterpots are full; but that the water may be turned into wine, Christ must be understood in that whole prophecy.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But observe what Himself saith, “The things which were written in the law, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me.””

He refers to **Luke 24 (KJV):44** And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me.

He continues, “And we know that the law extends from the time of which we have record, that is, from the beginning of the world: “In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1)”

He refers to **Genesis 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

He continues, “Thence down to the time in which we are now living are six ages, this being the sixth, as you have often heard and know. The first age is reckoned from Adam to Noah; the second, from Noah to Abraham; and, as Matthew the evangelist duly follows and distinguishes, the third, from Abraham to David; the fourth, from David to the carrying away into Babylon; the fifth, from the carrying away into Babylon to John the Baptist; (Matthew 1:17) the sixth, from John the Baptist to the end of the world.”

He refers to **Matthew 1 (KJV):17** So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

But nothing is said about ages in this Scripture. But in the sovereignty of God, there is symmetry in His plan and purpose.

He continues, “Moreover, God made man after His own image on the sixth day, because in this sixth age is manifested the renewing of our mind through the gospel, after the image of Him who created us; (Colossians 3:10) and the water is turned into wine, that we may taste of Christ, now manifested in the law and the prophets.”

He refers to **Colossians 3 (KJV):10** And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

He concludes, “Hence “there were there six waterpots,” which He bade be filled with water. Now the six waterpots signify the six ages, which were not without prophecy. And those six periods, divided and separated as it were by joints, would be as empty vessels unless they were filled by Christ. Why did I say, the periods which would run fruitlessly on, unless the Lord Jesus were preached in them? Prophecies are fulfilled, the waterpots are full; but that the water may be turned into wine, Christ must be understood in that whole prophecy.”

He is referring to the waterpots mentioned in **John 2 (KJV):6** And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. 9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom...

There are ages mentioned in the Scriptures. There is the “present age” and “the age to come” as we read in **Mark 10 (NASB):30** Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake, 30 but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last, first.

And in **Galatians 1 (KJV):3** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.

And in **Titus 2 (NASB):11** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

And there are ages to come as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

There are past ages as we read in **1 Corinthians 10 (NASB):11** Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Dr. Albert Grimes describes ages in the Biblical sense, as follows:

“What is an age in the Bible sense? An age in scripture is a period of time from one violent or decided change in the earth’s surface or condition to another, or a marked change involving the earth’s inhabitants. Or we could give this definition of the word “Age”. An age in scripture and in geology is from one cataclysmic or climatic change to another, in the earth’s surface or condition.

This definition is correct when we examine scripture. Beginning from the creation of the original earth in Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Then, in Genesis 1:2, “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

A cataclysmic change had taken place in the original earth which became the end of this first age or period of time.

The next age began with the reconditioning of this ruined earth, as described in Genesis 1:3-25. Now this second age came to an end with another violent change. The earth was flooded with water, mentioned in Genesis 7:19.

The next age began after the flood of Genesis 7:19. This age will continue until the Revelation of Christ, as he comes down to this earth again to set up his kingdom. Matthew 24:29,30. The earth will undergo a change which will end the age. Earthquakes and climatic conditions will change the earth.

The next age will begin with the thousand years reign of Christ on the earth. Revelation 20:1-6. And that age will end with the destruction of the earth’s surface with fire described in 2 Peter 3:10-13.

The next age will begin with the new heaven and earth of Revelation 21:1. This doubtless refers to the fullness of time referred to in Ephesians 1:10. This age will never end, but go on eternally.” **Book 15: God’s Divine Plan of the Ages, page 6**

<http://www.theriskofchrist.com/grimes/book15.pdf>

So we could conclude that there are 5 ages:

- The first beginning with the creation of the earth in Genesis 1:1 until the fall of Lucifer and the ruined earth in Genesis 1:2. This is known as the Creative Age.
- The second beginning with the ruined earth in Genesis 1:2 until Noah and the flood in Genesis 7:19. This is known as the Antediluvian Age.
- The third beginning just after the flood, from Genesis 7:19, until the second coming of Christ, the Revelation of Christ, when He comes to set up the Kingdom in Matthew 24:29-30, and Matthew 25:31. This is known as the Present Age.
- The fourth will be from the beginning of the Kingdom at Christ’s coming until the new heaven and earth in Revelation 21:1. This is known as the Kingdom Age.
- The fifth will be from the beginning of the new heaven and the earth to eternity. This is known as the Eternal Ages.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XV. Chapter IV. 1–42, paragraph 9, page 101**

9. But why at the sixth hour? Because at the sixth age of the world. In the Gospel, count



up as an hour each, the first age from Adam to Noah; the second, from Noah to Abraham; the third, from Abraham to David; the fourth, from David to the removing to Babylon; the fifth, from the removing to Babylon to the baptism of John: thence is the sixth being enacted. Why dost thou marvel? Jesus came, and, by humbling Himself, came to a well. He came wearied, because He carried weak flesh. At the sixth hour, because in the sixth age of the world. To a well, because to the depth of this our habitation. For which reason it is said in the psalm: “From the depth have I cried unto Thee, O Lord.” (Psalm 130:1) He sat, as I said, because He was humbled.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But why at the sixth hour?” He is referring to a reference in the previous paragraph 8 of his writing to **John 4 (KJV):3** He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. 4 And he must needs go through Samaria. 5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. 6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

He continues, “Because at the sixth age of the world. In the Gospel, count up as an hour each, the first age from Adam to Noah; the second, from Noah to Abraham; the third, from Abraham to David; the fourth, from David to the removing to Babylon; the fifth, from the removing to Babylon to the baptism of John: thence is the sixth being enacted. Why dost thou marvel? Jesus came, and, by humbling Himself, came to a well. He came wearied, because He carried weak flesh. At the sixth hour, because in the sixth age of the world. To a well, because to the depth of this our habitation. For which reason it is said in the psalm: “From the depth have I cried unto Thee, O Lord.” (Psalm 130:1) He sat, as I said, because He was humbled.”

He refers to **Psalm 130 (KJV):1** Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.

So we have Augustine’s thoughts on the ages in the Bible.

## The Kingdom Age

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine**

**Ten Homilies, The Epistle of St. John, Homily I. 1 John I. 1–II. 11, paragraph 13, page 467-468**

13. “For he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth.” (1 John 2:11) A great thing, my brethren: mark it, we beseech you. “He that hateth his brother walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.” What so blind as these who hate their brethren? For that ye may know that they are blind, they have stumbled at a Mountain. I say the same things often, that they may not slip out of your memory. The Stone which was “cut out of the Mountain without hands,” is it not Christ, who came of the kingdom of the Jews, without the work of man? (Daniel 2:34-35) Has not that Stone broken in pieces all the kingdoms of the earth, that is, all the dominations of idols and demons? Has not that Stone grown, and become a great mountain, and filled the whole earth? Do we point with the finger to this Mountain in like manner as the moon on its third day is pointed out to men? For example, when they wish people

to see the new moon, they say, Lo, the moon! lo, where it is! And if there be some there who are not sharp-sighted, and say, Where? then the finger is put forth that they may see it. Sometimes when they are ashamed to be thought blind, they say they have seen what they have not seen. Do we in this way point out the Church, my brethren? Is it not open? Is it not manifest? Has it not possessed all nations? Is not that fulfilled which so many years before was promised to Abraham, that in his seed should all nations be blessed? (Genesis 22:18) It was promised to one believer, and the world is filled with thousands of believers. Behold here the mountain filling the whole face of the earth! Behold the city of which it is said, “A city set upon a mountain cannot be hid!” (Matthew 5:14) But those stumble at the mountain, and when it is said to them, Go up; “There is no mountain,” say they, and dash their heads against it sooner than seek a habitation there. Esaias was read yesterday; whosoever of you was awake not with his eyes only but with his ear, and not the ear of the body but the ear of the heart, noted this; “In the last days shall the mountain of the house of the Lord be manifest, prepared upon the top of the mountains.” (Isaiah 2:2) What so manifest as a mountain? But there are even mountains unknown, because they are situated in one part of the earth. Which of you knows Mount Olympus? Just as the people who dwell there do not know our Giddaba. These mountains are in different parts of the earth. But not so that Mountain, for it hath filled the whole face of the earth, and of it is said, “Prepared upon the top of the mountains.” It is a Mountain above the tops of all mountains. “And,” saith he, “to it shall be gathered all nations.” Who can fail to be aware of this Mountain? Who breaks his head by stumbling against it? Who is ignorant of the city set upon a mountain? But marvel not that it is unknown by these who hate the brethren, because they walk in darkness and know not whither they go, because the darkness hath blinded their eyes. They do not see the Mountain: I would not have thee marvel; they have no eyes. How is it they have no eyes? Because the darkness hath blinded them. How do we prove this? Because they hate the brethren, in that, while they are offended at Africans, they separate themselves from the whole earth: in that they do not tolerate for the peace of Christ those whom they defame, and do tolerate for the sake of Donatus those whom they condemn.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““For he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth.” (1 John 2:11)”

He refers to **1 John 2 (KJV):11** But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

He continues, “A great thing, my brethren: mark it, we beseech you. “He that hateth his brother walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.” What so blind as these who hate their brethren? For that ye may know that they are blind, they have stumbled at a Mountain. I say the same things often, that they may not slip out of your memory. The Stone which was “cut out of the Mountain without hands,” is it not Christ, who came of the kingdom of the Jews, without the work of man? (Daniel 2:34-35)”

He refers to **Daniel 2 (KJV):34** Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

He continues, “Has not that Stone broken in pieces all the kingdoms of the earth, that is, all the dominations of idols and demons? Has not that Stone grown, and become a great mountain, and filled the whole earth? Do we point with the finger to this Mountain in like manner as the moon on its third day is pointed out to men? For example, when they wish people to see the new moon, they say, Lo, the moon! lo, where it is! and if there be some there who are not sharp-sighted, and say, Where? Then the finger is put forth that they may see it. Sometimes when they are ashamed to be thought blind, they say they have seen what they have not seen. Do we in this way point out the Church, my brethren? Is it not open? Is it not manifest? Has it not possessed all nations? Is not that fulfilled which so many years before was promised to Abraham, that in his seed should all nations be blessed? (Genesis 22:18)”

He refers in context to **Genesis 22 (KJV)**:15 And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, 16 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: 17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; 18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

He continues, “It was promised to one believer, and the world is filled with thousands of believers. Behold here the mountain filling the whole face of the earth! Behold the city of which it is said, “A city set upon a mountain cannot be hid!” (Matthew 5:14)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV)**:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

He continues, “But those stumble at the mountain, and when it is said to them, Go up; “There is no mountain,” say they, and dash their heads against it sooner than seek a habitation there. Esaias was read yesterday; whosoever of you was awake not with his eyes only but with his ear, and not the ear of the body but the ear of the heart, noted this; “In the last days shall the mountain of the house of the Lord be manifest, prepared upon the top of the mountains.” (Isaiah 2:2)”

He refers in context to **Isaiah 2 (KJV)**:1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. 5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.

The prophet Isaiah is speaking of the Kingdom of Israel, for we read in verse 3, “for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem”. The “mountain of the Lord” refers to the Kingdom of Israel, which is where “the house of the God of Jacob” is. Augustine did not understand that Israel would rise to the head of the nations when Messiah returns, that is, when Jesus Christ returns, and Israel again repents and returns to God. This is referred to in **Zechariah 12 (KJV)**:8 In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of

Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. 9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Augustine continues, “What so manifest as a mountain? But there are even mountains unknown, because they are situated in one part of the earth. Which of you knows Mount Olympus? Just as the people who dwell there do not know our Giddaba. These mountains are in different parts of the earth. But not so that Mountain, for it hath filled the whole face of the earth, and of it is said, “Prepared upon the top of the mountains.” It is a Mountain above the tops of all mountains. “And,” saith he, “to it shall be gathered all nations.” Who can fail to be aware of this Mountain? Who breaks his head by stumbling against it? Who is ignorant of the city set upon a mountain? But marvel not that it is unknown by these who hate the brethren, because they walk in darkness and know not whither they go, because the darkness hath blinded their eyes. They do not see the Mountain: I would not have thee marvel; they have no eyes. How is it they have no eyes? Because the darkness hath blinded them. How do we prove this? Because they hate the brethren, in that, while they are offended at Africans, they separate themselves from the whole earth: in that they do not tolerate for the peace of Christ those whom they defame, and do tolerate for the sake of Donatus those whom they condemn.”

The “mountain of the Lord”, referred to in Isaiah 2:3, refers to Israel in the Kingdom Age. Augustine thought that he was living in the Kingdom Age where the Church was reigning with Christ, because Rome was ruling the world in his time, and Rome had embraced the Church. But during the Kingdom Age, Christ will rule the nations with a rod of iron as we read in **Revelation 2 (KJV):27** And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

And in **Revelation 12 (KJV):5** And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

His second coming is describe in **Revelation 19 (KJV):11** And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords. 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

He will come to rule at the end of the tribulation as we read in **Revelation 19**

**(KJV):**19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

After this, Satan will be bound for a thousand years as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):**1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

The thousand year reign of Christ in the Kingdom Age then begins as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):**4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

#### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate IV. Chapter I. 19–33, paragraph 4, page 26-27**

4. “And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias?” For they knew that Elias was to precede Christ. For to no Jew was the name of Christ unknown. They did not think that he was the Christ; but they did not think that Christ would not come at all. When they were hoping that He would come, they were offended at Him when He was present, and stumbled at Him as on a low stone. For He was as yet a small stone, already indeed cut out of the mountain without hands; as saith Daniel the prophet, that he saw a stone cut out of the mountain without hands. But what follows? “And that stone,” saith he, “grew and became a great mountain and filled the whole face of the earth.” (Daniel 2:34-35) Mark then, my beloved brethren, what I say: Christ, before the Jews, was already cut out from the mountain. The prophet wishes that by the mountain should be understood the Jewish kingdom. But the kingdom of the Jews had not filled the whole face of the earth. The stone was cut out from thence, because from thence was the Lord born on His advent among men. And wherefore without hands? Because without the cooperation of man did the Virgin bear Christ. Now then was that stone cut out without hands before the eyes of the Jews; but it was humble. Not without reason; because not yet had that stone increased and filled the whole earth: that He showed in His kingdom, which is the Church, with which He has filled the whole face of the earth. Because then it had not yet increased, they stumbled at Him as at a stone: and that happened in them which is written, “Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever that stone shall fall, it will grind them to powder.” (Luke 20:18) At first they fell upon Him lowly: as the lofty One He shall come upon them; but that He may grind them to powder when He comes in His exaltation, He first broke them in His lowliness. They stumbled at Him, and were broken; they



were not ground, but broken: He will come exalted and will grind them. But the Jews were to be pardoned because they stumbled at a stone which had not yet increased. What sort of persons are those who stumble at the mountain itself? Already you know who they are of whom I speak. Those who deny the Church diffused through the whole world, do not stumble at the lowly stone, but at the mountain itself: because this the stone became as it grew. The blind Jews did not see the lowly stone: but how great blindness not to see the mountain!

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias?” For they knew that Elias was to precede Christ. For to no Jew was the name of Christ unknown. They did not think that he was the Christ; but they did not think that Christ would not come at all.”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):19** And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? 20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. 21 And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

He continues, “When they were hoping that He would come, they were offended at Him when He was present, and stumbled at Him as on a low stone. For He was as yet a small stone, already indeed cut out of the mountain without hands; as saith Daniel the prophet, that he saw a stone cut out of the mountain without hands. But what follows? “And that stone,” saith he “grew and became a great mountain and filled the whole face of the earth.” (Daniel 2:34-35)”

He refers to **Daniel 2 (KJV):34** Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

He continues, as he then interprets, “Mark then, my beloved brethren, what I say: Christ, before the Jews, was already cut out from the mountain. The prophet wishes that by the mountain should be understood the Jewish kingdom. But the kingdom of the Jews had not filled the whole face of the earth. The stone was cut out from thence, because from thence was the Lord born on His advent among men. And wherefore without hands? Because without the cooperation of man did the Virgin bear Christ. Now then was that stone cut out without hands before the eyes of the Jews; but it was humble. Not without reason; because not yet had that stone increased and filled the whole earth: that He showed in His kingdom, which is the Church, with which He has filled the whole face of the earth. Because then it had not yet increased, they stumbled at Him as at a stone: and that happened in them which is written, “Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever that stone shall fall, it will grind them to powder.” (Luke 20:18)”

He refers in context to **Luke 20 (KJV):17** And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? 18 Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

He continues, “At first they fell upon Him lowly: as the lofty One He shall come upon them; but that He may grind them to powder when He comes in His exaltation, He first broke

them in His lowliness. They stumbled at Him, and were broken; they were not ground, but broken: He will come exalted and will grind them. But the Jews were to be pardoned because they stumbled at a stone which had not yet increased. What sort of persons are those who stumble at the mountain itself? Already you know who they are of whom I speak. Those who deny the Church diffused through the whole world, do not stumble at the lowly stone, but at the mountain itself: because this the stone became as it grew. The blind Jews did not see the lowly stone: but how great blindness not to see the mountain!”

Augustine did not understand the timing of the event spoken of by Daniel. Let us read in context in **Daniel 2 (KJV):29** As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. 30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, has just had a dream. Daniel will now first tell him the dream he had, and then explain it as we continue in **Daniel 2 (KJV):31** Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. 32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. 34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

Daniel will now explain the dream as we continue to read in **Daniel 2 (KJV):36** This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. 37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. 38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. 39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

Daniel, by revelation from the Lord, is interpreting the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. And Nebuchadnezzar later on became a believer as we read in **Daniel 4 (KJV):34** And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: 35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? 36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. 37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

Now the head of gold in the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in Daniel 2 was the first kingdom of Babylon. The breast and arms of silver was the next kingdom of the Medes and Persians. This we know from history, and the book of Daniel itself. Daniel will now interpret Belshazzar's dream, who was the king who reigned over Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar, his father, as we read in **Daniel 5 (KJV)**: 17 Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation. 18 O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: 19 And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down. 20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him: 21 And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will. 22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; 23 But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified: 24 Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written. 25 And this is the writing that was written, Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin. 26 This is the interpretation of the thing: Mene; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. 27 Tekel; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. 28 Peres; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians. 29 Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and put a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom. 30 In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. 31 And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.

Now after the silver kingdom of the Medes and Persians, the third kingdom mentioned in Daniel 2:39 was to be a "kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth". We know that this was the kingdom of Greece. This is confirmed in Daniel's dream of four beasts in Daniel 7:1-8, of which the third beast was as in **Daniel 7 (KJV)**: 6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.

The four heads were the four kingdoms into which the kingdom of Greece was divided when Alexander the Great died.

Then the fourth kingdom mentioned in Daniel 2:40 was to be "strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise." This kingdom was the kingdom of Rome, which was presently ruling in the time of Augustine.

We now continue to read in **Daniel 2 (KJV)**: 41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as

the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

The Roman empire became divided after Augustine, and part was centered in Rome, and part was centered in Constantinople. But the division of the kingdom into ten toes has not been fulfilled yet. And it will be fulfilled when in the “the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed”, which relates to the Kingdom Age. So this part of the prophecy is yet to be fulfilled.

We now continue to read in **Daniel 2 (KJV)**:45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Augustine thought that he was living in the time when God had set up His Kingdom, and he seemed to be reigning with Christ, because the Roman empire had nominally become Christian.

We continue to read in **Daniel 2 (KJV)**:46 Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him. 47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret. 48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon. 49 Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel sat in the gate of the king.

Daniel’s interpretation of the dream struck a chord with Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel was not told the dream of the king by the king himself, and the dream and its interpretation was a total revelation of the Holy Spirit to Daniel.

Israel did stumble at the stone, which was the fulfillment of the prophecy in **Psalms 118 (KJV)**:22 The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. 23 This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

And in **Isaiah 8 (KJV)**:14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

And Jesus spoke to the Jews as we read in **Matthew 21 (KJV)**:42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. 45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. 46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

The “nation” He was speaking of in verse 43 is the Church as we read in **1 Peter 2**

**(KJV):9** But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;

When the disciples asked Jesus if He was going to set up the kingdom now for Israel, He responded as in **Acts 1 (KJV):6** When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

Augustine does not refer to the prophecy concerning Israel in **Daniel 9 (KJV):24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

So 69 weeks have been fulfilled of this prophecy of Daniel when Messiah was cut off. There is still one week left of the seventy in which the Lord will again deal with Israel. This week is known as the time of Jacob's trouble as we read in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV):4** And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5 For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. 8 For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: 9 But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

This final week will be the great tribulation that Daniel prophesied of in **Daniel 12 (KJV):1** And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

The gap of time between the 69th week and the 70th week is explained by Jesus in **Luke 21 (KJV):24** And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.



When the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, the Lord will again deal with Israel in the time of tribulation, which Jesus also prophesied of in **Matthew 24 (KJV)**:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. 23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. 25 Behold, I have told you before. 26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. 27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. 28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. 29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

When Jesus comes again, it will be “as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west”, as in verse 27 above. We won’t be able to miss it. Every eye will see Him as we read in **Revelation 1 (KJV)**:7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

And when those who pierced him see him, it will be as we read in **Zechariah 12 (KJV)**:10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Israel will be saved in a single day as we read in **Isaiah 66 (KJV)**:7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. 8 Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. 9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. 10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: 11 That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. 12 For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees. 13 As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

The time of tribulation is outlined in the book of Revelation, from chapter 6 to chapter 19. The battle of Armageddon is described in chapter 19. And in chapter 20, the 1000 year reign of Christ is then described.

So the time when a “stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his

feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces”, and “the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth”, will be at the end of the tribulation period, after the battle of Armageddon, and the Lord sets up His Kingdom and reigns for a thousand years with the first resurrection saints.

Augustine thought that he was living in this period of 1000 years! We will now read of this in his thinking in the next section.

## **The Church Now Reigning with Christ a Thousand Years**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God  
Book XX, Chapter 17, page 436-437**

Chapter 17.—Of the Endless Glory of the Church.

“And I saw,” he says, “a great city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, but neither shall there be any more pain: because the former things have passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.” (Revelation 21:2-5) This city is said to come down out of heaven, because the grace with which God formed it is of heaven. Wherefore He says to it by Isaiah, “I am the Lord that formed thee.” (Isaiah 45:8) It is indeed descended from heaven from its commencement, since its citizens during the course of this world grow by the grace of God, which cometh down from above through the laver of regeneration in the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. But by God’s final judgment, which shall be administered by His Son Jesus Christ, there shall by God’s grace be manifested a glory so pervading and so new, that no vestige of what is old shall remain; for even our bodies shall pass from their old corruption and mortality to new incorruption and immortality. For to refer this promise to the present time, in which the saints are reigning with their King a thousand years, seems to me excessively barefaced, when it is most distinctly said, “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, but there shall be no more pain.” And who is so absurd, and blinded by contentious opinionativeness, as to be audacious enough to affirm that in the midst of the calamities of this mortal state, God’s people, or even one single saint, does live, or has ever lived, or shall ever live, without tears or pain,—the fact being that the holier a man is, and the fuller of holy desire, so much the more abundant is the tearfulness of his supplication? Are not these the utterances of a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem: “My tears have been my meat day and night;” (Psalm 42:3) and “Every night shall I make my bed to swim; with my tears shall I water my couch;” (Psalm 6:6) and “My groaning is not hid from Thee;” (Psalm 38:9) and “My sorrow was renewed?” (Psalm 39:2) Or are not those God’s children who groan, being burdened, not that they wish to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life? (2 Corinthians 5:4) Do not they even who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan within themselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of their

body? (Romans 8:23) Was not the Apostle Paul himself a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, and was he not so all the more when he had heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for his Israelitish brethren? (Romans 9:2) But when shall there be no more death in that city, except when it shall be said, “O death, where is thy contention? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin.” (1 Corinthians 15:55-56) Obviously there shall be no sin when it can be said, “Where is”—But as for the present it is not some poor weak citizen of this city, but this same Apostle John himself who says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8) No doubt, though this book is called the Apocalypse, there are in it many obscure passages to exercise the mind of the reader, and there are few passages so plain as to assist us in the interpretation of the others, even though we take pains; and this difficulty is increased by the repetition of the same things, in forms so different, that the things referred to seem to be different, although in fact they are only differently stated. But in the words, “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, but there shall be no more pain,” there is so manifest a reference to the future world and the immortality and eternity of the saints,—for only then and only there shall such a condition be realized,—that if we think this obscure, we need not expect to find anything plain in any part of Scripture.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““And I saw,” he says, “a great city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, but neither shall there be any more pain: because the former things have passed away. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.” (Revelation 21:2-5)

He refers in context to **Revelation 21 (KJV):2** And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

Augustine leaves out verse 1 which tells us the time that this new Jerusalem will come down from God out of heaven. This is revealed as in **Revelation 21 (KJV):1** And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

He continues as he then says, “This city is said to come down out of heaven, because the grace with which God formed it is of heaven. Wherefore He says to it by Isaiah, “I am the Lord that formed thee.” (Isaiah 45:8)”

He refers to **Isaiah 45 (KJV):8** Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it.

It is not clear that Isaiah is referring to the New Jerusalem here.

It also says in **Isaiah 44 (KJV):24** Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;

But Augustine continues, “It is indeed descended from heaven from its commencement, since its citizens during the course of this world grow by the grace of God, which cometh down from above through the laver of regeneration in the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.”

Nothing is mentioned about the grace of God, or the laver of regeneration or the Holy Ghost in these Scriptures. But he seems to believe that this is in the process of being fulfilled now.

He then continues, “But by God’s final judgment, which shall be administered by His Son Jesus Christ, there shall by God’s grace be manifested a glory so pervading and so new, that no vestige of what is old shall remain; for even our bodies shall pass from their old corruption and mortality to new incorruption and immortality.”

He then explains, “For to refer this promise to the present time, in which the saints are reigning with their King a thousand years, seems to me excessively barefaced, when it is most distinctly said, “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, but there shall be no more pain.”

Augustine apparently believed that the Church, that is, “the saints”, were at “the present time”, the time in which he lived, “reigning with their King a thousand years”.

He then continues, as he says, “And who is so absurd, and blinded by contentious opinionativeness, as to be audacious enough to affirm that in the midst of the calamities of this mortal state, God’s people, or even one single saint, does live, or has ever lived, or shall ever live, without tears or pain,—the fact being that the holier a man is, and the fuller of holy desire, so much the more abundant is the tearfulness of his supplication?”

He at least recognized that the first heaven and the first earth had not yet passed away, for there was still “the calamities of this mortal state”, tears, and pain.

In his explanation we see that Augustine believed that the Church in his time, that is “the present time”, to be presently reigning with Christ, their King, in the thousand year reign mentioned in Revelation 20:1-7. He also believes correctly that the future promise of “a glory so pervading and so new, that no vestige of what is old shall remain; for even our bodies shall pass from their old corruption and mortality to new incorruption and immortality,” has not arrived yet, for God has not wiped away all tears from the eyes of the saints, and there is still death, sorrow, and crying, and pain.

However, we shall see that he still believed that the Church was “reigning with their King a thousand years”, because the Roman Empire had nominally embraced Christianity in his time. However, the reign of Christ for a thousand years is also a yet future time. One reason this is so is because the tribulation has not happened yet. We shall explain more as we progress.

Augustine continues, “Are not these the utterances of a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem: “My tears have been my meat day and night;” (Psalm 42:3) and “Every night shall I make my bed to swim; with my tears shall I water my couch;” (Psalm 6:6) and “My groaning is not hid from Thee;” (Psalm 38:9) and “My sorrow was renewed?” (Psalm 39:2)”

He refers to **Psalm 42 (KJV):3** My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?

And to **Psalm 6 (KJV):6** I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.

And to **Psalm 38 (KJV):9** Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.

And to **Psalm 39 (KJV):2** I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred.

Now to repeat, Augustine has said above, speaking of the new Jerusalem, **“It is indeed descended from heaven from its commencement, since its citizens during the course of this world grow by the grace of God, which cometh down from above through the laver of regeneration in the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.”**

But we must remember the context in which we are reading in **Revelation 21 (KJV):4** And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

In verse 4 he says that the former things are passed away. In verse 5 he says, “I make all things new”. So in the new heaven and the new earth, mentioned in Revelation 21:1, in which the New Jerusalem descends, all death, pain, sorrow, and crying have passed away.

But Augustine continues, “Or are not those God’s children who groan, being burdened, not that they wish to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of life? (2 Corinthians 5:4)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):4** For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

And this will happen at the first resurrection which shall happen before the new heaven and the new earth, and even before the thousand year reign of Christ.

Augustine continues, “Do not they even who have the first fruits of the Spirit groan within themselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of their body? (Romans 8:23)”

Yes we do, as Paul clearly reveals in **Romans 8 (KJV):23** And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

The redemption of our body will happen at the first resurrection. Augustine continues, “Was not the Apostle Paul himself a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, and was he not so all the more when he had heaviness and continual sorrow of heart for his Israelitish brethren? (Romans 9:2)”

He refers in context to **Romans 9 (KJV):1** I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, 2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. 3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

But we read in **Galatians 4 (KJV):22** For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. 24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is,



and is in bondage with her children. 26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. 28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. 29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. 30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Paul speaks in verse 25 of the “Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children”. Paul then refers in verse 26 to “Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all”. So in that sense we can call ourselves, and Paul, citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. But we need to keep in mind that Jerusalem, which is now, “is in bondage with her children”. The new Jerusalem, of which we read of in Revelation 21:2, has not descended yet.

Augustine then continues, “But when shall there be no more death in that city, except when it shall be said, ‘O death, where is thy contention? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin.’ (1 Corinthians 15:55-56)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV)**: 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, and this will happen at the resurrection, when “the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed”. And this will happen at the rapture of the Church, just before the tribulation week.

Augustine continues, “Obviously there shall be no sin when it can be said, ‘Where is’—But as for the present it is not some poor weak citizen of this city, but this same Apostle John himself who says, ‘If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.’ (1 John 1:8)”

Augustine refers in context to **1 John 1 (KJV)**: 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Now Augustine concludes with uncertainty, as he then says, “No doubt, though this book is called the Apocalypse, there are in it many obscure passages to exercise the mind of the reader, and there are few passages so plain as to assist us in the interpretation of the others, even though we take pains; and this difficulty is increased by the repetition of the same things, in forms so different, that the things referred to seem to be different, although in fact they are only differently stated. But in the words, ‘God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, but there shall be no more pain,’ there is so manifest a reference to the future world and the immortality and eternity of the saints,—for only then and only there shall such a condition be realized,—that if we think this obscure, we need

not expect to find anything plain in any part of Scripture.”

The word “Apocalypse” means revelation. So he is saying that, even “though this book is called the Apocalypse, there are in it many obscure passages to exercise the mind of the reader, and there are few passages so plain as to assist us in the interpretation of the others, even though we take pains; and this difficulty is increased by the repetition of the same things, in forms so different, that the things referred to seem to be different, although in fact they are only differently stated.”

He did understand that “there is so manifest a reference to the future world and the immortality and eternity of the saints” in the book of Revelation.

## Summary

Concerning the ages, Augustine says, “And we know that the law extends from the time of which we have record, that is, from the beginning of the world: “In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1)”

And then he adds, “Thence down to the time in which we are now living are six ages, this being the sixth, as you have often heard and know. The first age is reckoned from Adam to Noah; the second, from Noah to Abraham; and, as Matthew the evangelist duly follows and distinguishes, the third, from Abraham to David; the fourth, from David to the carrying away into Babylon; the fifth, from the carrying away into Babylon to John the Baptist; (Matthew 1:17) the sixth, from John the Baptist to the end of the world.”

But an age in scripture, and in geology, is from one cataclysmic or climatic change to another, in the earth’s surface or condition.

So the first age, the Creative Age, began when God created the heavens and the earth, as in **Genesis 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

This age ended with the fall of Lucifer. Because of his sin, the earth became formless and void, as we read in **Genesis 1 (KJV):2** And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

We quoted Dr. Albert Grimes, who said, “The next age began with the reconditioning of this ruined earth, as described in Genesis 1:3-25. Now this second age came to an end with another violent change. The earth was flooded with water, mentioned in Genesis 7:19.”

This is known as The Antediluvian Age.

Dr. Grimes continues, “The next age began after the flood of Genesis 7:19. This age will continue until the Revelation of Christ, as he comes down to this earth again to set up his kingdom. Matthew 24:29,30. The earth will undergo a change which will end the age. Earthquakes and climatic conditions will change the earth.”

This is known as The Present Age.

Dr. Grimes continues, “The next age will begin with the thousand years reign of Christ on the earth. Revelation 20:1-6. And that age will end with the destruction of the earth’s surface with fire described in 2 Peter 3:10-13.”

This is known as The Kingdom Age.

Dr. Grimes continues, “The next age will begin with the new heaven and earth of Revelation 21:1. This doubtless refers to the fullness of time referred to in Ephesians 1:10. This

age will never end, but go on eternally.” **Book 15: God’s Divine Plan of the Ages, page 6**  
<http://www.theriskofchrist.com/grimes/book15.pdf>

This is known as The Eternal Ages.

Now Augustine’s ages don’t really line up with the Scripture. But there are divisions of time called dispensations, which fit better to his thinking. Dispensations are divisions of the ages.

Dr. Grimes says, “The word “Dispensation” means the management, oversight, administration of other’s property, the office of a manager, overseer, stewardship. So it speaks of an administration by God of a certain period of human history. It’s a period of time in which man is tested as to his obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God. The dispensations do not relate to salvation. Faith in Christ in every age is the only way into the experience of salvation. We could say that a dispensation is a shorter period of time, dividing some of the ages which relate to man’s time. There are seven such Dispensations.” **Book 15: God’s Divine Plan of the Ages, page 10.**

In the Antediluvian Age, there are two dispensations. The first was the Dispensation of Innocence, which was when Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, and before they sinned. The second is the Dispensation of Conscience which was after they had sinned, and were driven out of the Garden of Eden. Then the Present Age consists of four dispensations. The first is the Dispensation of Human Government which began after the flood. The Dispensation of Promise begins with the calling of Abraham. The Dispensation of Law began with Moses when God gave him the law. The Dispensation of Grace began at the cross, and will last until the rapture of the Church just before the tribulation period begins, which is a parenthetical period before the Kingdom Age, which is also a dispensation.

But Augustine still believed that the Church was “reigning with their King a thousand years”, because the Roman Empire had nominally embraced Christianity in his time. He did not understand the divisions of time that are in the Scriptures. But he did understand that in the future, there will be a time when God shall wipe away every tear, and there shall be no more death, as we read in **Revelation 21 (KJV):4** And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

# The Book of Revelation

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XVII, Chapter 52, page 393

Chapter 52.—Whether We Should Believe What Some Think, That, as the Ten Persecutions Which are Past Have Been Fulfilled, There Remains No Other Beyond the Eleventh, Which Must Happen in the Very Time of Antichrist.

I do not think, indeed, that what some have thought or may think is rashly said or believed, that until the time of Antichrist the Church of Christ is not to suffer any persecutions besides those she has already suffered,—that is, *ten*,—and that the eleventh and last shall be inflicted by Antichrist. **They reckon as the first that made by Nero, the second by Domitian, the third by Trajan, the fourth by Antoninus, the fifth by Severus, the sixth by Maximin, the seventh by Decius, the eighth by Valerian, the ninth by Aurelian, the tenth by Diocletian and Maximian.** For as there were ten plagues in Egypt before the people of God could begin to go out, they think this is to be referred to as showing that the last persecution by Antichrist must be like the eleventh plague, in which the Egyptians, while following the Hebrews with hostility, perished in the Red Sea when the people of God passed through on dry land. Yet I do not think persecutions were prophetically signified by what was done in Egypt, however nicely and ingeniously those who think so may seem to have compared the two in detail, not by the prophetic Spirit, but by the conjecture of the human mind, which sometimes hits the truth, and sometimes is deceived. But what can those who think this say of the persecution in which the Lord Himself was crucified? In which number will they put it? And if they think the reckoning is to be made exclusive of this one, as if those must be counted which pertain to the body, and not that in which the Head Himself was set upon and slain, what can they make of that one which, after Christ ascended into heaven, took place in Jerusalem, when the blessed Stephen was stoned; when James the brother of John was slaughtered with the sword; when the Apostle Peter was imprisoned to be killed, and was set free by the angel; when the brethren were driven away and scattered from Jerusalem; when Saul, who afterward became the Apostle Paul, wasted the Church; and when he himself, publishing the glad tidings of the faith he had persecuted, suffered such things as he had inflicted, either from the Jews or from other nations, where he most fervently preached Christ everywhere? Why, then, do they think fit to start with Nero, when the Church in her growth had reached the times of Nero amid the most cruel persecutions; about which it would be too long to say anything? But if they think that only the persecutions made by kings ought to be reckoned, it was king Herod who also made a most grievous one after the ascension of the Lord. And what account do they give of Julian, whom they do not number in the ten? Did not he persecute the Church, who forbade the Christians to teach or learn liberal letters? Under him the elder Valentinian, who was the third emperor after him, stood forth as a confessor of the Christian faith, and was dismissed from his command in the army. I shall say nothing of what he did at Antioch, except to mention his being struck with wonder at the freedom and cheerfulness of one most faithful and steadfast young man, who, when many were seized to be tortured, was tortured during a whole day, and sang under the

instrument of torture, until the emperor feared lest he should succumb under the continued cruelties and put him to shame at last, which made him dread and fear that he would be yet more dishonorably put to the blush by the rest. Lastly, within our own recollection, did not Valens the Arian, brother of the foresaid Valentinian, waste the Catholic Church by great persecution throughout the East? But how unreasonable it is not to consider that the Church, which bears fruit and grows through the whole world, may suffer persecution from kings in some nations even when she does not suffer it in others! Perhaps, however, it was not to be reckoned a persecution when the king of the Goths, in Gothia itself, persecuted the Christians with wonderful cruelty, when there were none but Catholics there, of whom very many were crowned with martyrdom, as we have heard from certain brethren who had been there at that time as boys, and unhesitatingly called to mind that they had seen these things? And what took place in Persia of late? Was not persecution so hot against the Christians (if even yet it is allayed) that some of the fugitives from it came even to Roman towns? **When I think of these and the like things, it does not seem to me that the number of persecutions with which the Church is to be tried can be definitely stated. But, on the other hand, it is no less rash to affirm that there will be some persecutions by kings besides that last one, about which no Christian is in doubt. Therefore we leave this undecided, supporting or refuting neither side of this question, but only restraining men from the audacious presumption of affirming either of them.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “I do not think, indeed, that what some have thought or may think is rashly said or believed, that until the time of Antichrist the Church of Christ is not to suffer any persecutions besides those she has already suffered,—that is, ten,—and that the eleventh and last shall be inflicted by Antichrist. **They reckon as the first that made by Nero, the second by Domitian, the third by Trajan, the fourth by Antoninus, the fifth by Severus, the sixth by Maximin, the seventh by Decius, the eighth by Valerian, the ninth by Aurelian, the tenth by Diocletian and Maximian.**”

We will discuss this belief more in a moment.

Augustine then continues, “For as there were ten plagues in Egypt before the people of God could begin to go out, they think this is to be referred to as showing that the last persecution by Antichrist must be like the eleventh plague, in which the Egyptians, while following the Hebrews with hostility, perished in the Red Sea when the people of God passed through on dry land. Yet I do not think persecutions were prophetically signified by what was done in Egypt, however nicely and ingeniously those who think so may seem to have compared the two in detail, not by the prophetic Spirit, but by the conjecture of the human mind, which sometimes hits the truth, and sometimes is deceived.”

Augustine does not agree with this interpretation.

He then argues, “But what can those who think this say of the persecution in which the Lord Himself was crucified? In which number will they put it? And if they think the reckoning is to be made exclusive of this one, as if those must be counted which pertain to the body, and not that in which the Head Himself was set upon and slain, what can they make of that one which, after Christ ascended into heaven, took place in Jerusalem, when the blessed Stephen was stoned; when James the brother of John was slaughtered with the sword; when the Apostle Peter was imprisoned to be killed, and was set free by the angel; when the brethren were driven away and scattered from Jerusalem; when Saul, who afterward became the Apostle Paul, wasted



the Church; and when he himself, publishing the glad tidings of the faith he had persecuted, suffered such things as he had inflicted, either from the Jews or from other nations, where he most fervently preached Christ everywhere?”

No one would deny that those were examples of persecution.

He continues, “Why, then, do they think fit to start with Nero, when the Church in her growth had reached the times of Nero amid the most cruel persecutions; about which it would be too long to say anything?”

Persecution is promised to all that will live godly, as we read in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):12** Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

And we read in **Matthew 24 (KJV):13** But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

But the reason they may start with Nero is because it seems to be referred to by Scripture. A prophecy of ten persecutions is given concerning what the church in Smyrna would suffer, that is, “tribulation ten days”, as in **Revelation 2 (KJV):8** And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; 9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. 10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. 11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

History tells us that ten great persecutions occurred under the reigns of the following Roman emperors with approximate dates of their reigns in parentheses:

1. Nero (54-68 A.D.) (persecuted Church from 64 to 66 A.D.)
2. Domitian (81-96 A.D.) (persecuted Church from 95 to 96 A.D.)
3. Trajan (98-117 A.D.) (persecuted Church from 100 to 115 A.D.)
4. Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (161-180 A.D.) (persecuted Church from 168 to 177 A.D.)
5. Septimius Severus (193-211 A.D.) (persecuted Church from 203 to 210 A.D.)
6. Maximinus (235-238 A.D.) (persecuted Church from 235 to 237 A.D.)
7. Decius (249-251 A.D.) (persecuted Church from 250 to 251 A.D.)
8. Valerian (253-260 A.D.) (persecuted Church from 257 to 260 A.D.)
9. Aurelian (270-275 A.D.) (persecuted Church from 275 to 275 A.D.)
10. Diocletian (284-305 A.D.) (persecution of the Church lasted from 303 to 313 A.D.)

Augustine continues, “But if they think that only the persecutions made by kings ought to be reckoned, it was king Herod who also made a most grievous one after the ascension of the Lord.”

He may refer to the persecution mentioned in **Acts 8 (KJV):1** And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

This may have also related to the death of Stephen, as we read in **Acts 11 (KJV):19** Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

He continues, “And what account do they give of Julian, whom they do not number in the ten? Did not he persecute the Church, who forbade the Christians to teach or learn liberal letters? Under him the elder Valentinian, who was the third emperor after him, stood forth as a confessor of the Christian faith, and was dismissed from his command in the army. I shall say nothing of what he did at Antioch, except to mention his being struck with wonder at the freedom and cheerfulness of one most faithful and steadfast young man, who, when many were seized to be tortured, was tortured during a whole day, and sang under the instrument of torture, until the emperor feared lest he should succumb under the continued cruelties and put him to shame at last, which made him dread and fear that he would be yet more dishonorably put to the blush by the rest.”

The Julian he is speaking of is known in history as Julian the Apostate. Here is a short history of him.

### **Persecution Under Julian the Apostate**

This emperor was the son of Julius Constantius, and the nephew of Constantine the Great. He studied the rudiments of grammar under the inspection of Mardonius, a eunuch, and a heathen of Constantinople. His father sent him some time after to Nicomedia, to be instructed in the Christian religion, by the bishop of Eusebius, his kinsman, but his principles were corrupted by the pernicious doctrines of Ecebolius the rhetorician, and Maximus the magician.

Constantius, dying the year 361, Julian succeeded him, and had no sooner attained the imperial dignity than he renounced Christianity and embraced paganism, which had for some years fallen into great disrepute. Though he restored the idolatrous worship, he made no public edicts against Christianity. He recalled all banished pagans, allowed the free exercise of religion to every sect, but deprived all Christians of offices at court, in the magistracy, or in the army. He was chaste, temperate, vigilant, laborious, and pious; yet he prohibited any Christian from keeping a school or public seminary of learning, and deprived all the Christian clergy of the privileges granted them by Constantine the Great.

Bishop Basil made himself first famous by his opposition to Arianism, which brought upon him the vengeance of the Arian bishop of Constantinople; he equally opposed paganism. The emperor's agents in vain tampered with Basil by means of promises, threats, and racks, he was firm in the faith, and remained in prison to undergo some other sufferings, when the emperor came accidentally to Ancyra. Julian determined to examine Basil himself, when that holy man being brought before him, the emperor did every thing in his power to dissuade him from persevering in the faith. Basil not only continued as firm as ever, but, with a prophetic spirit foretold the death of the emperor, and that he should be tormented in the other life. Enraged at what he heard, Julian commanded that the body of Basil should be torn every day in seven different parts, until his skin and flesh were entirely mangled. This inhuman sentence was executed with rigor, and the martyr expired under its severities, on June 28, A.D. 362. Donatus, bishop of Arezzo, and Hilarinus, a hermit, suffered about the same time; also Gordian, a Roman magistrate. Artemius, commander in chief of the Roman forces in Egypt, being a Christian, was deprived of his commission, then of his estate, and lastly of his head.

The persecution raged dreadfully about the latter end of the year 363; but, as many of the particulars have not been handed down to us, it is necessary to remark in general, that in

Palestine many were burnt alive, others were dragged by their feet through the streets naked until they expired; some were scalded to death, many stoned, and great numbers had their brains beaten out with clubs. In Alexandria, innumerable were the martyrs who suffered by the sword, burning, crucifixion and stoning. In Arethusa, several were ripped open, and corn being put into their bellies, swine were brought to feed therein, which, in devouring the grain, likewise devoured the entrails of the martyrs, and in Thrace, Emilianus was burnt at a stake; and Domitius murdered in a cave, whither he had fled for refuge.

The emperor, Julian the apostate, died of a wound which he received in his Persian expedition, A.D. 363, and even while expiring, uttered the most horrid blasphemies. He was succeeded by Jovian, who restored peace to the Church.

After the decease of Jovian, Valentinian succeeded to the empire, and associated to himself Valens, who had the command in the east, and was an Arian and of an unrelenting and persecuting disposition.”

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/history/foxs-book-of-martyrs/persecution-under-julian-the-apostate.html>

This persecution seems to have lasted about a year or two, and was after the ten mentioned above, and it was after Constantine made peace with the Church. So it was after the 10 great persecutions. This is not to deny that it was a persecution.

Augustine continues, “Lastly, within our own recollection, did not Valens the Arian, brother of the foresaid Valentinian, waste the Catholic Church by great persecution throughout the East?”

“Valentinian the Great, was Roman emperor from 364 to 375. Upon becoming emperor he made his brother Valens his co-emperor, giving him rule of the eastern provinces while Valentinian retained the west.” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valentinian\\_I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valentinian_I)

We read of Valens in Wikipedia:

“During his reign, Valens had to confront the theological diversity that was beginning to create division in the Empire. Julian (361–363), had tried to revive the pagan religions. His reactionary attempt took advantage of the dissensions among the different Christian factions, and a largely Pagan rank and file military. However, in spite of broad support, his actions were often viewed as excessive, and before he died in a campaign against the Persians, he was often treated with disdain. His death was considered a sign from God.

Valens was baptised by the Arian bishop of Constantinople before he set out on his first war against the Goth. While the Nicene Christian writers of his time identified Valens with the Arian faction and accused him of persecuting Nicene Christians, modern historians have described both Valens and Valentinian I as primarily interested in maintaining social order and have minimized their theological concerns. Although Athanasius was impelled, under his reign, to briefly go into hiding, Valens maintained a close dependency on his brother Valentinian and treated St. Basil mildly, both of whom supported the Nicene position. Not long after Valens died the cause of Arianism in the Roman East was to come to an end. His successor Theodosius I would favor the Nicene Creed and suppress the Arians.”

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valens#Struggles\\_with\\_the\\_religious\\_nature\\_of\\_the\\_Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valens#Struggles_with_the_religious_nature_of_the_Empire)

Augustine continues, “But how unreasonable it is not to consider that the Church, which

bears fruit and grows through the whole world, may suffer persecution from kings in some nations even when she does not suffer it in others! Perhaps, however, it was not to be reckoned a persecution when the king of the Goths, in Gothia itself, persecuted the Christians with wonderful cruelty, when there were none but Catholics there, of whom very many were crowned with martyrdom, as we have heard from certain brethren who had been there at that time as boys, and unhesitatingly called to mind that they had seen these things? And what took place in Persia of late? Was not persecution so hot against the Christians (if even yet it is allayed) that some of the fugitives from it came even to Roman towns? **When I think of these and the like things, it does not seem to me that the number of persecutions with which the Church is to be tried can be definitely stated. But, on the other hand, it is no less rash to affirm that there will be some persecutions by kings besides that last one, about which no Christian is in doubt. Therefore we leave this undecided, supporting or refuting neither side of this question, but only restraining men from the audacious presumption of affirming either of them.**"

Augustine did not see the ten persecutions he listed as the fulfillment of prophecy. But it is interesting that the historical list also agrees with Augustine's list, as he says "...by Nero, the second by Domitian, the third by Trajan, the fourth by Antoninus, the fifth by Severus, the sixth by Maximin, the seventh by Decius, the eighth by Valerian, the ninth by Aurelian, the tenth by Diocletian and Maximian."

Now when we consider the messages to the seven churches in Revelation 2:1 to 3:22, we see that they represent seven periods in Church history. The seven periods are as follows:

1. Ephesus A.D. 70 to A.D. 170
2. Smyrna A.D. 170 to A.D. 312
3. Pergamos A.D. 312 to A.D. 606
4. Thyatira A.D. 606 to A.D. 1520
5. Sardis A.D. 1520 to A.D. 1750
6. Philadelphia A.D. 1750 to the rapture
7. Laodicea A.D. 1750 through the tribulation

These churches were real churches at the time of John's writing. The reason for believing these churches are representative periods in the history of the Church is in part due to the historical validity of the ten persecutions, which seem to represent a block in time, ending with the acceptance of the Church by Constantine.

But the main reason for believing these churches are representative periods in the history of the Church is because of the message to the Church at Philadelphia in **Revelation 3 (KJV):10** Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.  
11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

The "hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth", must refer to the great tribulation spoken of by the prophet Daniel in **Daniel 12 (KJV):1** And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

And Jesus spoke of this time also in **Matthew 24 (KJV):21** For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. This time of great tribulation is still to come.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God  
Book XX, Chapters 6-9, page 425-431**

**Chapter 6.—What is the First Resurrection, and What the Second.**

After that He adds the words, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.” (John 5:25-26) As yet He does not speak of the second resurrection, that is, the resurrection of the body, which shall be in the end, but of the first, which now is. It is for the sake of making this distinction that He says, “The hour is coming, and now is.” Now this resurrection regards not the body, but the soul. **For souls, too, have a death of their own in wickedness and sins, whereby they are the dead of whom the same lips say, “Suffer the dead to bury their dead,” (Matthew 8:22)—that is, let those who are dead in soul bury them that are dead in body. It is of these dead, then—the dead in ungodliness and wickedness—that He says, “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.” “They that hear,” that is, they who obey, believe, and persevere to the end. Here no difference is made between the good and the bad. For it is good for all men to hear His voice and live, by passing to the life of godliness from the death of ungodliness. Of this death the Apostle Paul says, “Therefore all are dead, and He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again.” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15) Thus all, without one exception, were dead in sins, whether original or voluntary sins, sins of ignorance, or sins committed against knowledge; and for all the dead there died the one only person who lived, that is, who had no sin whatever, in order that they who live by the remission of their sins should live, not to themselves, but to Him who died for all, for our sins, and rose again for our justification, that we, believing in Him who justifies the ungodly, and being justified from ungodliness or quickened from death, may be able to attain to the first resurrection which now is. For in this first resurrection none have a part save those who shall be eternally blessed; but in the second, of which He goes on to speak, all, as we shall learn, have a part, both the blessed and the wretched. The one is the resurrection of mercy, the other of judgment. And therefore it is written in the psalm, “I will sing of mercy and of judgment: unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing.” (Psalm 101:1)**

And of this judgment He went on to say, “And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.” Here He shows that He will come to judge in that flesh in which He had come to be judged. For it is to show this He says, “because He is the Son of man.” **And then follow the words for our purpose: “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.” (John 5:28-29) This judgment He uses here in the same sense as a little before, when He says, “He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath**



everlasting life, and shall not come into *judgment*, but is passed from death to life;" *i.e.*, by having a part in the first resurrection, by which a transition from death to life is made in this present time, he shall not come into damnation, which He mentions by the name of judgment, as also in the place where He says, "but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment," *i.e.*, of damnation. He, therefore, who would not be damned in the second resurrection, let him rise in the first. For "the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live," *i.e.*, shall not come into damnation, which is called the second death; into which death, after the second or bodily resurrection, they shall be hurled who do not rise in the first or spiritual resurrection. For "the hour is coming" (but here He does not say, "and now is," because it shall come in the end of the world in the last and greatest judgment of God) "when all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth." He does not say, as in the first resurrection, "And they that Hear shall live." For all shall not live, at least with such life as ought alone to be called life because it alone is blessed. For some kind of life they must have in order to hear, and come forth from the graves in their rising bodies. And why all shall not live He teaches in the words that follow: "They that have done good, to the resurrection of life,"—these are they who shall live; "but they that have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment,"—these are they who shall not live, for they shall die in the second death. They have done evil because their life has been evil; and their life has been evil because it has not been renewed in the first or spiritual resurrection which now is, or because they have not persevered to the end in their renewed life. As, then, there are two regenerations, of which I have already made mention,—the one according to faith, and which takes place in the present life by means of baptism; the other according to the flesh, and which shall be accomplished in its incorruption and immortality by means of the great and final judgment,—so are there also two resurrections,—the one the first and spiritual resurrection, which has place in this life, and preserves us from coming into the second death; the other the second, which does not occur now, but in the end of the world, and which is of the body, not of the soul, and which by the last judgment shall dismiss some into the second death, others into that life which has no death.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "After that He adds the words, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." (John 5:25-26)"

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):**25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.  
26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

He continues, "As yet He does not speak of the second resurrection, that is, the resurrection of the body, which shall be in the end, but of the first, which now is. It is for the sake of making this distinction that He says, "The hour is coming, and now is." Now this resurrection regards not the body, but the soul. **For souls, too, have a death of their own in wickedness and sins, whereby they are the dead of whom the same lips say, "Suffer the dead to bury their dead," (Matthew 8:22)"**

He refers to **Matthew 8 (KJV):**22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

He then explains, “—that is, let those who are dead in soul bury them that are dead in body. It is of these dead, then—the dead in ungodliness and wickedness—that He says, “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.” “They that hear,” that is, they who obey, believe, and persevere to the end. Here no difference is made between the good and the bad. For it is good for all men to hear His voice and live, by passing to the life of godliness from the death of ungodliness.”

But he confuses the life of the soul with the life of the spirit. Jesus refers to those who were alive, but spiritually dead in Matthew 8:22.

Jesus explained to Nicodemus what happens when we are born again in **John 3 (KJV):3** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

When we are born again, our spirit is born of the Spirit of God. Our soul will then be renewed as we walk in the light of the word of God, and grow in grace and knowledge.

Augustine continues, “Of this death the Apostle Paul says, “Therefore all are dead, and He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again.” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):14** For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

He continues, “Thus all, without one exception, were dead in sins, whether original or voluntary sins, sins of ignorance, or sins committed against knowledge; and for all the dead there died the one only person who lived, that is, who had no sin whatever, in order that they who live by the remission of their sins should live, not to themselves, but to Him who died for all, for our sins, and rose again for our justification, that we, believing in Him who justifies the ungodly, and being justified from ungodliness or quickened from death, may be able to attain to the first resurrection which now is.”

It is true that we were dead in sins as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins...

And he refers in part to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):15** And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

And to **Romans 4 (KJV):25** Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Augustine then continues, “For in this first resurrection none have a part save those who shall be eternally blessed; but in the second, of which He goes on to speak, all, as we shall learn, have a part, both the blessed and the wretched. The one is the resurrection of mercy, the other of judgment. And therefore it is written in the psalm, “I will sing of mercy and of

judgment: unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing.” (Psalm 101:1)”

He refers to **Psalm 101 (KJV)**:1 I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.

Now there is a spiritual resurrection, which Augustine is calling “**this first resurrection**”. This occurs when we are born again, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB)**:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

When we accepted Christ, we who were spiritually dead in trespasses and sins were made alive together with Christ, and He “raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus”, as in verse 6 above.

But when the Scripture refers to the “first resurrection”, it is referring to a resurrection of the body for the righteous dead. We will explain shortly.

He continues, “And of this judgment He went on to say, “And hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.”

He refers to **John 5 (KJV)**:27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

He continues, “Here He shows that He will come to judge in that flesh in which He had come to be judged. For it is to show this He says, “because He is the Son of man.” **And then follow the words for our purpose: “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.” (John 5:28-29)”**

He refers to **John 5 (Douay Rheims)**:28 Wonder not at this: for the hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. 29 And they that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life: but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.

And to **John 5 (NASB)**:28 Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, 29 and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

There are two resurrections spoken of here. That is, “the resurrection of life”, and “the resurrection of judgment” are spoken of here. We will explain more shortly.

Augustine then continues, “**This judgment He uses here in the same sense as a little before, when He says, “He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death to life;”**

He refers to **John 5 (NASB)**:24 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

He then explains, “i.e., by having a part in the first resurrection, by which a transition from death to life is made in this present time, he shall not come into damnation, which He mentions by the name of judgment, as also in the place where He says, “but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment,” i.e., of damnation.”

The word “judgment” is the same Greek word in both John 5:24 as in John 5:29, and it is κρίσις (pronounced krē'-sēs), decision (subjectively or objectively, for or against); by extension, a tribunal; by implication, justice (especially, divine law):—accusation, condemnation, damnation, judgment. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2920.**

And the **King James Version** translates it as “damnation” as we read **John 5 (KJV):29** And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

And as “condemnation” in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

But the sense of the Scripture is that the one who has passed from death in a spiritual resurrection shall not come into judgment, or condemnation, or damnation. In John 5:29 we read of the resurrection of damnation for those who have done evil.

He continues, “He, therefore, who would not be damned in the second resurrection, let him rise in the first. For “the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live,””

He refers again to **John 5 (KJV):25** Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

He then explains, “i.e., shall not come into damnation, which is called the second death; into which death, after the second or bodily resurrection, they shall be hurled who do not rise in the first or spiritual resurrection.”

He is correct in that he is referring to the “spiritual resurrection” when we are born again. And that hour has come. But this spiritual resurrection is not spoken of as the “first resurrection” in Scripture as we shall see, though it is in a sense a first resurrection.

Augustine continues, “For “the hour is coming” (but here He does not say, “and now is,” because it shall come in the end of the world in the last and greatest judgment of God) “when all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth.””

He refers again to **John 5 (KJV):28** Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

He continues, “He does not say, as in the first resurrection, “And they that Hear shall live.” For all shall not live, at least with such life as ought alone to be called life because it alone is blessed. For some kind of life they must have in order to hear, and come forth from the graves in their rising bodies. And why all shall not live He teaches in the words that follow: “They that have done good, to the resurrection of life,”—these are they who shall live; “but they that have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment,”—these are they who shall not live, for they shall die in the second death. They have done evil because their life has been evil; and their life has been evil because it has not been renewed in the first or spiritual resurrection which now is, or because they have not persevered to the end in their renewed life.”

He refers to **Matthew 24 (KJV):13** But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

He is correct in that he says that those who have done evil will rise “to the resurrection of judgment” because “their life has been evil because it has not been renewed in the first or spiritual resurrection”. That is, they have not been born again.

But he is not correct when he refers to those who have “not persevered to the end in their renewed life”, and makes perseverance a condition of salvation. Jesus is merely confirming the salvation of those who shall endure to the end. When we believe in Him, we have passed from death to life, as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

The life that we who have believed now have is “everlasting life”. And the one who believeth in Him is not condemned as we read in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

And in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Augustine continues, “As, then, there are two regenerations, of which I have already made mention,—the one according to faith, and which takes place in the present life by means of baptism; the other according to the flesh, and which shall be accomplished in its incorruption and immortality by means of the great and final judgment,—so are there also two resurrections,—the one the first and spiritual resurrection, which has place in this life, and preserves us from coming into the second death; the other the second, which does not occur now, but in the end of the world, and which is of the body, not of the soul, and which by the last judgment shall dismiss some into the second death, others into that life which has no death.”

Augustine believed in one final judgment for all, in which some would be resurrected to life, and the rest to the resurrection of damnation. Now we shall explain the “first resurrection”, according to Scripture. It is mentioned as such in **Revelation 20 (KJV):1** And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

In verse 4 we read of those who “were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received



his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands”. The “beast” refers to the Antichrist. Therefore these were killed during the great tribulation.

Although this resurrection will include the martyred saints during the tribulation, this resurrection will actually begin with the rapture of the saints which is referred to in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):15** For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Then we read in **2 Thessalonians 2 (NASB):6** And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

The one who “restrains” in verse 7 is the Holy Spirit. He will be taken out of the way when the Church is raptured, or caught up to be with the Lord, in which “the dead in Christ shall rise first”, then we “which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air”. That is, “we which are alive” and who have believed in the Lord Jesus, will be “caught up together with them”. This is the first resurrection.

This is also spoken of in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):51** Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

The “rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished”, the Scripture says in Revelation 20:5 above.

There is one more point that will clarify when the first resurrection shall occur, which we shall discuss shortly.

Augustine thought that the Church was living in the thousand year reign with Christ as we shall see when we get to Chapter 8.

Chapter 7.—What is Written in the Revelation of John Regarding the Two Resurrections, and the Thousand Years, and What May Reasonably Be Held on These Points.

The evangelist John has spoken of these two resurrections in the book which is called the Apocalypse, but in such a way that some Christians do not understand the first of the two, and so construe the passage into ridiculous fancies. For the Apostle John says in the foresaid book, “And I saw an angel come down from heaven. . . . Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the

first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:1-6) Those who, on the strength of this passage, have suspected that the first resurrection is future and bodily, have been moved, among other things, specially by the number of a thousand years, as if it were a fit thing that the saints should thus enjoy a kind of Sabbath-rest during that period, a holy leisure after the labors of the six thousand years since man was created, and was on account of his great sin dismissed from the blessedness of paradise into the woes of this mortal life, so that thus, as it is written, “One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,” (2 Peter 3:8) there should follow on the completion of six thousand years, as of six days, a kind of seventh-day Sabbath in the succeeding thousand years; and that it is for this purpose the saints rise, viz., to celebrate this Sabbath. And this opinion would not be objectionable, if it were believed that the joys of the saints in that Sabbath shall be spiritual, and consequent on the presence of God; for I myself, too, once held this opinion. (Sermon 259) But, as they assert that those who then rise again shall enjoy the leisure of immoderate carnal banquets, furnished with an amount of meat and drink such as not only to shock the feeling of the temperate, but even to surpass the measure of credulity itself, such assertions can be believed only by the carnal. They who do believe them are called by the spiritual Chiliasts, which we may literally reproduce by the name Millenarians. It were a tedious process to refute these opinions point by point: we prefer proceeding to show how that passage of Scripture should be understood. [Augustin, who had formerly himself entertained chiliastic hopes, revolutionized the prevailing ante-Nicene view of the Apocalyptic millennium by understanding it of the present reign of Christ in the Church. See Schaff, Church History, vol. ii. 619.—P.S.]

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself says, “No man can enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man” (Mark 3:27)—meaning by the strong man the devil, because he had power to take captive the human race; and meaning by his goods which he was to take, those who had been held by the devil in divers sins and iniquities, but were to become believers in Himself. It was then for the binding of this strong one that the apostle saw in the Apocalypse “an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss, and a chain in his hand. And he laid hold,” he says, “on the dragon, that old serpent, which is called the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,”—that is, bridled and restrained his power so that he could not seduce and gain possession of those who were to be freed. Now the thousand years may be understood in two ways, so far as occurs to me: either because these things happen in the sixth thousand of years or sixth millennium (the latter part of which is now passing), as if during the sixth day, which is to be followed by a Sabbath which has no evening, the endless rest of the saints, so that, speaking of a part under the name of the whole, he calls the last part of the millennium—the part, that is, which had yet to expire before the end of the world—a thousand years; or he used the thousand years as an equivalent for the whole duration of this world, employing the number of perfection to mark the fullness of time. For a thousand is the cube of ten. For ten times ten makes a hundred, that is; the square on a plane superficies. But to give this superficies height, and make it a cube, the hundred is again multiplied by ten, which gives a thousand. Besides, if a hundred is sometimes used for totality, as when the Lord said by way of promise to him that left all and followed Him “He shall receive in this world an hundredfold;” (Matthew 19:29) of which the apostle gives, as it were, an explanation when he says, “As having nothing, yet possessing all things,” (2 Corinthians

6:10)—for even of old it had been said, The whole world is the wealth of a believer,—with how much greater reason is a thousand put for totality since it is the cube, while the other is only the square? And for the same reason we cannot better interpret the words of the psalm, “He hath been mindful of His covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations,” (Psalm 105:8) than by understanding it to mean “to all generations.”

“And he cast him into the abyss,”—i.e., cast the devil into the abyss. By the abyss is meant the countless multitude of the wicked whose hearts are unfathomably deep in malignity against the Church of God; not that the devil was not there before, but he is said to be cast in thither, because, when prevented from harming believers, he takes more complete possession of the ungodly. For that man is more abundantly possessed by the devil who is not only alienated from God, but also gratuitously hates those who serve God. “And shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled.” “Shut him up,”—i.e., prohibited him from going out, from doing what was forbidden. And the addition of “set a seal upon him” seems to me to mean that it was designed to keep it a secret who belonged to the devil’s party and who did not. For in this world this is a secret, for we cannot tell whether even the man who seems to stand shall fall, or whether he who seems to lie shall rise again. But by the chain and prisonhouse of this interdict the devil is prohibited and restrained from seducing those nations which belong to Christ, but which he formerly seduced or held in subjection. For before the foundation of the world God chose to rescue these from the power of darkness, and to translate them into the kingdom of the Son of His love, as the apostle says. (Colossian 1:13) For what Christian is not aware that he seduces nations even now, and draws them with himself to eternal punishment, but not those predestined to eternal life? And let no one be dismayed by the circumstance that the devil often seduces even those who have been regenerated in Christ, and begun to walk in God’s way. For “the Lord knoweth them that are His,” (2 Timothy 2:19) and of these the devil seduces none to eternal damnation. For it is as God, from whom nothing is hid even of things future, that the Lord knows them; not as a man, who sees a man at the present time (if he can be said to see one whose heart he does not see), but does not see even himself so far as to be able to know what kind of person he is to be. The devil, then, is bound and shut up in the abyss that he may not seduce the nations from which the Church is gathered, and which he formerly seduced before the Church existed. For it is not said “that he should not seduce any man,” but “that he should not seduce the nations”—meaning, no doubt, those among which the Church exists—“till the thousand years should be fulfilled,”—i.e., either what remains of the sixth day which consists of a thousand years, or all the years which are to elapse till the end of the world.

The words, “that he should not seduce the nations till the thousand years should be fulfilled,” are not to be understood as indicating that afterwards he is to seduce only those nations from which the predestined Church is composed, and from seducing whom he is restrained by that chain and imprisonment; but they are used in conformity with that usage frequently employed in Scripture and exemplified in the psalm, “So our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until He have mercy upon us,” (Psalm 123:2)—not as if the eyes of His servants would no longer wait upon the Lord their God when He had mercy upon them. Or the order of the words is unquestionably this, “And he shut him up and set a seal upon him, till the thousand years should be fulfilled;” and the interposed clause, “that he should seduce the nations no more,” is not to be understood in the connection in which it stands, but separately, and as if

added afterwards, so that the whole sentence might be read, “And He shut him up and set a seal upon him till the thousand years should be fulfilled, that he should seduce the nations no more,”—i.e., he is shut up till the thousand years be fulfilled, on this account, that he may no more deceive the nations.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “The evangelist John has spoken of these two resurrections in the book which is called the Apocalypse, but in such a way that some Christians do not understand the first of the two, and so construe the passage into ridiculous fancies. For the Apostle John says in the foresaid book, “And I saw an angel come down from heaven. . . . Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:1-6)”

He refers in context to **Revelation 20 (KJV):1** And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

He continues, “Those who, on the strength of this passage, have suspected that the first resurrection is future and bodily, have been moved, among other things, specially by the number of a thousand years, as if it were a fit thing that the saints should thus enjoy a kind of Sabbath-rest during that period, a holy leisure after the labors of the six thousand years since man was created, and was on account of his great sin dismissed from the blessedness of paradise into the woes of this mortal life, so that thus, as it is written, “One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,” (2 Peter 3:8) there should follow on the completion of six thousand years, as of six days, a kind of seventh-day Sabbath in the succeeding thousand years; and that it is for this purpose the saints rise, viz., to celebrate this Sabbath.”

He refers to **2 Peter 3 (KJV):8** But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

He then argues, “And this opinion would not be objectionable, if it were believed that the joys of the saints in that Sabbath shall be spiritual, and consequent on the presence of God; for I myself, too, once held this opinion. (Sermon 259) But, as they assert that those who then rise again shall enjoy the leisure of immoderate carnal banquets, furnished with an amount of meat and drink such as not only to shock the feeling of the temperate, but even to surpass the measure of credulity itself, such assertions can be believed only by the carnal. They who do believe them are called by the spiritual Chiliasts, which we may literally reproduce by the name

Millenarians. It were a tedious process to refute these opinions point by point: we prefer proceeding to show how that passage of Scripture should be understood. [Augustin, who had formerly himself entertained chiliastic hopes, revolutionized the prevailing ante-Nicene view of the Apocalyptic millennium by understanding it of the present reign of Christ in the Church. See Schaff, Church History, vol. ii. 619.—P.S.]

So Augustine once held this opinion but was triggered by the assertion of some “that those who then rise again shall enjoy the leisure of immoderate carnal banquets, furnished with an amount of meat and drink such as not only to shock the feeling of the temperate, but even to surpass the measure of credulity itself”. So he concluded, “such assertions can be believed only by the carnal.”

He then continues, “The Lord Jesus Christ Himself says, “No man can enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man” (Mark 3:27)”

He refers in context to **Mark 3 (KJV):22** And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. 23 And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. 27 No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. 28 Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: 29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. 30 Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

Augustine then explains, “—meaning by the strong man the devil, because he had power to take captive the human race; and meaning by his goods which he was to take, those who had been held by the devil in divers sins and iniquities, but were to become believers in Himself.”

Jesus was being accused of casting out devils by “Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils”. The reason they accused Him of this is revealed in **Mark 3 (KJV):11** And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

The demons were bowing down before Him. But the mission of Jesus was to set the captives free as we read in **Luke 4 (KJV):18** The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

The devil is the strong man, but Jesus was binding the strong man to free the captives. And this was to bring to salvation through belief in Himself.

Augustine continues, “It was then for the binding of this strong one that the apostle saw in the Apocalypse “an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss, and a chain in his hand. And he laid hold,” he says, “on the dragon, that old serpent, which is called the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,”—that is, bridled and restrained his power so that he could not seduce and gain possession of those who were to be freed.”

He refers again to **Revelation 20 (KJV):1** And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And



cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Note that in verse 3, we read that the reason the Devil was bound was “that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled”.

Augustine then continues, “Now the thousand years may be understood in two ways, so far as occurs to me: either because these things happen in the sixth thousand of years or sixth millennium (the latter part of which is now passing), as if during the sixth day, which is to be followed by a Sabbath which has no evening, the endless rest of the saints, so that, speaking of a part under the name of the whole, he calls the last part of the millennium—the part, that is, which had yet to expire before the end of the world—a thousand years;”

He has just explained the first way a thousand years may be understood. He then continues and explains the second way, “or he used the thousand years as an equivalent for the whole duration of this world, employing the number of perfection to mark the fullness of time. For a thousand is the cube of ten. For ten times ten makes a hundred, that is; the square on a plane superficies. But to give this superficies height, and make it a cube, the hundred is again multiplied by ten, which gives a thousand. Besides, if a hundred is sometimes used for totality, as when the Lord said by way of promise to him that left all and followed Him “He shall receive in this world an hundredfold;” (Matthew 19:29) of which the apostle gives, as it were, an explanation when he says, “As having nothing, yet possessing all things,” (2 Corinthians 6:10)”

The word “superficies” means

1 : a surface of a body or a region of space

2 : the external aspects or appearance of a thing (**Merriam Webster**)

He refers to **Matthew 19 (KJV):29** And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

And to **2 Corinthians 6 (KJV):10** As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

However, in Matthew 19:29, a hundredfold does not mean all, or even symbolic of all, but it simply means “a great reward”.

He continues, “—for even of old it had been said, The whole world is the wealth of a believer,—with how much greater reason is a thousand put for totality since it is the cube, while the other is only the square? And for the same reason we cannot better interpret the words of the psalm, “He hath been mindful of His covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations,” (Psalm 105:8) than by understanding it to mean “to all generations.”

He refers to **Psalm 105 (KJV):8** He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.

Here “a thousand generations” does mean “all generations”, for “He hath remembered his covenant for ever”. The verse explains itself.

Augustine continues, ““And he cast him into the abyss,”—i.e., cast the devil into the abyss. By the abyss is meant the countless multitude of the wicked whose hearts are unfathomably deep in malignity against the Church of God; not that the devil was not there

before, but he is said to be cast in thither, because, when prevented from harming believers, he takes more complete possession of the ungodly.”

The “abyss” is not “the countless multitude of the wicked whose hearts are unfathomably deep in malignity against the Church of God”. Augustine’s explanation goes beyond the context of the Scriptures. We must let the Scripture explain itself.

The thousand years reign of Christ begins after the battle of Armageddon, and after the beast, who is the Antichrist, and the false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire at the end of the great tribulation, as we read in context in **Revelation 19 (KJV)**:19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

Then we read of the “bottomless pit”, which is the “abyss” that Augustine referred to, as we continue in **Revelation 20 (KJV)**:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

The “abyss” or “bottomless pit” is a prison house where the devil will be kept for a thousand years. Therefore, his explanation that the abyss is “the countless multitude of the wicked whose hearts are unfathomably deep in malignity against the Church of God” is a total fabrication of the meaning of the Scripture. The abyss or “bottomless pit” is a prison house where the devil will be held so that “he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled”, as in Revelation 20:3 above.

He continues, “For that man is more abundantly possessed by the devil who is not only alienated from God, but also gratuitously hates those who serve God. “And shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled.” “Shut him up,”—i.e., prohibited him from going out, from doing what was forbidden. And the addition of “set a seal upon him” seems to me to mean that it was designed to keep it a secret who belonged to the devil’s party and who did not. For in this world this is a secret, for we cannot tell whether even the man who seems to stand shall fall, or whether he who seems to lie shall rise again. But by the chain and prison-house of this interdict the devil is prohibited and restrained from seducing those nations which belong to Christ, but which he formerly seduced or held in subjection.”

The seal more likely has to do with a covering over his mouth so that he cannot deceive anyone as we read again in **Revelation 20 (KJV)**:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

But it also signifies his total incapacity to harm or deceive anyone during this time. Augustine continues, “For before the foundation of the world God chose to rescue these from the power of darkness, and to translate them into the kingdom of the Son of His love, as the

apostle says. (Colossian 1:13)”

He refers to **Colossians 1 (KJV):13** Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

He continues, “For what Christian is not aware that he seduces nations even now, and draws them with himself to eternal punishment, but not those predestined to eternal life? And let no one be dismayed by the circumstance that the devil often seduces even those who have been regenerated in Christ, and begun to walk in God’s way. For “the Lord knoweth them that are His,” (2 Timothy 2:19) and of these the devil seduces none to eternal damnation.”

He refers to **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):19** Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

But Augustine says that the devil “seduces nations even now, and draws them with himself to eternal punishment”. This is true, because the devil is not bound in the abyss now. He has just contradicted himself.

He continues, “For it is as God, from whom nothing is hid even of things future, that the Lord knows them; not as a man, who sees a man at the present time (if he can be said to see one whose heart he does not see), but does not see even himself so far as to be able to know what kind of person he is to be. **The devil, then, is bound and shut up in the abyss that he may not seduce the nations from which the Church is gathered, and which he formerly seduced before the Church existed. For it is not said “that he should not seduce any man,” but “that he should not seduce the nations”—meaning, no doubt, those among which the Church exists—“till the thousand years should be fulfilled,”—i.e., either what remains of the sixth day which consists of a thousand years, or all the years which are to elapse till the end of the world.”**

Augustine thought that the Church was now reigning with Christ during the thousand years mentioned in Revelation 20:1-6. However, he did not understand that God’s plan was to rapture the Church before the great tribulation of seven years would begin. This is what God intends to do in order to complete His plan for Israel to be the head of the nations. The whole plan of God is revealed to Daniel in **Daniel 9 (KJV):24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

So in verse 25, “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks”. So 69 weeks of the 70 weeks have been completed.

Then in verse 26, Messiah will “be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary”. The city was destroyed in 70 A.D. as Jesus also predicted in **Luke 19 (KJV):5** And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, 6 As for these things which ye behold, the days

will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

When the Romans destroyed the temple, they wanted the gold, so they broke down every stone. Now there is one more week yet to be fulfilled for Israel, as we continue to read in **Daniel 9 (KJV):27** And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

So the words, “for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate”, speak of the Antichrist who will set himself up as God in the temple as we read in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):1** Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, **2** That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. **3** Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; **4** Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

This is the “abomination of desolation” spoken of by Jesus in **Matthew 24 (KJV):15** When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

And in **Mark 13 (KJV):14** But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:

This is in the time of the Antichrist, and this has not happened yet. The thousand year reign of Christ happens after the Antichrist has come, and has been cast into the lake of fire.

Augustine continues, “The words, “that he should not seduce the nations till the thousand years should be fulfilled,” are not to be understood as indicating that afterwards he is to seduce only those nations from which the predestined Church is composed, and from seducing whom he is restrained by that chain and imprisonment; but they are used in conformity with that usage frequently employed in Scripture and exemplified in the psalm, “So our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until He have mercy upon us,” (Psalm 123:2)”

He refers to **Psalms 123 (KJV):2** Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

He continues, “—not as if the eyes of His servants would no longer wait upon the Lord their God when He had mercy upon them. Or the order of the words is unquestionably this, “And he shut him up and set a seal upon him, till the thousand years should be fulfilled;” and the interposed clause, “that he should seduce the nations no more,” is not to be understood in the connection in which it stands, but separately, and as if added afterwards, so that the whole sentence might be read, “And He shut him up and set a seal upon him till the thousand years should be fulfilled, that he should seduce the nations no more,”—i.e., he is shut up till the thousand years be fulfilled, on this account, that he may no more deceive the nations.”

In other words, Augustine is saying that the devil is shut up forever. Before we comment on this, let us read the next chapter in his writing.

## Chapter 8.—Of the Binding and Loosing of the Devil.

“After that,” says John, “he must be loosed a little season.” If the binding and shutting up of the devil means his being made unable to seduce the Church, must his loosing be the recovery of this ability? By no means. For the Church predestined and elected before the foundation of the world, the Church of which it is said, “The Lord knoweth them that are His,” shall never be seduced by him. And yet there shall be a Church in this world even when the devil shall be loosed, as there has been since the beginning, and shall be always, the places of the dying being filled by new believers. For a little after John says that the devil, being loosed, shall draw the nations whom he has seduced in the whole world to make war against the Church, and that the number of these enemies shall be as the sand of the sea. “And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil who seduced them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (Revelation 20:9-10) This relates to the last judgment, but I have thought fit to mention it now, lest any one might suppose that in that short time during which the devil shall be loose there shall be no Church upon earth, whether because the devil finds no Church, or destroys it by manifold persecutions. The devil, then, is not bound during the whole time which this book embraces,—that is, from the first coming of Christ to the end of the world, when He shall come the second time,—not bound in this sense, that during this interval, which goes by the name of a thousand years, he shall not seduce the Church, for not even when loosed shall he seduce it. For certainly if his being bound means that he is not able or not permitted to seduce the Church, what can the loosing of him mean but his being able or permitted to do so? But God forbid that such should be the case! But the binding of the devil is his being prevented from the exercise of his whole power to seduce men, either by violently forcing or fraudulently deceiving them into taking part with him. If he were during so long a period permitted to assail the weakness of men, very many persons, such as God would not wish to expose to such temptation, would have their faith overthrown, or would be prevented from believing; and that this might not happen, he is bound.

But when the short time comes he shall be loosed. For he shall rage with the whole force of himself and his angels for three years and six months; and those with whom he makes war shall have power to withstand all his violence and stratagems. And if he were never loosed, his malicious power would be less patent, and less proof would be given of the steadfast fortitude of the holy city: it would, in short, be less manifest what good use the Almighty makes of his great evil. For the Almighty does not absolutely seclude the saints from his temptation, but shelters only their inner man, where faith resides, that by outward temptation they may grow in grace. And He binds him that he may not, in the free and eager exercise of his malice, hinder or destroy the faith of those countless weak persons, already believing or yet to believe, from whom the Church must be increased and completed; and he will in the end loose him, that the city of God may see how mighty an adversary it has conquered, to the great glory of its Redeemer, Helper, Deliverer. And what are we in comparison with those believers and saints who shall then exist, seeing that they shall be tested by the loosing of an enemy with whom we make war at the greatest peril even when he is bound? Although it is also certain that even in



this intervening period there have been and are some soldiers of Christ so wise and strong, that if they were to be alive in this mortal condition at the time of his loosing, they would both most wisely guard against, and most patiently endure, all his snares and assaults.

Now the devil was thus bound not only when the Church began to be more and more widely extended among the nations beyond Judea, but is now and shall be bound till the end of the world, when he is to be loosed. Because even now men are, and doubtless to the end of the world shall be, converted to the faith from the unbelief in which he held them. And this strong one is bound in each instance in which he is spoiled of one of his goods; and the abyss in which he is shut up is not at an end when those die who were alive when first he was shut up in it, but these have been succeeded, and shall to the end of the world be succeeded, by others born after them with a like hate of the Christians, and in the depth of whose blind hearts he is continually shut up as in an abyss. But it is a question whether, during these three years and six months when he shall be loose, and raging with all his force, any one who has not previously believed shall attach himself to the faith. For how in that case would the words hold good, “Who entereth into the house of a strong one to spoil his goods, unless first he shall have bound the strong one?” Consequently this verse seems to compel us to believe that during that time, short as it is, no one will be added to the Christian community, but that the devil will make war with those who have previously become Christians, and that, though some of these may be conquered and desert to the devil, these do not belong to the predestinated number of the sons of God. For it is not without reason that John, the same apostle as wrote this Apocalypse, says in his epistle regarding certain persons, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have remained with us.” (1 John 2:19) But what shall become of the little ones? For it is beyond all belief that in these days there shall not be found some Christian children born, but not yet baptized, and that there shall not also be some born during that very period; and if there be such, we cannot believe that their parents shall not find some way of bringing them to the laver of regeneration. But if this shall be the case, how shall these goods be snatched from the devil when he is loose, since into his house no man enters to spoil his goods unless he has first bound him? On the contrary, we are rather to believe that in these days there shall be no lack either of those who fall away from, or of those who attach themselves to the Church; but there shall be such resoluteness, both in parents to seek baptism for their little ones, and in those who shall then first believe, that they shall conquer that strong one, even though unbound,—that is, shall both vigilantly comprehend, and patiently bear up against him, though employing such wiles and putting forth such force as he never before used; and thus they shall be snatched from him even though unbound. And yet the verse of the Gospel will not be untrue, “Who entereth into the house of the strong one to spoil his goods, unless he shall first have bound the strong one?” For in accordance with this true saying that order is observed—the strong one first bound, and then his goods spoiled; for the Church is so increased by the weak and strong from all nations far and near, that by its most robust faith in things divinely predicted and accomplished, it shall be able to spoil the goods of even the unbound devil. For as we must own that, “when iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold,” (Matthew 24:12) and that those who have not been written in the book of life shall in large numbers yield to the severe and unprecedented persecutions and stratagems of the devil now loosed, so we cannot but think that not only those whom that time shall find sound in the faith, but also some who till then shall be without, shall become firm in the faith they have hitherto rejected and mighty to

conquer the devil even though unbound, God's grace aiding them to understand the Scriptures, in which, among other things, there is foretold that very end which they themselves see to be arriving. And if this shall be so, his binding is to be spoken of as preceding, that there might follow a spoiling of him both bound and loosed; for it is of this it is said, "Who shall enter into the house of the strong one to spoil his goods, unless he shall first have bound the strong one?"

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "'After that," says John, "he must be loosed a little season.'"

He refers in context to **Revelation 20 (KJV):1** And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Augustine continues, "If the binding and shutting up of the devil means his being made unable to seduce the Church, must his loosing be the recovery of this ability? By no means. For the Church predestined and elected before the foundation of the world, the Church of which it is said, "The Lord knoweth them that are His," shall never be seduced by him."

He refers again to **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):19** Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

He continues, "And yet there shall be a Church in this world even when the devil shall be loosed, as there has been since the beginning, and shall be always, the places of the dying being filled by new believers. For a little after John says that the devil, being loosed, shall draw the nations whom he has seduced in the whole world to make war against the Church, and that the number of these enemies shall be as the sand of the sea. "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil who seduced them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." (Revelation 20:9-10)"

He refers in context to **Revelation 20 (KJV):7** And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Augustine thought that the "camp of the saints" was the Church. The camp of the saints is not the Church, but all the saints reigning with Christ during the thousand year period.

Augustine also did not understand God's plan for Israel. We must understand that, before the reign of Christ for a thousand years, the battle of Armageddon will take place with the second coming of Christ. This battle is mentioned in **Revelation 16 (KJV):12** And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up,

that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

So we see that the time when the devil shall be bound is yet future, and not as Augustine has supposed. Nevertheless, believers have now been given authority over him as we read in **Luke 10 (KJV)**: 17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. 18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

The battle of Armageddon is described in **Revelation 19 (KJV)**: 11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

The rider on the white horse is Jesus Christ. We continue to read in **Revelation 19 (KJV)**: 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords. 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. 19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

This is the time when the Lord will defend Jerusalem as we read in **Zechariah 12 (KJV)**: 8 In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. 9 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon

me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

This is the time of Jacob's trouble as we read in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV)**:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 2 Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. 3 For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. 4 And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5 For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. 8 For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: 9 But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. 10 Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. 11 For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished.

The nation of Israel will be saved in one day as we read in **Isaiah 66 (KJV)**:6 A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompence to his enemies. 7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. 8 Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. 9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. 10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:

This is the time of the second coming of Christ. This is the time of the first resurrection, that begins with the rapture of the Church, and continues throughout the tribulation, for the first resurrection occurs prior to the thousand year reign of Christ as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV)**:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

This was not a spiritual resurrection as Augustine asserts, for those mentioned in verse 4 above were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God. It was they who "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years", as the verse concludes. So this resurrection was not a

spiritual resurrection, but a physical resurrection of the bodies of these martyrs. This is not to say that a spiritual resurrection does not occur to all who accept Christ. It's just that when the Bible refers to the "first resurrection", it is referring to the resurrection of the body.

Augustine then concludes, "This relates to the last judgment, but I have thought fit to mention it now, lest any one might suppose that in that short time during which the devil shall be loose there shall be no Church upon earth, whether because the devil finds no Church, or destroys it by manifold persecutions."

Augustine thought that the first resurrection was a spiritual resurrection, and that a final resurrection will occur where all shall be judged. But the first resurrection will include the Old Testament saints, and the Church, and the tribulation saints as well.

Augustine continues, "The devil, then, is not bound during the whole time which this book embraces,—that is, from the first coming of Christ to the end of the world, when He shall come the second time,—not bound in this sense, that during this interval, which goes by the name of a thousand years, he shall not seduce the Church, for not even when loosed shall he seduce it."

Augustine thought that they were in "this interval, which goes by the name of a thousand years". But according to Scripture, we are not there yet. But Jesus did promise that the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church as we read in **Matthew 16 (KJV):18** And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Augustine continues, "For certainly if his being bound means that he is not able or not permitted to seduce the Church, what can the loosing of him mean but his being able or permitted to do so? But God forbid that such should be the case! But the binding of the devil is his being prevented from the exercise of his whole power to seduce men, either by violently forcing or fraudulently deceiving them into taking part with him. If he were during so long a period permitted to assail the weakness of men, very many persons, such as God would not wish to expose to such temptation, would have their faith overthrown, or would be prevented from believing; and that this might not happen, he is bound."

But Paul describes the time when the "man of lawlessness is revealed" in **2 Thessalonians 2 (NASB):1** Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, **2** that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. **3** Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, **4** who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. **5** Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? **6** And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed.

What restrains him now is the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church. So although Satan is not bound as he will be in the bottomless pit, he is restrained by the Holy Spirit until the Holy Spirit is taken out of the way, as we continue in **2 Thessalonians 2 (NASB):7** For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. **8** Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; **9** that is, the one



whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

Augustine then continues, “**But when the short time comes he shall be loosed. For he shall rage with the whole force of himself and his angels for three years and six months; and those with whom he makes war shall have power to withstand all his violence and stratagems.**”

Augustine is placing the time of Satan’s loosing in the tribulation period. However, the Scripture says that this time is after the tribulation, as we read in **Revelation 19 (KJV):20** And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

Then, after the thousand year reign of Christ, “Satan shall be loosed”, as we read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):7** And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Augustine continues, “And if he were never loosed, his malicious power would be less patent, and less proof would be given of the steadfast fortitude of the holy city: it would, in short, be less manifest what good use the Almighty makes of his great evil. **For the Almighty does not absolutely seclude the saints from his temptation, but shelters only their inner man, where faith resides, that by outward temptation they may grow in grace.** And He binds him that he may not, in the free and eager exercise of his malice, hinder or destroy the faith of those countless weak persons, already believing or yet to believe, from whom the Church must be increased and completed; and he will in the end loose him, that the city of God may see how mighty an adversary it has conquered, to the great glory of its Redeemer, Helper, Deliverer. And what are we in comparison with those believers and saints who shall then exist, seeing that they shall be tested by the loosing of an enemy with whom we make war at the greatest peril even when he is bound? Although it is also certain that even in this intervening period there have been and are some soldiers of Christ so wise and strong, that if they were to be alive in this mortal condition at the time of his loosing, they would both most wisely guard against, and most patiently endure, all his snares and assaults.”

Even now Jesus has all authority “in heaven and in earth”, as we read in **Matthew 28 (KJV):18** And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

And in **Mark 16 (KJV):15** And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach

the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. 17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

In the name of Jesus, believers have authority over Satan. And during the millennium, Jesus will reign with a rod of iron as we read again in **Revelation 19 (KJV):15** And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Augustine continues, “Now the devil was thus bound not only when the Church began to be more and more widely extended among the nations beyond Judea, but is now and shall be bound till the end of the world, when he is to be loosed. Because even now men are, and doubtless to the end of the world shall be, converted to the faith from the unbelief in which he held them.”

Augustine did not understand the timing of when Satan was to be bound. Satan is restrained now by the presence of the Holy Spirit in believers, who form the body of Christ, the Church. But he continues in the world to deceive the unbelieving.

He continues, “And this strong one is bound in each instance in which he is spoiled of one of his goods; and the abyss in which he is shut up is not at an end when those die who were alive when first he was shut up in it, but these have been succeeded, and shall to the end of the world be succeeded, by others born after them with a like hate of the Christians, and in the depth of whose blind hearts he is continually shut up as in an abyss.”

The Scripture speaks of Satan’s power as it is now in our age in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):1** And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

He is the prince of the power of the air, as in verse 2. He is also the god of this world as we read in context in **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):3** But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

But Christians have authority over all the power of the enemy in Jesus’ name. And He is greater who is in us as we read in **1 John 4 (KJV):4** Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

Augustine continues, “But it is a question whether, during these three years and six months when he shall be loose, and raging with all his force, any one who has not previously believed shall attach himself to the faith. For how in that case would the words hold good, “Who entereth into the house of a strong one to spoil his goods, unless first he shall have bound the strong one?”

Augustine now places the loosing of the devil in the last half of the tribulation period. He clearly does not understand the Biblical timeline.

When Israel was in captivity in Babylon, the prophet Daniel was prophesying until 540 B.C.. He sought the Lord, and the Lord sent the angel Gabriel to him as we read in **Daniel 9**

**(KJV):24** Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. 22 And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. 23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

God's plan was revealed to Daniel, as we continue in **Daniel 9 (KJV):24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

The angel then explains as we continue in **Daniel 9 (KJV):25** Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

When Israel went into captivity in Babylon, the prophet Jeremiah prophesied that Israel would be in captivity 70 years, as we read in **Jeremiah 25 (KJV):11** And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

Daniel knew about this prophecy, as we read in **Daniel 9 (KJB):1** In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; 2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

Daniel wanted to find out what God's plan was after the Babylonian captivity. So according to Daniel 9:26, after three score and two weeks, or 69 weeks, Messiah would be cut off. Now according to the prophecy of Jesus, after His death would be the times of the Gentiles, as we read in **Luke 21 (KJV):24** And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

When the times of the Gentiles have been fulfilled, God will again deal with Israel in the final week of the 70 that were prophesied by Daniel.

We will discuss this more as we progress.

Augustine continues, **"Consequently this verse seems to compel us to believe that during that time, short as it is, no one will be added to the Christian community, but that the devil will make war with those who have previously become Christians, and that, though some of these may be conquered and desert to the devil, these do not belong to the predestinated number of**

the sons of God. For it is not without reason that John, the same apostle as wrote this Apocalypse, says in his epistle regarding certain persons, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have remained with us.” (1 John 2:19)”

He refers to **1 John 2 (KJV):19** They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

The time he is speaking of would be the last three and a half years of the tribulation period when Satan shall be cast out of heaven. To see why this is so, let us we read in **Revelation 12 (KJV):1** And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: **2** And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

That this woman represents Israel is clear from her clothing, which matches Joseph’s dream in **Genesis 37 (KJV):9** And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. **10** And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?

We continue in **Revelation 12 (KJV):3** And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. **4** And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. **5** And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. **6** And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. **7** And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, **8** And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. **9** And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The seven heads and ten horns in verse 3 are symbolic of the devil’s association with the beast, the antichrist in **Revelation 13 (KJV):1** And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

The stars in verse 4 represent the devil’s angels. The man child in verse 5 is Christ. This woman who flees into the wilderness is faithful Israel during the last half of the seven years of tribulation. During this time, Satan and his angels will be restricted to this earth, as he is cast out of heaven.

Augustine continues, “But what shall become of the little ones? For it is beyond all belief that in these days there shall not be found some Christian children born, but not yet baptized, and that there shall not also be some born during that very period; and if there be such, **we cannot believe that their parents shall not find some way of bringing them to the laver of regeneration.** But if this shall be the case, how shall these goods be snatched from the devil when he is loose, since into his house no man enters to spoil his goods unless he has first bound



him? On the contrary, we are rather to believe that in these days there shall be no lack either of those who fall away from, or of those who attach themselves to the Church; but there shall be such resoluteness, both in parents to seek baptism for their little ones, and in those who shall then first believe, that they shall conquer that strong one, even though unbound,—that is, shall both vigilantly comprehend, and patiently bear up against him, though employing such wiles and putting forth such force as he never before used; and thus they shall be snatched from him even though unbound.”

Augustine could not see that it is simple faith in Jesus Christ and His resurrection that saves us and regenerates us. And so even in this time of tribulation he imagines that no one will be saved unless they are baptized.

He continues, “And yet the verse of the Gospel will not be untrue, “Who entereth into the house of the strong one to spoil his goods, unless he shall first have bound the strong one?” For in accordance with this true saying that order is observed—the strong one first bound, and then his goods spoiled; for the Church is so increased by the weak and strong from all nations far and near, that by its most robust faith in things divinely predicted and accomplished, it shall be able to spoil the goods of even the unbound devil. For as we must own that, “when iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold,” (Matthew 24:12) and that those who have not been written in the book of life shall in large numbers yield to the severe and unprecedented persecutions and stratagems of the devil now loosed, **so we cannot but think that not only those whom that time shall find sound in the faith, but also some who till then shall be without, shall become firm in the faith they have hitherto rejected and mighty to conquer the devil even though unbound, God’s grace aiding them to understand the Scriptures, in which, among other things, there is foretold that very end which they themselves see to be arriving.** And if this shall be so, his binding is to be spoken of as preceding, that there might follow a spoiling of him both bound and loosed; for it is of this it is said, “Who shall enter into the house of the strong one to spoil his goods, unless he shall first have bound the strong one?”

He refers to **Matthew 24 (KJV):12** And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

And again to **Matthew 3 (KJV):27** No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

Believers have authority over Satan, and all the power of the enemy in Jesus’ name. But this part of the tribulation will be a time of trouble like never before as we read in **Daniel 12 (KJV):1** And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Chapter 9.—What the Reign of the Saints with Christ for a Thousand Years Is, and How It Differs from the Eternal Kingdom.

**But while the devil is bound, the saints reign with Christ during the same thousand years, understood in the same way, that is, of the time of His first coming. For, leaving out of account that kingdom concerning which He shall say in the end, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you,” (Matthew 25:34) the Church could not now be**



called His kingdom or the kingdom of heaven unless His saints were even now reigning with Him, though in another and far different way; for to His saints He says, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.” (Matthew 28:20) Certainly it is in this present time that the scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God, and of whom we have already spoken, brings forth from his treasure things new and old. And from the Church those reapers shall gather out the tares which He suffered to grow with the wheat till the harvest, as He explains in the words “The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered together and burned with fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all offenses.” (Matthew 13:39-41) Can He mean out of that kingdom in which are no offenses? Then it must be out of His present kingdom, the Church, that they are gathered. So He says, “He that breaketh one of the least of these commandments, and teacheth men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth and teacheth thus shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:19) He speaks of both as being in the kingdom of heaven, both the man who does not perform the commandments which He teaches,—for “to break” means not to keep, not to perform,—and the man who does and teaches as He did; but the one He calls least, the other great. And He immediately adds, “For I say unto you, that except your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees,”—that is, the righteousness of those who break what they teach; for of the scribes and Pharisees He elsewhere says, “For they say and do not;” (Matthew 23:3)—unless therefore, your righteousness exceed theirs that is, so that you do not break but rather do what you teach, “ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:20) We must understand in one sense the kingdom of heaven in which exist together both he who breaks what he teaches and he who does it, the one being least, the other great, and in another sense the kingdom of heaven into which only he who does what he teaches shall enter. Consequently, where both classes exist, it is the Church as it now is, but where only the one shall exist, it is the Church as it is destined to be when no wicked person shall be in her. Therefore the Church even now is the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, even now His saints reign with Him, though otherwise than as they shall reign hereafter; and yet, though the tares grow in the Church along with the wheat, they do not reign with Him. For they reign with Him who do what the apostle says, “If ye be risen with Christ, mind the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Seek those things which are above, not the things which are on the earth.” (Colossians 3:1-2) Of such persons he also says that their conversation is in heaven. (Philippians 3:20) In fine, they reign with Him who are so in His kingdom that they themselves are His kingdom. But in what sense are those the kingdom of Christ who, to say no more, though they are in it until all offenses are gathered out of it at the end of the world, yet seek their own things in it, and not the things that are Christ’s? (Philippians 2:21)

It is then of this kingdom militant, in which conflict with the enemy is still maintained, and war carried on with warring lusts, or government laid upon them as they yield, until we come to that most peaceful kingdom in which we shall reign without an enemy, and it is of this first resurrection in the present life, that the Apocalypse speaks in the words just quoted. For, after saying that the devil is bound a thousand years and is afterwards loosed for a short season, it goes on to give a sketch of what the Church does or of what is done in the Church in those days, in the words, “And I saw seats and them that sat upon them, and judgment was given.” It is not to be supposed that this refers to the last judgment, but to the seats of the rulers and to the

rulers themselves by whom the Church is now governed. And no better interpretation of judgment being given can be produced than that which we have in the words, “What ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 18:18) Whence the apostle says, “What have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?” (1 Corinthians 5:12) “And the souls,” says John, “of those who were slain for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God,”—understanding what he afterwards says, “reigned with Christ a thousand years,” (Revelation 20:4)—that is, the souls of the martyrs not yet restored to their bodies. For the souls of the pious dead are not separated from the Church, which even now is the kingdom of Christ; otherwise there would be no remembrance made of them at the altar of God in the partaking of the body of Christ, nor would it do any good in danger to run to His baptism, that we might not pass from this life without it; nor to reconciliation, if by penitence or a bad conscience any one may be severed from His body. For why are these things practiced, if not because the faithful, even though dead, are His members? Therefore, while these thousand years run on, their souls reign with Him, though not as yet in conjunction with their bodies. And therefore in another part of this same book we read, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth and now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works do follow them.” (Revelation 14:13) The Church, then, begins its reign with Christ now in the living and in the dead. For, as the apostle says, “Christ died that He might be Lord both of the living and of the dead.” (Romans 14:9) But he mentioned the souls of the martyrs only, because they who have contended even to death for the truth, themselves principally reign after death; but, taking the part for the whole, we understand the words of all others who belong to the Church, which is the kingdom of Christ.

As to the words following, “And if any have not worshipped the beast nor his image, nor have received his inscription on their forehead, or on their hand,” we must take them of both the living and the dead. And what this beast is, though it requires a more careful investigation, yet it is not inconsistent with the true faith to understand it of the ungodly city itself, and the community of unbelievers set in opposition to the faithful people and the city of God. “His image” seems to me to mean his simulation, to wit, in those men who profess to believe, but live as unbelievers. For they pretend to be what they are not, and are called Christians, not from a true likeness but from a deceitful image. For to this beast belong not only the avowed enemies of the name of Christ and His most glorious city, but also the tares which are to be gathered out of His kingdom, the Church, in the end of the world. And who are they who do not worship the beast and his image, if not those who do what the apostle says, “Be not yoked with unbelievers?” (2 Corinthians 6:14) For such do not worship, i.e., do not consent, are not subjected; neither do they receive the inscription, the brand of crime, on their forehead by their profession, on their hand by their practice. They, then, who are free from these pollutions, whether they still live in this mortal flesh, or are dead, reign with Christ even now, through this whole interval which is indicated by the thousand years, in a fashion suited to this time.

“The rest of them,” he says, “did not live.” For now is the hour when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live; and the rest of them shall not live. The words added, “until the thousand years are finished,” mean that they did not live in the time in which they ought to have lived by passing from death to life. And therefore, when the day of the bodily resurrection arrives, they shall come out of their graves, not to life, but to judgment, namely, to damnation, which is called the second death. For whosoever has not lived until the

thousand years be finished, *i.e.*, during this whole time in which the first resurrection is going on,—whosoever has not heard the voice of the Son of God, and passed from death to life,—that man shall certainly in the second resurrection, the resurrection of the flesh, pass with his flesh into the second death. For he goes to say, “This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection,” or who experiences it. Now he experiences it who not only revives from the death of sin, but continues in this renewed life. “In these the second death hath no power.” Therefore it has power in the rest, of whom he said above, “The rest of them did not live until the thousand years were finished;” for in this whole intervening time called a thousand years, however lustily they lived in the body, they were not quickened to life out of that death in which their wickedness held them, so that by this revived life they should become partakers of the first resurrection, and so the second death should have no power over them.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But while the devil is bound, the saints reign with Christ during the same thousand years, understood in the same way, that is, of the time of His first coming. For, leaving out of account that kingdom concerning which He shall say in the end, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you,” (Matthew 25:34) the Church could not now be called His kingdom or the kingdom of heaven unless His saints were even now reigning with Him, though in another and far different way; for to His saints He says, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.” (Matthew 28:20)”

So Augustine places the present Church in the thousand year reign of Christ. He refers in context to **Matthew 25 (KJV):**31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

But this refers to the second coming, and after the battle of Armageddon. To Augustine, it refers to “**the end**”.

He refers also to **Matthew 28 (KJV):**20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

This Scripture is current, and applies to us today. Augustine then continues, “Certainly it is in this present time that the scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God, and of whom we have already spoken, brings forth from his treasure things new and old. And from the Church those reapers shall gather out the tares which He suffered to grow with the wheat till the harvest, as He explains in the words “The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered together and burned with fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all offenses.” (Matthew 13:39-41)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 13 (KJV):**36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. 37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; 38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; 39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is

the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

We note that the word “world” in verse 38 in the Greek is **κόσμος** (pronounced ko'-smos), probably from the base of G2865; orderly arrangement, i.e. decoration; by implication, the world (in a wide or narrow sense, including its inhabitants, literally or figuratively (morally)):—adorning, world. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2889.**

The word “world” in verse 39 and 40 is **αἰών** (pronounced ī-ō'n), from the same as G104; properly, an age; by extension, perpetuity (also past); by implication, the world; specially (Jewish) a Messianic period (present or future):—age, course, eternal, (for) ever(-more), (n-)ever, (beginning of the , while the) world (began, without end). Compare G5550. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G165.**

So in verse 39, the “end of the world” relates to the end of the present age. In verse 40, “the end of this world” relates also to the end of the present age. The Kingdom Age is the next age after this present age.

He then reasons, “**Can He mean out of that kingdom in which are no offenses? Then it must be out of His present kingdom, the Church, that they are gathered. So He says, “He that breaketh one of the least of these commandments, and teacheth men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth and teacheth thus shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:19)**”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):19** Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

He continues, “**He speaks of both as being in the kingdom of heaven, both the man who does not perform the commandments which He teaches,—for “to break” means not to keep, not to perform,—and the man who does and teaches as He did; but the one He calls least, the other great.**”

Jesus began this parable in **Matthew 13 (KJV):24** Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

The field is the world, or kosmos, as we read again in **Matthew 13 (KJV):38** The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; 39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

So the harvest is the end of the world, or more properly translated, end of the age. It is then that the “The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity”, as in Matthew 13:41 above.

Now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence as Jesus taught in **Matthew 11 (KJV):12** And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

The kingdom of heaven is in mystery form now, as we read in **Matthew 13 (KJV):10**

And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? 11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. 13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

But when Jesus comes to set up the kingdom and reign for a thousand years, there will be a manifestation of the sons of God as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV)**: 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

The redemption of our body in verse 23 speaks of the resurrection of our body. This will happen when Jesus returns, and the thousand year reign begins. It is then, as resurrected saints, that we will be ruling and reigning with Christ, and manifest as sons of God, having glorified bodies.

But Augustine continues, “And He immediately adds, “For I say unto you, that except your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees,”—that is, the righteousness of those who break what they teach;”

He then refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV)**: 20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

He continues, “for of the scribes and Pharisees He elsewhere says, “For they say and do not;” (Matthew 23:3)”

He refers to **Matthew 23 (KJV)**: 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

The scribes and Pharisees were those who did not believe in Jesus Christ, therefore they had no righteousness, and could not enter into the kingdom of heaven. So any righteousness above theirs is salvation.

Augustine continues, “—unless therefore, your righteousness exceed theirs that is, so that you do not break but rather do what you teach, “ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:20)”

Again, the scribes and the Pharisees were not born again. They had no righteousness. Jesus knew their hearts. So He was warning the people not to follow their example.



Augustine then continues, “We must understand that in one sense the kingdom of heaven in which exist together both he who breaks what he teaches and he who does it, the one being least, the other great, and in another sense the kingdom of heaven into which only he who does what he teaches shall enter. Consequently, where both classes exist, it is the Church as it now is, but where only the one shall exist, it is the Church as it is destined to be when no wicked person shall be in her.”

By being doers of the word, we prove that we have received the word of God. We are not saved by what we do, but what we do is evidence of a genuine faith.

Now the kingdom of heaven exists in mystery form. But when Jesus comes, the kingdom of heaven will be manifest as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV)**: 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

What are we hoping for? We are hoping and waiting for the resurrection when our bodies will be changed or resurrected, and made imperishable, and made like His glorious body, when we will then be manifest as the sons of God.

Augustine thought that the kingdom of heaven was in some sense manifest now, in that the Church, as he perceived it, was reigning with Christ in the thousand year period, having been embraced by the Roman empire.

He continues, “**Therefore the Church even now is the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, even now His saints reign with Him, though otherwise than as they shall reign hereafter; and yet, though the tares grow in the Church along with the wheat, they do not reign with Him. For they reign with Him who do what the apostle says, “If ye be risen with Christ, mind the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Seek those things which are above, not the things which are on the earth.” (Colossians 3:1-2)**”

He refers to **Colossians 3 (KJV)**: 1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

He continues, “**Of such persons he also says that their conversation is in heaven. Philippians 3:20)**”

He refers to **Philippians 3 (KJV)**: 20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

He then says, “**In fine, they reign with Him who are so in His kingdom that they themselves are His kingdom.** But in what sense are those the kingdom of Christ who, to say no more, though they are in it until all offenses are gathered out of it at the end of the world, yet seek their own things in it, and not the things that are Christ’s? (Philippians 2:21)”

He refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):21** For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

He continues, "It is then of this kingdom militant, in which conflict with the enemy is still maintained, and war carried on with warring lusts, or government laid upon them as they yield, until we come to that most peaceful kingdom in which we shall reign without an enemy, and it is of this first resurrection in the present life, that the Apocalypse speaks in the words just quoted. **For, after saying that the devil is bound a thousand years and is afterwards loosed for a short season, it goes on to give a sketch of what the Church does or of what is done in the Church in those days, in the words, "And I saw seats and them that sat upon them, and judgment was given."**

He refers to **Revelation 20 (KJV):4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

He then explains, **"It is not to be supposed that this refers to the last judgment, but to the seats of the rulers and to the rulers themselves by whom the Church is now governed. And no better interpretation of judgment being given can be produced than that which we have in the words, "What ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what ye loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 18:18)"**

He refers to **Matthew 18 (KJV):18** Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Augustine thought that the Church was reigning with Christ in the thousand year period, and that the seats, or thrones as it says in Revelation 20:4, referred to the **"rulers themselves by whom the Church is now governed"**, referring to the bishops.

He continues, **"Whence the apostle says, "What have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?" (1 Corinthians 5:12)"**

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 5 (KJV):11** But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. 12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

Them "that are without" are those outside the Church, that is, unbelievers. Those "that are within" are the believers in the church of the Corinthians. So Paul then says, **"Do not ye judge them that are within?"** That is, Paul is saying that those in the Church are to not compromise with known sin in its members. He says in verse 1, that "if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat". We are to judge those who are within. Rulers judge those who are without, and we submit to their rule. Rulers do not govern the Church.

Augustine then continues, **"And the souls," says John, "of those who were slain for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God,"—understanding what he afterwards says, "reigned with Christ a thousand years," (Revelation 20:4)—that is, the souls of the martyrs not yet restored to their bodies."**

He refers to **Revelation 20 (KJV):4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

This Scripture refers to the reward of those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus during the tribulation. It is yet future. But the Scripture says that they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. So they were no longer dead because they lived. And they reigned with Christ a thousand years, so they must have been resurrected to live that long. But to Augustine, he and the Church in his time believed they were in the thousand year reign of Christ, yet they had not yet attained to the resurrection.

Augustine then explains his thinking, “For the souls of the pious dead are not separated from the Church, which even now is the kingdom of Christ; otherwise there would be no remembrance made of them at the altar of God in the partaking of the body of Christ, nor would it do any good in danger to run to His baptism, that we might not pass from this life without it; nor to reconciliation, if by penitence or a bad conscience any one may be severed from His body. For why are these things practiced, if not because the faithful, even though dead, are His members? Therefore, while these thousand years run on, their souls reign with Him, though not as yet in conjunction with their bodies. And therefore in another part of this same book we read, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth and now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works do follow them.” (Revelation 14:13) The Church, then, begins its reign with Christ now in the living and in the dead.”

He refers to **Revelation 14 (KJV):13** And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

So, according to Augustine, the souls of the dead are reigning in heaven with Christ, and waiting for the “conjunction with their bodies”. So they are waiting for the resurrection, which is the “conjunction with their bodies”. But Augustine did not realize that Revelation, chapter 14, relates to the second half of the tribulation period. Augustine did not see the impossibility of his logic.

In the thinking of the Catholic Church in Augustine’s time, there was only one final judgment and that was the white throne judgment in **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

All of the dead would stand before God at this judgment and be joined with their bodies. And they were all “judged every man according to their works”, as in verse 13 above. But this judgment is only for the wicked dead.

He continues, “For, as the apostle says, “Christ died that He might be Lord both of the

living and of the dead.” (Romans 14:9)”

He refers in context to **Romans 14 (KJV):9** For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. 10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. 12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Believers will all “stand before the judgment seat of Christ”, as in verse 10 above. But we will be rewarded for good works as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

That is, if our work doesn't amount to anything, we will suffer for the bad choices we have made in this life, but when we die we will go to be with the Lord. In other words, we do not lose our salvation if all we produce is wood, hay, and stubble, but we will lose our rewards.

Augustine then continues, “But he mentioned the souls of the martyrs only, because they who have contended even to death for the truth, themselves principally reign after death; but, taking the part for the whole, we understand the words of all others who belong to the Church, which is the kingdom of Christ.”

So in Augustine's thinking, the souls of the martyrs were reigning with Christ in heaven, but still not united to their bodies. He does not say they have not been resurrected, for in his thinking, they were spiritually resurrected when they accepted Christ. To Augustine, this was the first resurrection.

There is a spiritual resurrection when we accept Christ as Paul reveals in **Colossians 2 (KJV):13** When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,

But this is not the resurrection of the body, as Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 15. So we read again in **Revelation 20 (KJV):4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

So in verse 4, it is these souls which have been resurrected out from among the dead who are seated on the thrones. These were slain during the tribulation, but have now been resurrected, and are living and reigning with Christ during the millennium. This is the first resurrection, John says, in verse 5. So these souls have been united to their bodies. And John explains that “the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished”. In other words, the rest of the dead were not united to their bodies until the thousand years were finished.

Augustine then continues, “As to the words following, “And if any have not worshipped the beast nor his image, nor have received his inscription on their forehead, or on their hand,”

we must take them of both the living and the dead. **And what this beast is, though it requires a more careful investigation, yet it is not inconsistent with the true faith to understand it of the ungodly city itself, and the community of unbelievers set in opposition to the faithful people and the city of God.**

Augustine is not sure “**what this beast is**”. This beast is mentioned in **Revelation 13 (KJV)**: 1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. 4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

The beast is a person. In verse 6 above, “he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven”. This person is spoken of by Paul in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV)**: 1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

This is the one the apostle John calls the antichrist in **1 John 2 (KJV)**: 18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

And in **1 John 2 (KJV)**: 22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

And in **1 John 4 (KJV)**: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should



come; and even now already is it in the world.

The Antichrist will set himself up in the temple and declare himself as God in the middle of the tribulation week, as we read in **Daniel 9 (KJV):27** And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

When the Antichrist sets himself up in the temple, declaring that he is God, this act is the “abomination of desolation” that Daniel speaks of, and which Jesus also referred to in **Matthew 24 (KJV):15** When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

This will be the last half of the tribulation week, or 42 months mentioned in Revelation 13:5 above, and in **Matthew 24 (KJV):21** For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

This beast is also representative of the revived Roman Empire as revealed by Daniel in his interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in **Daniel 2 (KJV):31** Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. 32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. 34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. 36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. 37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. 38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.

The first kingdom was the kingdom of Babylon represented by the head of Gold. We continue in **Daniel 2 (KJV):39** And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. 41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

The second kingdom was the kingdom of the Medes and Persians represented by the “breast and his arms of silver”, in verse 32.

The third kingdom was the kingdom of Greece represented by the “belly and his thighs of

brass”, in verse 32.

The fourth kingdom was the kingdom of Rome represented by “his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay”.

We continue in **Daniel 2 (KJV):44** And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

God has given us an outline of history. The revived Roman empire is represented by the ten toes. This corresponds to the ten horns of the beast in **Revelation 13 (KJV):1** And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

This is again revealed in the dream of Daniel in **Daniel 7 (KJV):1** In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. 2 Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. 3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. 6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. 8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

In verse 4, the lion refers to Babylon. In verse 5 the bear refers to Media and Persia, and in verse 6, the leopard refers to Greece. In verse 8 the “little horn” is speaking of the Antichrist.

Then Daniel interprets the vision of Belshazzar in **Daniel 8 (KJV):20** The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the rough goat is the king of Grecia: and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

There is much more that could be explained in these Scriptures relating to future events, but for now we continue with Augustine’s writing.

Augustine continues, ““His image” seems to me to mean his simulation, to wit, in those men who profess to believe, but live as unbelievers.”

He is referring to the “image” mentioned in **Revelation 13 (KJV):9** If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the

sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. 11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

But Augustine's interpretation is of his own imagination, as we read again, **““His image” seems to me to mean his simulation, to wit, in those men who profess to believe, but live as unbelievers.”**

The image was actually an idol that the false prophet set up for people to worship, or be killed. It has nothing to do with **“his simulation, to wit, in those men who profess to believe, but live as unbelievers”**. That is, the image of the beast that the prophet made was to be worshiped, and did not represent **“those men who profess to believe, but live as unbelievers”**. The image was an actual idol.

Augustine continues, **“For they pretend to be what they are not, and are called Christians, not from a true likeness but from a deceitful image. For to this beast belong not only the avowed enemies of the name of Christ and His most glorious city, but also the tares which are to be gathered out of His kingdom, the Church, in the end of the world. And who are they who do not worship the beast and his image, if not those who do what the apostle says, “Be not yoked with unbelievers?” (2 Corinthians 6:14)”**

He refers to **2 Corinthians 6 (KJV):14** Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?

He continues, “For such do not worship, i.e., do not consent, are not subjected; neither do they receive the inscription, the brand of crime, on their forehead by their profession, on their hand by their practice.”

He refers to **Revelation 13 (KJV):16** And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

The mark of the beast was something that could be discerned, for in verse 17 he says that “no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name”.

Augustine continues, **“They, then, who are free from these pollutions, whether they still live in this mortal flesh, or are dead, reign with Christ even now, through this whole interval which is indicated by the thousand years, in a fashion suited to this time.”**

But we are not in the thousand year reign of Christ yet. The rapture of the Church and the great tribulation of seven years is still to come. This must happen before the thousand year reign can begin. Also, the Antichrist must come as we read in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):1** Now we

beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Augustine continues, ““The rest of them, ”he says, “did not live.” For now is the hour when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live; and the rest of them shall not live. The words added, “until the thousand years are finished,” mean that they did not live in the time in which they ought to have lived by passing from death to life. And therefore, when the day of the bodily resurrection arrives, they shall come out of their graves, not to life, but to judgment, namely, to damnation, which is called the second death. For whosoever has not lived until the thousand years be finished, i.e., during this whole time in which the first resurrection is going on,—whosoever has not heard the voice of the Son of God, and passed from death to life,—that man shall certainly in the second resurrection, the resurrection of the flesh, pass with his flesh into the second death.”

Augustine believed that the first resurrection is the new birth, as mentioned in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

But this refers to the spiritual resurrection when we believe “on Him”, that is, on Jesus. And so in Revelation 20:11-15, as the second resurrection is of the body, so is the first resurrection. And it is true that those who have not been spiritually resurrected, or born again, will “pass with his flesh into the second death”.

However, Augustine is saying that the first resurrection is spiritual, and “the second resurrection, the resurrection of the flesh”. But the Scriptures teach that the first resurrection mentioned in Revelation 20:1-6, is of the flesh for the righteous. The second resurrection is of the flesh for the wicked dead.

He continues, “For he goes to say, “This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection,” or who experiences it. Now he experiences it who not only revives from the death of sin, but continues in this renewed life. “In these the second death hath no power.” Therefore it has power in the rest, of whom he said above, “The rest of them did not live until the thousand years were finished;” for in this whole intervening time called a thousand years, however lustily they lived in the body, they were not quickened to life out of that death in which their wickedness held them, so that by this revived life they should become partakers of the first resurrection, and so the second death should have no power over them.”

He refers again to **Revelation 20 (KJV):6** Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Those who are included in this first resurrection are all who will go up in the rapture, and all of the Old Testament saints, and all of the gleanings, that is those who come to Christ during the tribulation and the thousand year reign of Christ. All of these will not experience the “second death”.

To Augustine, the first resurrection was to be born again by accepting Christ. He did not understand the Biblical timeline in the Scriptures. He thought that they were living in the thousand year reign of Christ, and that there would be one great judgment at the end. In doing so, he took many Scriptures out of context. But in that he knew that the one who believed in Jesus Christ passed from death to life, he did well.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God  
Book XX, Chapters 11-15, page 432-435**

Chapter 11.—Of Gog and Magog, Who are to Be Roused by the Devil to Persecute the Church, When He is Loosed in the End of the World.

“And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed from his prison, and shall go out to seduce the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, and shall draw them to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.” This then, is his purpose in seducing them, to draw them to this battle. For even before this he was wont to use as many and various seductions as he could continue. And the words “he shall go out” mean, he shall burst forth from lurking hatred into open persecution. For this persecution, occurring while the final judgment is imminent, shall be the last which shall be endured by the holy Church throughout the world, the whole city of Christ being assailed by the whole city of the devil, as each exists on earth. For these nations which he names Gog and Magog are not to be understood of some barbarous nations in some part of the world, whether the Getæ and Massagetæ, as some conclude from the initial letters, or some other foreign nations not under the Roman government. For John marks that they are spread over the whole earth, when he says, “The nations which are in the four corners of the earth,” and he added that these are Gog and Magog. The meaning of these names we find to be, Gog, “a roof,” Magog, “from a roof,”—a house, as it were, and he who comes out of the house. They are therefore the nations in which we found that the devil was shut up as in an abyss, and the devil himself coming out from them and going forth, so that they are the roof, he from the roof. Or if we refer both words to the nations, not one to them and one to the devil, then they are both the roof, because in them the old enemy is at present shut up, and as it were roofed in; and they shall be from the roof when they break forth from concealed to open hatred. The words, “And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the saints and the beloved city,” do not mean that they have come, or shall come, to one place, as if the camp of the saints and the beloved city should be in some one place; for this camp is nothing else than the Church of Christ extending over the whole world. And consequently wherever the Church shall be,—and it shall be in all nations, as is signified by “the breadth of the earth,”—there also shall be the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and there it shall be encompassed by the savage persecution of all its enemies; for they too shall exist along with it in all nations,—that is, it shall be straitened, and hard pressed, and shut up in the straits of tribulation, but shall not desert its military duty, which is signified by the word “camp.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed from his prison, and shall go out to seduce the nations which are in the



four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, and shall draw them to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.””

He refers in context to **Revelation 20 (KJV):7** And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

In the context of Scripture, the “beloved city” mentioned in verse 9 is Jerusalem where Christ is ruling the nations with a rod of iron during the thousand year reign. The beast and the false prophet had already been cast into the lake of fire before the thousand year reign of Christ began.

Augustine then continues, “This then, is his purpose in seducing them, to draw them to this battle. For even before this he was wont to use as many and various seductions as he could continue. And the words “he shall go out” mean, he shall burst forth from lurking hatred into open persecution. For this persecution, occurring while the final judgment is imminent, shall be the last which shall be endured by the holy Church throughout the world, the whole city of Christ being assailed by the whole city of the devil, as each exists on earth.”

Augustine allegorizes so much that he misinterprets the Scripture. The devil has been shut up in the abyss for the whole thousand years. The thousand year reign of Christ will not start until the seven year tribulation has finished. At the beginning of the thousand years there was a judgment of the nations as we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

The sheep nations are judged on the basis of how they treated the brethren of the Lord, that is, the Jews during the tribulation period. The goat nations are then judged as we continue in **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or

naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

After this judgment, the thousand year reign of Christ will begin. Then after the thousand year reign of Christ, Satan will be loosed, and be able to gather as many as “the sand of the sea” in Revelation 20:8 to oppose the “camp of the saints”, and the kingdom of God.

Augustine then continues, “For these nations which he names Gog and Magog are not to be understood of some barbarous nations in some part of the world, whether the Getæ and Massagetæ, as some conclude from the initial letters, or some other foreign nations not under the Roman government. For John marks that they are spread over the whole earth, when he says, “The nations which are in the four corners of the earth,” and he added that these are Gog and Magog. The meaning of these names we find to be, Gog, “a roof,” Magog, “from a roof,”—a house, as it were, and he who comes out of the house.”

Because the Roman government had in effect accepted the Catholic Church as the Church of the empire, Augustine thought that they were in the time of the thousand year reign of Christ.

Augustine continues, “They are therefore the nations in which we found that the devil was shut up as in an abyss, and the devil himself coming out from them and going forth, so that they are the roof, he from the roof. Or if we refer both words to the nations, not one to them and one to the devil, then they are both the roof, because in them the old enemy is at present shut up, and as it were roofed in; and they shall be from the roof when they break forth from concealed to open hatred.”

He is not even sure of his own allegory. He is only guessing at who Gog and Magog represent. But they simply represent the unsaved people in the nations at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ. In the Kingdom Age, the thousand year reign of Christ, there will still be death as we read in **Isaiah 65 (KJV):20** There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

But the ages of people will be like they were before the flood, when they lived for hundreds of years. But after the thousand year reign of Christ, there will be new heavens and a new earth with no more death as we read in **Revelation 21 (KJV):1** And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Augustine continues, “The words, “And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the saints and the beloved city,” do not mean that they have come, or shall come, to one place, as if the camp of the saints and the beloved city should be in some one place; for this camp is nothing else than the Church of Christ extending over the whole world. And consequently wherever the Church shall be,—and it shall be in all nations, as is signified

by “the breadth of the earth,”—there also shall be the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and there it shall be encompassed by the savage persecution of all its enemies; for they too shall exist along with it in all nations,—that is, it shall be straitened, and hard pressed, and shut up in the straits of tribulation, but shall not desert its military duty, which is signified by the word “camp.””

But the Church is not mentioned in the book of Revelation, after **Revelation 3 (KJV):22** He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The Church is in fact pictured in heaven represented by the 24 elders as we read in **Revelation 5 (KJV):8** And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

This is a picture of the resurrected saints who have been redeemed “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation”, in verse 9.

After Chapter 5, Chapters 6 through 19 of the book of Revelation are speaking about the course of the tribulation period of seven years, the time of Jacob’s trouble. Augustine was unaware of this.

Chapter 12.—Whether the Fire that Came Down Out of Heaven and Devoured Them Refers to the Last Punishment of the Wicked.

The words, “And fire came down out of heaven and devoured them,” are not to be understood of the final punishment which shall be inflicted when it is said, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;” (Matthew 25:41) for then they shall be cast into the fire, not fire come down out of heaven upon them. In this place “fire out of heaven” is well understood of the firmness of the saints, wherewith they refuse to yield obedience to those who rage against them. For the firmament is “heaven,” by whose firmness these assailants shall be pained with blazing zeal, for they shall be impotent to draw away the saints to the party of Antichrist. This is the fire which shall devour them, and this is “from God;” for it is by God’s grace the saints become unconquerable, and so torment their enemies. For as in a good sense it is said, “The zeal of Thine house hath consumed me,” (Psalm 69:9) so in a bad sense it is said, “Zeal hath possessed the uninstructed people, and now fire shall consume the enemies.” (Isaiah 26:11) “And now,” that is to say, not the fire of the last judgment. Or if by this fire coming down out of heaven and consuming them, John meant that blow wherewith Christ in His coming is to strike those persecutors of the Church whom He shall then find alive upon earth, when He shall kill Antichrist with the breath of His mouth, (2 Thessalonians 2:8) then even this is not the last judgment of the wicked; but the last judgment is that which they shall suffer when the bodily resurrection has taken place.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, and says, “The words, “And fire came down out of heaven and devoured them,” are not to be understood of the final punishment which shall be inflicted when it is said, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;” (Matthew 25:41) for

then they shall be cast into the fire, not fire come down out of heaven upon them.”

He refers first to **Revelation 20 (KJV):9** And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

And then to **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

And then to **Revelation 20 (KJV):15** And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Augustine continues, “In this place “fire out of heaven” is well understood of the firmness of the saints, wherewith they refuse to yield obedience to those who rage against them. For the firmament is “heaven,” by whose firmness these assailants shall be pained with blazing zeal, for they shall be impotent to draw away the saints to the party of Antichrist. This is the fire which shall devour them, and this is “from God;” for it is by God’s grace the saints become unconquerable, and so torment their enemies.”

Augustine allegorizes again. The verse reads, “fire came down from God out of heaven”. The fire was “from God”. And it was “out of heaven”. This was a judgment of God on unbelievers who were in a rebellion led by Satan at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ. During the thousand year reign of Christ there will still be unbelievers, This is why Christ will have to rule the nations with a rod of iron. And fire will devour these as we read again in **Revelation 20 (KJV):9** And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

Augustine continues, “For as in a good sense it is said, “The zeal of Thine house hath consumed me,” (Psalm 69:9) so in a bad sense it is said, “Zeal hath possessed the uninstructed people, and now fire shall consume the enemies.” (Isaiah 26:11)”

He refers to **Psalm 69 (KJV):9** For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

This was a prophecy of Jesus, and it was fulfilled in **John 2 (KJV):13** And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: 15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; 16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. 17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

Then he refers to **Isaiah 26 (KJV):11** Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

But this Scripture is out of context with Revelation 20:9. The fire in this Scripture refers to the fire in the enemies of Israel which shall devour them. The fire in Revelation 20:9 is coming from God and from heaven as a final judgment on the wicked on the earth.

Augustine then continues, ““And now,” that is to say, not the fire of the last judgment. Or if by this fire coming down out of heaven and consuming them, John meant that blow wherewith Christ in His coming is to strike those persecutors of the Church whom He shall then find alive upon earth, when He shall kill Antichrist with the breath of His mouth, (2

Thessalonians 2:8) then even this is not the last judgment of the wicked; but the last judgment is that which they shall suffer when the bodily resurrection has taken place.

He refers in context to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):8** And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Augustine did not understand the prophecies concerning the end times. Antichrist has already been judged before we get to Revelation 20:9, as we read in **Revelation 19 (KJV):20** And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

The devil was cast into the lake of fire with them after the thousand year reign of Christ, when he was released from the abyss, and gathered a great host to come against the camp of the saints. We continue to read in **Revelation 20 (KJV):10** And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Those who were gathered by Satan and who came against the camp of the saints and were devoured by the fire that came down from heaven will be judged at the white throne judgment, which is the judgment of the wicked dead. They were then all cast into the lake of fire. Augustine did not understand the Biblical timeline in the book of Revelation.

Chapter 13.—Whether the Time of the Persecution or Antichrist Should Be Reckoned in the Thousand Years.

This last persecution by Antichrist shall last for three years and six months, as we have already said, and as is affirmed both in the book of Revelation and by Daniel the prophet. Though this time is brief, yet not without reason is it questioned whether it is comprehended in the thousand years in which the devil is bound and the saints reign with Christ, or whether this little season should be added over and above to these years. For if we say that they are included in the thousand years, then the saints reign with Christ during a more protracted period than the devil is bound. For they shall reign with their King and Conqueror mightily even in that crowning persecution when the devil shall now be unbound and shall rage against them with all his might. How then does Scripture define both the binding of the devil and the reign of the saints by the same thousand years, if the binding of the devil ceases three years and six months before this reign of the saints with Christ? On the other hand, if we say that the brief space of



this persecution is not to be reckoned as a part of the thousand years, but rather as an additional period, we shall indeed be able to interpret the words, “The priests of God and of Christ shall reign with Him a thousand years; and when the thousand years shall be finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison;” for thus they signify that the reign of the saints and the bondage of the devil shall cease simultaneously, so that the time of the persecution we speak of should be contemporaneous neither with the reign of the saints nor with the imprisonment of Satan, but should be reckoned over and above as a superadded portion of time. But then in this case we are forced to admit that the saints shall not reign with Christ during that persecution. But who can dare to say that His members shall not reign with Him at that very juncture when they shall most of all, and with the greatest fortitude, cleave to Him, and when the glory of resistance and the crown of martyrdom shall be more conspicuous in proportion to the hotness of the battle? Or if it is suggested that they may be said not to reign, because of the tribulations which they shall suffer, it will follow that all the saints who have formerly, during the thousand years, suffered tribulation, shall not be said to have reigned with Christ during the period of their tribulation, and consequently even those whose souls the author of this book says that he saw, and who were slain for the testimony of Jesus and the word of God, did not reign with Christ when they were suffering persecution, and they were not themselves the kingdom of Christ, though Christ was then preeminently possessing them. **This is indeed perfectly absurd, and to be scouted.** But assuredly the victorious souls of the glorious martyrs having overcome and finished all griefs and toils, and having laid down their mortal members, have reigned and do reign with Christ till the thousand years are finished, that they may afterwards reign with Him when they have received their immortal bodies. And therefore during these three years and a half the souls of those who were slain for His testimony, both those which formerly passed from the body and those which shall pass in that last persecution, shall reign with Him till the mortal world come to an end, and pass into that kingdom in which there shall be no death. And thus the reign of the saints with Christ shall last longer than the bonds and imprisonment of the devil, because they shall reign with their King the Son of God for these three years and a half during which the devil is no longer bound. **It remains, therefore, that when we read that “the priests of God and of Christ shall reign with Him a thousand years; and when the thousand years are finished, the devil shall be loosed from his imprisonment,” that we understand either that the thousand years of the reign of the saints does not terminate, though the imprisonment of the devil does,—so that both parties have their thousand years, that is, their complete time, yet each with a different actual duration appropriate to itself, the kingdom of the saints being longer, the imprisonment of the devil shorter, —or at least that, as three years and six months is a very short time, it is not reckoned as either deducted from the whole time of Satan’s imprisonment, or as added to the whole duration of the reign of the saints, as we have shown above in the sixteenth book regarding the round number of four hundred years, which were specified as four hundred, though actually somewhat more; and similar expressions are often found in the sacred writings, if one will mark them.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “This last persecution by Antichrist shall last for three years and six months, as we have already said, and as is affirmed both in the book of Revelation and by Daniel the prophet.”

He refers to **Revelation 13 (KJV):5** And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

Forty and two months would be equivalent to “three years and six months”. And we read in **Daniel 7 (KJV):23** Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. 24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. 25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

“A time and times and the dividing of time”, refers to the forty and two months in Revelation 13:5, since these Scriptures refer to the same person.

Augustine then continues, “Though this time is brief, yet not without reason is it questioned whether it is comprehended in the thousand years in which the devil is bound and the saints reign with Christ, or whether this little season should be added over and above to these years. For if we say that they are included in the thousand years, then the saints reign with Christ during a more protracted period than the devil is bound. For they shall reign with their King and Conqueror mightily even in that crowning persecution when the devil shall now be unbound and shall rage against them with all his might.”

Augustine is not sure when the Antichrist will appear. But Daniel gives us the complete outline of God’s plan in **Daniel 9 (KJV):24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

Titus, the Roman general, destroyed the temple and the city in 70 A.D. which had been rebuilt after their destruction by Babylon. And we must understand that in Augustine’s thinking, the City of God is the Church, but in the Scriptures, the “holy city” mentioned in verse 24 above is Jerusalem, because in verse 24 the angel speaks of “thy people”, meaning Daniel’s brethren, the Jews.

We continue in **Daniel 9 (KJV):27** And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Verse 27 speaks of the antichrist who will confirm a covenant with Israel for the one week that is left of the seventy, which is to be understood in context as seven years. But “in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease”, and he will set himself up as the “abomination of desolation” in the temple and “make it desolate, even until the consummation”.

But Augustine continues, “How then does Scripture define both the binding of the devil and the reign of the saints by the same thousand years, if the binding of the devil ceases three years and six months before this reign of the saints with Christ? On the other hand, if we say that the brief space of this persecution is not to be reckoned as a part of the thousand years, but rather as an additional period, we shall indeed be able to interpret the words, “The priests of God and of Christ shall reign with Him a thousand years; and when the thousand years shall be finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison;”

He refers to **Revelation 20 (KJV):6** Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. 7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

Augustine did not understand that the thousand year reign of Christ will not begin until the Antichrist is cast into the lake of fire. He also did not understand that Israel would repent and be saved. This is revealed in **Revelation 12 (KJV):1** And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: 2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. 3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. 5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. 6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

We must interpret the symbols in the Bible by the Bible itself. So who is the woman “clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars”?

We find an explanation of the symbolism in **Genesis 37 (KJV):5** And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. 6 And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: 7 For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. 8 And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. 9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. 10 And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? 11 And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

The symbolism is interpreted by Jacob, who corresponds to the sun, Joseph’s mother to the moon, and the twelve stars to Joseph and his brothers. Therefore, the woman in Revelation 12:1 is Israel. The child to be born was the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The dragon is Satan who controls the beast having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads, that is, the Antichrist. In verse 4, the dragon was ready to devour the child, and he inspired Herod to kill all the children in Israel two years old and under. But Joseph was warned in a dream to take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt. The “man child” is “to rule all nations with a rod of

iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne”. This can only refer to Jesus Christ, the Messiah. And in verse 6, “the woman”, Israel, “fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”

The woman, that is, Israel, will be protected for “a thousand two hundred and threescore days”, or three and one half years. Augustine did not understand that God’s purpose for Israel has never been put to one side, for we read in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):**31 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. 35 Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. 37 Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord.

God has not put to one side His plan for Israel which shall be fulfilled in its time.

Augustine continues, “for thus they signify that the reign of the saints and the bondage of the devil shall cease simultaneously, so that the time of the persecution we speak of should be contemporaneous neither with the reign of the saints nor with the imprisonment of Satan, but should be reckoned over and above as a superadded portion of time.”

He did not understand God’s plan for Israel which would have made him know that the time of the Antichrist would be before the thousand year reign of Christ.

Augustine continues, “But then in this case we are forced to admit that the saints shall not reign with Christ during that persecution. But who can dare to say that His members shall not reign with Him at that very juncture when they shall most of all, and with the greatest fortitude, cleave to Him, and when the glory of resistance and the crown of martyrdom shall be more conspicuous in proportion to the hotness of the battle?”

But no persecution is recorded in this battle. It is simply stated as in **Revelation 20 (KJV):**9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

Augustine then argues, “Or if it is suggested that they may be said not to reign, because of the tribulations which they shall suffer, it will follow that all the saints who have formerly, during the thousand years, suffered tribulation, shall not be said to have reigned with Christ during the period of their tribulation, and consequently even those whose souls the author of this book says that he saw, and who were slain for the testimony of Jesus and the word of God, did not reign with Christ when they were suffering persecution, and they were not themselves the kingdom of Christ, though Christ was then preeminently possessing them. This is indeed

perfectly absurd, and to be scouted.”

Augustine did not understand the plan and purpose of God in the thousand year reign of Christ. There is no persecution during this time, but if there is, punishment will be given swiftly and justly because Christ shall rule with a rod of iron during this time.

Augustine continues, “But assuredly the victorious souls of the glorious martyrs having overcome and finished all griefs and toils, and having laid down their mortal members, have reigned and do reign with Christ till the thousand years are finished, that they may afterwards reign with Him when they have received their immortal bodies.”

Augustine did not understand that the first resurrection was of the bodies of the saints. The Scripture is not referring to a spiritual resurrection in Revelation 20:4-5, because it was those who were beheaded that are those who lived and reigned with Christ as we read again in **Revelation 20 (KJV):4** And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

So this is the first resurrection which is of the body. Augustine misinterprets the Scripture here. He continues, “And therefore during these three years and a half the souls of those who were slain for His testimony, both those which formerly passed from the body and those which shall pass in that last persecution, shall reign with Him till the mortal world come to an end, and pass into that kingdom in which there shall be no death. And thus the reign of the saints with Christ shall last longer than the bonds and imprisonment of the devil, because they shall reign with their King the Son of God for these three years and a half during which the devil is no longer bound.”

Again, he speaks of the reign of the Antichrist in the last half of the tribulation period of seven years. This occurs before the thousand year reign of Christ, and not after.

He concludes, “It remains, therefore, that when we read that “the priests of God and of Christ shall reign with Him a thousand years; and when the thousand years are finished, the devil shall be loosed from his imprisonment,” that we understand either that the thousand years of the reign of the saints does not terminate, though the imprisonment of the devil does,—so that both parties have their thousand years, that is, their complete time, yet each with a different actual duration appropriate to itself, the kingdom of the saints being longer, the imprisonment of the devil shorter, —or at least that, as three years and six months is a very short time, it is not reckoned as either deducted from the whole time of Satan’s imprisonment, or as added to the whole duration of the reign of the saints, as we have shown above in the sixteenth book regarding the round number of four hundred years, which were specified as four hundred, though actually somewhat more; and similar expressions are often found in the sacred writings, if one will mark them.”

Augustine expresses his uncertainty with his own thinking, as he says, “that we understand either...or...” But according to the plain sense of the Scriptures, the devil will be absent from the earth during thousand year reign of Christ, and imprisoned in the abyss, a prison house. The resurrected saints will reign with Christ, during this time, who will rule with a rod of iron from Jerusalem, in Israel, which will be at the head of the nations during this time.



After this thousand year reign, the devil will be released from the abyss, and there will be a battle before the camp of the saints, but it will be sovereignly fought by the Lord who will cause those gathered by the devil to be devoured by fire from heaven.

Chapter 14.—Of the Damnation of the Devil and His Adherents; And a Sketch of the Bodily Resurrection of All the Dead, and of the Final Retributive Judgment.

After this mention of the closing persecution, he summarily indicates all that the devil, and the city of which he is the prince, shall suffer in the last judgment. For he says, “And the devil who seduced them is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, in which are the beast and the false prophet, and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” We have already said that by the beast is well understood the wicked city. His false prophet is either Antichrist or that image or figment of which we have spoken in the same place. After this he gives a brief narrative of the last judgment itself, which shall take place at the second or bodily resurrection of the dead, as it had been revealed to him: “I saw a throne great and white, and One sitting on it from whose face the heaven and the earth fled away, and their place was not found.” He does not say, “I saw a throne great and white, and One sitting on it, and from His face the heaven and the earth fled away,” for it had not happened then, i.e., before the living and the dead were judged; but he says that he saw Him sitting on the throne from whose face heaven and earth fled away, but afterwards. For when the judgment is finished, this heaven and earth shall cease to be, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth. For this world shall pass away by transmutation, not by absolute destruction. And therefore the apostle says, “For the figure of this world passeth away. I would have you be without anxiety.” (1 Corinthians 7:31-32) The figure, therefore, passes away, not the nature. After John had said that he had seen One sitting on the throne from whose face heaven and earth fled, though not till afterwards, he said, “And I saw the dead, great and small: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of the life of each man: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.” He said that the books were opened, and a book; but he left us at a loss as to the nature of this book, “which is,” he says, “the book of the life of each man.” By those books, then, which he first mentioned, we are to understand the sacred books old and new, that out of them it might be shown what commandments God had enjoined; and that book of the life of each man is to show what commandments each man has done or omitted to do. If this book be materially considered, who can reckon its size or length, or the time it would take to read a book in which the whole life of every man is recorded? Shall there be present as many angels as men, and shall each man hear his life recited by the angel assigned to him? In that case there will be not one book containing all the lives, but a separate book for every life. But our passage requires us to think of one only. “And another book was opened,” it says. We must therefore understand it of a certain divine power, by which it shall be brought about that every one shall recall to memory all his own works, whether good or evil, and shall mentally survey them with a marvelous rapidity, so that this knowledge will either accuse or excuse conscience, and thus all and each shall be simultaneously judged. And this divine power is called a book, because in it we shall as it were read all that it causes us to remember. That he may show who the dead, small and great, are who are to be judged, he recurs to this which he had omitted or rather deferred, and says, “And the sea presented the dead

which were in it; and death and hell gave up the dead which were in them.” This of course took place before the dead were judged, yet it is mentioned after. And so, I say, he returns again to what he had omitted. But now he preserves the order of events, and for the sake of exhibiting it repeats in its own proper place what he had already said regarding the dead who were judged. For after he had said, “And the sea presented the dead which were in it, and death and hell gave up the dead which were in them,” he immediately subjoined what he had already said, “and they were judged every man according to their works.” For this is just what he had said before, “And the dead were judged according to their works.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “After this mention of the closing persecution, he summarily indicates all that the devil, and the city of which he is the prince, shall suffer in the last judgment.”

The Scripture does not mention a city of which the devil is the prince. This is part of Augustine’s allegorizing. The devil is the prince of this world as we read in **John 12 (KJV):31** Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

And in **John 14 (KJV):30** Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.

And in **John 16 (KJV):11** Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

He is also known as the prince of the power of the air as in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Augustine continues, “For he says, “And the devil who seduced them is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, in which are the beast and the false prophet, and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

He refers to **Revelation 20 (KJV):10** And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

He continues, “We have already said that by the beast is well understood the wicked city. His false prophet is either Antichrist or that image or figment of which we have spoken in the same place.”

And we have already explained that the beast is a person, as we read in **Revelation 13 (KJV):4** And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

And the false prophet is a person, as we read in **Revelation 13 (KJV):11** And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

It was the false prophet who set up the image as an idol that people were forced to worship or die, as mentioned in **Revelation 13 (KJV):15** And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

Augustine continues, “After this he gives a brief narrative of the last judgment itself, which shall take place at the second or bodily resurrection of the dead, as it had been revealed to him: “I saw a throne great and white, and One sitting on it from whose face the heaven and the earth fled away, and their place was not found.” He does not say, “I saw a throne great and white, and One sitting on it, and from His face the heaven and the earth fled away,” for it had not happened then, i.e., before the living and the dead were judged; but he says that he saw Him sitting on the throne from whose face heaven and earth fled away, but afterwards. For when the judgment is finished, this heaven and earth shall cease to be, and there will be a new heaven and a new earth.”

He refers to **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

And to **Revelation 21 (KJV):1** And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

He continues, “For this world shall pass away by transmutation, not by absolute destruction. And therefore the apostle says, “For the figure of this world passeth away. I would have you be without anxiety.” (1 Corinthians 7:31-32) The figure, therefore, passes away, not the nature.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):31** And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. 32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:

He continues, “After John had said that he had seen One sitting on the throne from whose face heaven and earth fled, though not till afterwards, he said, “And I saw the dead, great and small: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of the life of each man: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.”

He refers in context to **Revelation 20 (KJV):11** And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

He continues, “He said that the books were opened, and a book; but he left us at a loss as to the nature of this book, “which is,” he says, “the book of the life of each man.” By those books, then, which he first mentioned, we are to understand the sacred books old and new, that out of them it might be shown what commandments God had enjoined; and that book of the life of each man is to show what commandments each man has done or omitted to do. If this book be materially considered, who can reckon its size or length, or the time it would take to read a

book in which the whole life of every man is recorded? Shall there be present as many angels as men, and shall each man hear his life recited by the angel assigned to him? In that case there will be not one book containing all the lives, but a separate book for every life.”

According to the Scripture, the book of life records those who are saved, for we read in verse 15 that “whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire”. The other books relate to the works of the dead. The wicked dead are those who are being judged, and their works only show them that they shall be in the lake of fire.

Augustine continues, “**But our passage requires us to think of one only. “And another book was opened,”** it says. We must therefore understand it of a certain divine power, by which it shall be brought about that every one shall recall to memory all his own works, whether good or evil, and shall mentally survey them with a marvelous rapidity, so that this knowledge will either accuse or excuse conscience, and thus all and each shall be simultaneously judged. And this divine power is called a book, because in it we shall as it were read all that it causes us to remember. That he may show who the dead, small and great, are who are to be judged, he recurs to this which he had omitted or rather deferred, and says, “And the sea presented the dead which were in it; and death and hell gave up the dead which were in them.” This of course took place before the dead were judged, yet it is mentioned after. And so, I say, he returns again to what he had omitted. But now he preserves the order of events, and for the sake of exhibiting it repeats in its own proper place what he had already said regarding the dead who were judged. For after he had said, “And the sea presented the dead which were in it, and death and hell gave up the dead which were in them,” he immediately subjoined what he had already said, “and they were judged every man according to their works.” For this is just what he had said before, “And the dead were judged according to their works.”

This judgment is strictly for the wicked dead, because they are judged according to their works. We know that believers in Jesus Christ are saved by grace as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We believers shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ as in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

And we will be rewarded accordingly as we read again in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

If we build wood, hay, or stubble, we will still be saved, but we will experience the fire of our bad choices before we die.

Now Augustine thought that the judgment in Revelation 20:11-15 was the final ultimate judgment where everyone would stand before God, both the righteous and the wicked, and be judged. The book of life in Revelation 20:15 is only there to show the dead that they are not written in it.

## Chapter 15.—Who the Dead are Who are Given Up to Judgment by the Sea, and by Death and Hell.

But who are the dead which were in the sea, and which the sea presented? For we cannot suppose that those who die in the sea are not in hell, nor that their bodies are preserved in the sea; nor yet, which is still more absurd, that the sea retained the good, while hell received the bad. Who could believe this? But some very sensibly suppose that in this place the sea is put forth is world. When John then wished to signify that those whom Christ should find still alive in the body were to be judged along with those who should rise again, he called them dead, both the good to whom it is said, “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God,” (Colossians 3:3) and the wicked of whom it is said, “Let the dead bury their dead.” (Matthew 8:22) They may also be called dead, because they wear mortal bodies, as the apostle says, “The body indeed is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness;” (Romans 8:10) proving that in a living man in the body there is both a body which is dead, and a spirit which is life. Yet he did not say that the body was mortal, but dead, although immediately after he speaks in the more usual way of mortal bodies. These, then, are the dead which were in the sea, and which the sea presented, to wit, the men who were in this world, because they had not yet died, and whom the world presented for judgment. “And death and hell,” he says, “gave up the dead which were in them.” The sea presented them because they had merely to be found in the place where they were; but death and hell gave them up or restored them, because they called them back to life, which they had already quitted. And perhaps it was not without reason that neither death nor hell were judged sufficient alone, and both were mentioned,—death to indicate the good, who have suffered only death and not hell; hell to indicate the wicked, who suffer also the punishment of hell. For if it does not seem absurd to believe that the ancient saints who believed in Christ and His then future coming, were kept in places far removed indeed from the torments of the wicked, but yet in hell, until Christ’s blood and His descent into these places delivered them, certainly good Christians, redeemed by that precious price already paid, are quite unacquainted with hell while they wait for their restoration to the body, and the reception of their reward. After saying, “They were judged every man according to their works,” he briefly added what the judgment was: “Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire;” by these names designating the devil and the whole company of his angels, for he is the author of death and the pains of hell. For this is what he had already, by anticipation, said in clearer language: “The devil who seduced them was cast into a lake of fire and brimstone.” The obscure addition he had made in the words, “in which were also the beast and the false prophet,” he here explains, “They who were not found written in the book of life were cast into the lake of fire.” This book is not for reminding God, as if things might escape Him by forgetfulness, but it symbolizes His predestination of those to whom eternal life shall be given. For it is not that God is ignorant, and reads in the book to inform Himself, but rather His infallible prescience is the book of life in which they are written, that is to say, known beforehand.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But who are the dead which were in the sea, and which the sea presented? For we cannot suppose that those who die in the sea are not in hell, nor that their bodies are preserved in the sea; nor yet, which is still more absurd, that the



sea retained the good, while hell received the bad. Who could believe this? But some very sensibly suppose that in this place the sea is put forth is world.”

He is referring in context to **Revelation 20 (KJV):12** And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

The bodies of the dead in this judgment are to be raised, so all who may have died at sea are raised, and united with their spirits, which were in hell. Death refers to all the bodies of the dead wherever else they may be.

Augustine continues, “When John then wished to signify that those whom Christ should find still alive in the body were to be judged along with those who should rise again, he called them dead, both the good to whom it is said, “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God,” (Colossians 3:3) and the wicked of whom it is said, “Let the dead bury their dead.” (Matthew 8:22)”

He refers to **Colossians 3 (KJV):3** For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

But this Scripture is not referring to physical death, but to death to sin as we read in **Romans 6 (KJV):2** God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Augustine also refers to **Matthew 8 (KJV):22** But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

But this judgment at the white throne does not include the righteous dead.

Augustine continues, “They may also be called dead, because they wear mortal bodies, as the apostle says, “The body indeed is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness;” (Romans 8:10) proving that in a living man in the body there is both a body which is dead, and a spirit which is life.”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):10** And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Paul is referring to the old Adamic sin nature of the body, and to our attitude towards sin, as we read in **Romans 6 (KJV):11** Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

So we are to consider ourselves dead to sin, and not to give in to the sinful nature in our flesh.

Augustine continues, “Yet he did not say that the body was mortal, but dead, although immediately after he speaks in the more usual way of mortal bodies. **These, then, are the dead which were in the sea, and which the sea presented, to wit, the men who were in this world, because they had not yet died, and whom the world presented for judgment. “And death and hell,” he says, “gave up the dead which were in them.” The sea presented them because they had merely to be found in the place where they were; but death and hell gave them up or restored them, because they called them back to life, which they had already quitted.**”

But the Scripture says in **Revelation 20 (KJV):13** And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

Nothing is said about those who are dead to sin in this verse, or to any who had not died physically yet.

Augustine continues, “And perhaps it was not without reason that neither death nor hell were judged sufficient alone, and both were mentioned,—death to indicate the good, who have suffered only death and not hell; hell to indicate the wicked, who suffer also the punishment of hell.”

Augustine includes the righteous dead as well as the wicked dead in the white throne judgment. But this judgment is for the wicked dead only.

He continues, “For if it does not seem absurd to believe that the ancient saints who believed in Christ and His then future coming, were kept in places far removed indeed from the torments of the wicked, but yet in hell, until Christ’s blood and His descent into these places delivered them, certainly good Christians, redeemed by that precious price already paid, are quite unacquainted with hell while they wait for their restoration to the body, and the reception of their reward.”

The ancient saints went to Sheol, which was divided into two places, as we read in Luke, chapter 16 of the rich man and Lazarus. Lazarus went to Abraham’s bosom, and the rich man went to hell. This is a parable that Jesus told before He had died on the cross, and ascended into heaven, and took captivity with Him. That is, when He died on the cross, He descended and He took all of the Old Testament saints in Abraham’s bosom to be with Him in heaven. And now all the dead go directly to heaven. We will explain more about Abraham’s bosom in succeeding chapters.

Augustine continues, “After saying, “They were judged every man according to their works,” he briefly added what the judgment was: “Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire;” by these names designating the devil and the whole company of his angels, for he is the author of death and the pains of hell. For this is what he had already, by anticipation, said in clearer language: “The devil who seduced them was cast into a lake of fire and brimstone.” The obscure addition he had made in the words, “in which were also the beast and the false prophet,” he here explains, “They who were not found written in the book of life were cast into the lake of fire.”

And if Augustine would have understood that the beast and the false prophet had already been cast into hell after the tribulation, and before the thousand year reign of Christ, he would not have thought it an “obscure addition he had made in the words, “in which were also the beast and the false prophet”.

Augustine concludes, “This book is not for reminding God, as if things might escape Him by forgetfulness, but it symbolizes His predestination of those to whom eternal life shall be given. For it is not that God is ignorant, and reads in the book to inform Himself, but rather His infallible prescience is the book of life in which they are written, that is to say, known beforehand.”

And we can agree with Augustine here. All that are written in the book of life will be with the Lord in heaven.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God  
Book XX, Chapter 19, page 437**

## Chapter 19.—What the Apostle Paul Wrote to the Thessalonians About the Manifestation of Antichrist Which Shall Precede the Day of the Lord.

I see that I must omit many of the statements of the gospels and epistles about this last judgment, that this volume may not become unduly long; but I can on no account omit what the Apostle Paul says, in writing to the Thessalonians, “We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-11) etc.

No one can doubt that he wrote this of Antichrist and of the day of judgment, which he here calls the day of the Lord, nor that he declared that this day should not come unless he first came who is called the apostate —apostate, to wit, from the Lord God. And if this may justly be said of all the ungodly, how much more of him? But it is uncertain in what temple he shall sit, whether in that ruin of the temple which was built by Solomon, or in the Church; for the apostle would not call the temple of any idol or demon the temple of God. And on this account some think that in this passage Antichrist means not the prince himself alone, but his whole body, that is, the mass of men who adhere to him, along with him their prince; and they also think that we should render the Greek more exactly were we to read, not “in the temple of God,” but “for” or “as the temple of God,” as if he himself were the temple of God, the Church. Then as for the words, “And now ye know what withholdeth,” i.e., ye know what hindrance or cause of delay there is, “that he might be revealed in his own time;” they show that he was unwilling to make an explicit statement, because he said that they knew. And thus we who have not their knowledge wish and are not able even with pains to understand what the apostle referred to, especially as his meaning is made still more obscure by what he adds. For what does he mean by, “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now holdeth, let him hold until he be taken out of the way: and then shall the wicked be revealed?” I frankly confess I do not know what he means. I will nevertheless mention such conjectures as I have heard or read.

Some think that the Apostle Paul referred to the Roman empire, and that he was unwilling to use language more explicit, lest he should incur the calumnious charge of wishing ill to the empire which it was hoped would be eternal; so that in saying, “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work,” he alluded to Nero, whose deeds already seemed to be as the deeds of Antichrist. And hence some suppose that he shall rise again and be Antichrist. Others, again, suppose that he is not even dead, but that he was concealed that he might be supposed to have been killed, and that he now lives in concealment in the vigor of that same age which he had reached when he was believed to have perished, and will live until he is revealed in his own time and restored to his kingdom. (Suetonius’ Nero, x. 47) But I wonder that men can be so audacious in their conjectures. However, it is not absurd to believe that these words of the apostle, “Only he who now holdeth, let him hold until he be taken out of the way,” refer to the Roman empire, as if it were said, “Only he who now reigneth, let him reign until he be taken out of the way.” “And then shall the wicked be revealed:” no one doubts that this means Antichrist. But others think that the words, “Ye know what withholdeth,” and “The mystery of iniquity worketh,” refer only to the wicked and the hypocrites who are in the Church, until they reach a number so great as to furnish Antichrist with a great people, and that this is the mystery of iniquity, because it seems hidden; also that the apostle is exhorting the faithful tenaciously to hold the faith they hold when he says, “Only he who now holdeth, let him hold until he be taken out of the way,” that is, until the mystery of iniquity which now is hidden departs from the

**Church.** For they suppose that it is to this same mystery John alludes when in his epistle he says, “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.” (1 John 2:18-19) As therefore there went out from the Church many heretics, whom John calls “many antichrists,” at that time prior to the end, and which John calls “the last time,” **so in the end they shall go out who do not belong to Christ, but to that last Antichrist, and then he shall be revealed.**

Thus various, then, are the conjectural explanations of the obscure words of the apostle. That which there is no doubt he said is this, that Christ will not come to judge quick and dead unless Antichrist, His adversary, first come to seduce those who are dead in soul; although their seduction is a result of God’s secret judgment already passed. For, as it is said “his presence shall be after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all seduction of unrighteousness in them that perish.” For then shall Satan be loosed, and by means of that Antichrist shall work with all power in a lying though a wonderful manner. It is commonly questioned whether these works are called “signs and lying wonders” because he is to deceive men’s senses by false appearances, or because the things he does, though they be true prodigies, shall be a lie to those who shall believe that such things could be done only by God, being ignorant of the devil’s power, and especially of such unexampled power as he shall then for the first time put forth. **For when he fell from heaven as fire, and at a stroke swept away from the holy Job his numerous household and his vast flocks, and then as a whirlwind rushed upon and smote the house and killed his children, these were not deceitful appearances, and yet they were the works of Satan to whom God had given this power. Why they are called signs and lying wonders, we shall then be more likely to know when the time itself arrives. But whatever be the reason of the name, they shall be such signs and wonders as shall seduce those who shall deserve to be seduced, “because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.” Neither did the apostle scruple to go on to say, “For this cause God shall send upon them the working of error that they should believe a lie.” For God shall send, because God shall permit the devil to do these things, the permission being by His own just judgment, though the doing of them is in pursuance of the devil’s unrighteous and malignant purpose, “that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” Therefore, being judged, they shall be seduced, and, being seduced, they shall be judged. But, being judged, they shall be seduced by those secretly just and justly secret judgments of God, with which He has never ceased to judge since the first sin of the rational creatures; and, being seduced, they shall be judged in that last and manifest judgment administered by Jesus Christ, who was Himself most unjustly judged and shall most justly judge.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “I see that I must omit many of the statements of the gospels and epistles about this last judgment, that this volume may not become unduly long; but I can on no account omit what the Apostle Paul says, in writing to the Thessalonians, “We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-11) etc.

He refers in context to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):** 1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not

soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Augustine continues, “No one can doubt that he wrote this of Antichrist and of the day of judgment, which he here calls the day of the Lord, nor that he declared that this day should not come unless he first came who is called the apostate —apostate, to wit, from the Lord God. And if this may justly be said of all the ungodly, how much more of him? **But it is uncertain in what temple he shall sit, whether in that ruin of the temple which was built by Solomon, or in the Church; for the apostle would not call the temple of any idol or demon the temple of God.**”

He refers to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):4** Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

The temple in Jerusalem was in ruins as a result of Titus, the Roman general who destroyed it in 70 A.D.

Augustine continues, “**And on this account some think that in this passage Antichrist means not the prince himself alone, but his whole body, that is, the mass of men who adhere to him, along with him their prince; and they also think that we should render the Greek more exactly were we to read, not “in the temple of God,” but “for” or “as the temple of God,” as if he himself were the temple of God, the Church.**”

This is proved false because the temple will be rebuilt in order to fulfill the prophecy. Augustine did not understand that Israel would be under God’s wrath for a set period of time as we read in **Luke 21 (KJV):24** And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

When the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, God will then revisit Israel and save them, and they will once again be a nation that fears God as Zechariah prophesied in **Zechariah 12 (KJV):10** And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Israel as a nation will be born again in one day as Isaiah prophesied in **Isaiah 66 (KJV):6** A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompence to his enemies. 7 Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. 8 Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. 9 Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God. 10 Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her:

Augustine continues, “**Then as for the words, “And now ye know what withholdeth,” i.e., ye know what hindrance or cause of delay there is, “that he might be revealed in his own time;” they show that he was unwilling to make an explicit statement, because he said that they knew.**



And thus we who have not their knowledge wish and are not able even with pains to understand what the apostle referred to, especially as his meaning is made still more obscure by what he adds. For what does he mean by, “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now holdeth, let him hold until he be taken out of the way: and then shall the wicked be revealed?” I frankly confess I do not know what he means. I will nevertheless mention such conjectures as I have heard or read.”

Augustine refers to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):6** And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

He then mentions “conjectures” that he “heard or read” as to “what withholdeth”, as he then continues, and says,

- 1.) “Some think that the Apostle Paul referred to the Roman empire, and that he was unwilling to use language more explicit, lest he should incur the calumnious charge of wishing ill to the empire which it was hoped would be eternal; so that in saying, “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work,” he alluded to Nero, whose deeds already seemed to be as the deeds of Antichrist. And hence some suppose that he shall rise again and be Antichrist.
- 2.) Others, again, suppose that he is not even dead, but that he was concealed that he might be supposed to have been killed, and that he now lives in concealment in the vigor of that same age which he had reached when he was believed to have perished, and will live until he is revealed in his own time and restored to his kingdom. (Suetonius’ Nero, x. 47) But I wonder that men can be so audacious in their conjectures.”
- 3.) “However, it is not absurd to believe that these words of the apostle, “Only he who now holdeth, let him hold until he be taken out of the way,” refer to the Roman empire, as if it were said, “Only he who now reigneth, let him reign until he be taken out of the way.” “And then shall the wicked be revealed:” no one doubts that this means Antichrist.
- 4.) But others think that the words, “Ye know what withholdeth,” and “The mystery of iniquity worketh,” refer only to the wicked and the hypocrites who are in the Church, until they reach a number so great as to furnish Antichrist with a great people, and that this is the mystery of iniquity, because it seems hidden; also that the apostle is exhorting the faithful tenaciously to hold the faith they hold when he says, “Only he who now holdeth, let him hold until he be taken out of the way,” that is, until the mystery of iniquity which now is hidden departs from the Church. For they suppose that it is to this same mystery John alludes when in his epistle he says, “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us,

they would no doubt have continued with us.” (1 John 2:18-19)”

He refers to **1 John 2 (KJV):18** Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

He continues, “As therefore there went out from the Church many heretics, whom John calls “many antichrists,” at that time prior to the end, and which John calls “the last time,” **so in the end they shall go out who do not belong to Christ, but to that last Antichrist, and then he shall be revealed.** Thus various, then, are the conjectural explanations of the obscure words of the apostle. That which there is no doubt he said is this, that Christ will not come to judge quick and dead unless Antichrist, His adversary, first come to seduce those who are dead in soul; although their seduction is a result of God’s secret judgment already passed. For, as it is said “his presence shall be after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all seduction of unrighteousness in them that perish.”

He refers again to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):9** Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

He continues, “For then shall Satan be loosed, and by means of that Antichrist shall work with all power in a lying though a wonderful manner. It is commonly questioned whether these works are called “signs and lying wonders” because he is to deceive men’s senses by false appearances, or because the things he does, though they be true prodigies, shall be a lie to those who shall believe that such things could be done only by God, being ignorant of the devil’s power, and especially of such unexampled power as he shall then for the first time put forth. **For when he fell from heaven as fire, and at a stroke swept away from the holy Job his numerous household and his vast flocks, and then as a whirlwind rushed upon and smote the house and killed his children, these were not deceitful appearances, and yet they were the works of Satan to whom God had given this power.**”

He refers to **Job 1 (KJV):8** And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? 9 Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? 10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. 11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. 12 And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord. 13 And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: 14 And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: 15 And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 16 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 17 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said,

The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 18 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: 19 And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. 20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, 21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. 22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

Augustine then concludes, “Why they are called signs and lying wonders, we shall then be more likely to know when the time itself arrives. But whatever be the reason of the name, they shall be such signs and wonders as shall seduce those who shall deserve to be seduced, “because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.” Neither did the apostle scruple to go on to say, “For this cause God shall send upon them the working of error that they should believe a lie.” For God shall send, because God shall permit the devil to do these things, the permission being by His own just judgment, though the doing of them is in pursuance of the devil’s unrighteous and malignant purpose, “that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” Therefore, being judged, they shall be seduced, and, being seduced, they shall be judged. But, being judged, they shall be seduced by those secretly just and justly secret judgments of God, with which He has never ceased to judge since the first sin of the rational creatures; and, being seduced, they shall be judged in that last and manifest judgment administered by Jesus Christ, who was Himself most unjustly judged and shall most justly judge.”

Again, Augustine places the coming of the Antichrist at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ. But, according to Scripture, the Antichrist will come in the seven years of tribulation that will come upon the earth before the thousand year reign of Christ.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XX, Chapter 22, page 442-443**

Chapter 22.—What is Meant by the Good Going Out to See the Punishment of the Wicked.

But in what way shall the good go out to see the punishment of the wicked? Are they to leave their happy abodes by a bodily movement, and proceed to the places of punishment, so as to witness the torments of the wicked in their bodily presence? Certainly not; but they shall go out by knowledge. For this expression, go out, signifies that those who shall be punished shall be without. And thus the Lord also calls these places, “the outer darkness,” (Matthew 25:30) to which is opposed that entrance concerning which it is said to the good servant, “Enter into the joy of thy Lord,” that it may not be supposed that the wicked can enter thither and be known, but rather that the good by their knowledge go out to them, because the good are to know that which is without. For those who shall be in torment shall not know what is going on within in the joy of the Lord; but they who shall enter into that

joy shall know what is going on outside in the outer darkness. Therefore it is said, “They shall go out,” because they shall know what is done by those who are without. For if the prophets were able to know things that had not yet happened, by means of that indwelling of God in their minds, limited though it was, shall not the immortal saints know things that have already happened, when God shall be all in all? (1 Corinthians 15:28) The seed, then, and the name of the saints shall remain in that blessedness,—the seed, to wit, of which John says, “And his seed remaineth in him;” (1 John 3:9) and the name, of which it was said through Isaiah himself, “I will give them an everlasting name.” (Isaiah 56:5) “And there shall be to them month after month, and Sabbath after Sabbath,” as if it were said, Moon after moon, and rest upon rest, both of which they shall themselves be when they shall pass from the old shadows of time into the new lights of eternity. **The worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched, which constitute the punishment of the wicked, are differently interpreted by different people. For some refer both to the body, others refer both to the soul; while others again refer the fire literally to the body, and the worm figuratively to the soul, which seems the more credible idea.** But the present is not the time to discuss this difference, for we have undertaken to occupy this book with the last judgment, in which the good and the bad are separated: their rewards and punishments we shall more carefully discuss elsewhere.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But in what way shall the good go out to see the punishment of the wicked? Are they to leave their happy abodes by a bodily movement, and proceed to the places of punishment, so as to witness the torments of the wicked in their bodily presence? Certainly not; but they shall go out by knowledge. For this expression, go out, signifies that those who shall be punished shall be without. And thus the Lord also calls these places, “the outer darkness,” (Matthew 25:30) to which is opposed that entrance concerning which it is said to the good servant, “Enter into the joy of thy Lord,” that it may not be supposed that the wicked can enter thither and be known, but rather that the good by their knowledge go out to them, because the good are to know that which is without.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 25 (KJV):** 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. 14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. 16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. 17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. 18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. 21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside

them. 23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. 26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: 27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. 28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. 30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The key to the parable is in verse 29. “For unto every one that hath shall be given...”, that is, everyone who has a disposition to receive the truth, shall be given more truth, and he shall have abundance. But the one who does not have a disposition to receive truth, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away.

Augustine continues, “For those who shall be in torment shall not know what is going on within in the joy of the Lord; but they who shall enter into that joy shall know what is going on outside in the outer darkness.”

I believe part of their torment will be in the knowledge they will have that there is a better place, as is evident in the rich man in **Luke 16 (KJV):23** And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

Augustine continues, “Therefore it is said, “They shall go out,” because they shall know what is done by those who are without. For if the prophets were able to know things that had not yet happened, by means of that indwelling of God in their minds, limited though it was, shall not the immortal saints know things that have already happened, when God shall be all in all? (1 Corinthians 15:28)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):28** And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

But this is stated in **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):9** For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

Now we know in part, but at the resurrection, we will know even as also we are known.

Augustine continues, “The seed, then, and the name of the saints shall remain in that blessedness,—the seed, to wit, of which John says, “And his seed remaineth in him;” (1 John 3:9) and the name, of which it was said through Isaiah himself, “I will give them an everlasting name.” (Isaiah 56:5)”

He refers to **1 John 3 (KJV):9** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his



seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

And in context to **Isaiah 56 (KJV):**4 For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; 5 Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.

This is the reward for eunuchs. Augustine continues, ““And there shall be to them month after month, and Sabbath after Sabbath,” as if it were said, Moon after moon, and rest upon rest, both of which they shall themselves be when they shall pass from the old shadows of time into the new lights of eternity. **The worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched, which constitute the punishment of the wicked, are differently interpreted by different people. For some refer both to the body, others refer both to the soul; while others again refer the fire literally to the body, and the worm figuratively to the soul, which seems the more credible idea.**”

He refers to **Mark 9 (KJV):**43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: 48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Some have thought that the fire of hell is only age long. But Jesus says in verse 43 that they “go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched”.

Augustine concludes, “But the present is not the time to discuss this difference, for we have undertaken to occupy this book with the last judgment, in which the good and the bad are separated: their rewards and punishments we shall more carefully discuss elsewhere.”

Jesus taught as in **Matthew 10 (KJV):**28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XX, Chapter 25, page 445-446**

Chapter 25.—Of Malachi’s Prophecy, in Which He Speaks of the Last Judgment, and of a Cleansing Which Some are to Undergo by Purifying Punishments.

The prophet Malachi or Malachias, who is also called Angel, and is by some (for Jerome tells us that this is the opinion of the Hebrews) identified with Ezra the priest, others of whose writings have been received into the canon, predicts the last judgment, saying, “Behold, He cometh, saith the Lord Almighty; and who shall abide the day of His entrance?...for I am the Lord your God, and I change not.” (Malachi 3:1-6) **From these words it more evidently appears that some shall in the last judgment suffer some kind of purgatorial punishments; for what else can be understood by the word, “Who shall abide the day of His entrance, or who shall be able to look upon Him? For He enters as a molder’s fire, and as the herb of fullers: and He shall sit**

fusing and purifying as if over gold and silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and pour them out like gold and silver?" Similarly Isaiah says, "The Lord shall wash the filthiness of the sons and daughters of Zion, and shall cleanse away the blood from their midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." (Isaiah 4:4) Unless perhaps we should say that they are cleansed from filthiness and in a manner clarified, when the wicked are separated from them by penal judgment, so that the elimination and damnation of the one party is the purgation of the others, because they shall henceforth live free from the contamination of such men. But when he says, "And he shall purify the sons of Levi, and pour them out like gold and silver, and they shall offer to the Lord sacrifices in righteousness; and the sacrifices of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing to the Lord," he declares that those who shall be purified shall then please the Lord with sacrifices of righteousness, and consequently they themselves shall be purified from their own unrighteousness which made them displeasing to God. Now they themselves, when they have been purified, shall be sacrifices of complete and perfect righteousness; for what more acceptable offering can such persons make to God than themselves? But this question of purgatorial punishments we must defer to another time, to give it a more adequate treatment. By the sons of Levi and Judah and Jerusalem we ought to understand the Church herself, gathered not from the Hebrews only, but from other nations as well; nor such a Church as she now is, when "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," (1 John 1:8) but as she shall then be, purged by the last judgment as a threshing floor by a winnowing wind, and those of her members who need it being cleansed by fire, so that there remains absolutely not one who offers sacrifice for his sins. For all who make such offerings are assuredly in their sins, for the remission of which they make offerings, that having made to God an acceptable offering, they may then be absolved.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "The prophet Malachi or Malachias, who is also called Angel, and is by some (for Jerome tells us that this is the opinion of the Hebrews) identified with Ezra the priest, others of whose writings have been received into the canon, predicts the last judgment, saying, "Behold, He cometh, saith the Lord Almighty; and who shall abide the day of His entrance?...for I am the Lord your God, and I change not." (Malachi 3:1-6)"

He refers in context to **Malachi 3 (KJV):1** Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. 2 But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: 3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. 4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. 5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts. 6 For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Augustine continues, "From these words it more evidently appears that some shall in the

last judgment suffer some kind of purgatorial punishments; for what else can be understood by the word, "Who shall abide the day of His entrance, or who shall be able to look upon Him? For He enters as a molder's fire, and as the herb of fullers: and He shall sit fusing and purifying as if over gold and silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and pour them out like gold and silver?" Similarly Isaiah says, "The Lord shall wash the filthiness of the sons and daughters of Zion, and shall cleanse away the blood from their midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." (Isaiah 4:4)"

He refers to Malachi 3:2-3 that we read above, and then in context to **Isaiah 4 (KJV):2** In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. 3 And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: 4 When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.

Augustine did not understand that the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ would save Israel, and establish them again as a holy nation. This is the time of Jacob's trouble referred to in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV):1** The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 2 Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book. 3 For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. 4 And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5 For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

The reason the day was so great in verse 7 above is because of the great battle that will be fought in Israel as we read in **Revelation 16 (KJV):12** And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

The word Armageddon in Hebrew is composed of two Hebrew words, **הַר** (pronounced har), meaning hill, and **מִגְדוֹן** (pronounced meg·id·dōn'). So Armageddon = "the hill or city of Megiddo". <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G717&t=KJV>

The hill of Megiddo is in Israel. This is the time when God shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem as we read in **Joel 3 (KJV):2** For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, 2 I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations,

and parted my land.

And in **Joel 3 (KJV):9** Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: 10 Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. 11 Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. 12 Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. 13 Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. 14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

This battle will be fierce as we read in **Revelation 14 (KJV):19** And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

A thousand and six hundred furlongs is two hundred miles. But all of these armies that come against Jerusalem will be destroyed as we read in **Revelation 19 (KJV):11** And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. 13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords. 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. 19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

We then read of the next events in **Revelation 20 (KJV):1** And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image,

neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

The dead in Christ who are raised in the first resurrection will go into the kingdom and reign with Christ for a thousand years. Augustine did not understand the sequence of events as they were to occur in the book of Revelation, and the Scriptures. This is the completion of the second coming of Christ which began with the rapture of the Church just before the tribulation of seven years, in which the Antichrist will come to power, and Israel will be melted as silver, but will be saved out of it.

Now let us reread Augustine's words, "From these words it more evidently appears that some shall in the last judgment suffer some kind of purgatorial punishments; for what else can be understood by the word, "Who shall abide the day of His entrance, or who shall be able to look upon Him? For He enters as a molder's fire, and as the herb of fullers: and He shall sit fusing and purifying as if over gold and silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and pour them out like gold and silver?" Similarly Isaiah says, "The Lord shall wash the filthiness of the sons and daughters of Zion, and shall cleanse away the blood from their midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning." (Isaiah 4:4)"

And Augustine continues, "Unless perhaps we should say that they are cleansed from filthiness and in a manner clarified, when the wicked are separated from them by penal judgment, so that the elimination and damnation of the one party is the purgation of the others, because they shall henceforth live free from the contamination of such men. But when he says, "And he shall purify the sons of Levi, and pour them out like gold and silver, and they shall offer to the Lord sacrifices in righteousness; and the sacrifices of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing to the Lord," he declares that those who shall be purified shall then please the Lord with sacrifices of righteousness, and consequently they themselves shall be purified from their own unrighteousness which made them displeasing to God. Now they themselves, when they have been purified, shall be sacrifices of complete and perfect righteousness; for what more acceptable offering can such persons make to God than themselves?"

He refers to **Malachi 3 (KJV):3** And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

The "the sacrifices of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasing to the Lord" because "they shall offer to the Lord sacrifices in righteousness", that is, because they shall be righteous having been born again by believing in Jesus Christ, and as a result, justified by their faith. This will happen when they look on Him whom they have pierced as in **Zechariah 12 (KJV):10** And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Augustine continues, "But this question of purgatorial punishments we must defer to another time, to give it a more adequate treatment. By the sons of Levi and Judah and Jerusalem we ought to understand the Church herself, gathered not from the Hebrews only, but from other



nations as well; nor such a Church as she now is, when “if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,” (1 John 1:8) but as she shall then be, purged by the last judgment as a threshing floor by a winnowing wind, and those of her members who need it being cleansed by fire, so that there remains absolutely not one who offers sacrifice for his sins.”

He refers to **1 John 1 (KJV):8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

At the resurrection of the just, that is when we see Him, we will be like Him as in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Augustine does not include Israel as a nation, as the focus of God’s attention in the the book of Revelation. Instead, he says, “**By the sons of Levi and Judah and Jerusalem we ought to understand the Church herself, gathered not from the Hebrews only, but from other nations as well**”. He substitutes the Church for Israel in Isaiah 4:2-4. Augustine did not understand that Israel, as a nation, will be saved at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As for his “**question of purgatorial punishments**”, we have already dealt with this subject in **Dogmas of the Early Church**, under the heading, **Purgatory**.

He concludes, “**For all who make such offerings are assuredly in their sins, for the remission of which they make offerings, that having made to God an acceptable offering, they may then be absolved.**”

When Israel is restored, the temple offerings will resume. But this does not mean that they are not saved. As a nation of believers, they will offer sacrifices in righteousness that will look back in remembrance of the perfect sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

## Suffering in Hell

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XXI, Chapter 3, page 453

Chapter 3.—Whether Bodily Suffering Necessarily Terminates in the Destruction of the Flesh.

But, say they, there is no body which can suffer and cannot also die. How do we know this? For who can say with certainty that the devils do not suffer in their bodies, when they own that they are grievously tormented? And if it is replied that there is no earthly body—that is to say, no solid and perceptible body, or, in one word, no flesh—which can suffer and cannot die, is not this to tell us only what men have gathered from experience and their bodily senses? For they indeed have no acquaintance with any flesh but that which is mortal; and this is their whole argument, that what they have had no experience of they judge quite impossible. **For we cannot call it reasoning to make pain a presumption of death, while, in fact, it is rather a sign of life. For though it be a question whether that which suffers can continue to live for ever, yet it is certain that everything which suffers pain does live, and that pain can exist only in a living subject. It is necessary, therefore, that he who is pained be living, not necessary that pain kill him; for every pain does not kill even those mortal bodies of ours which are destined to die.**

And that any pain kills them is caused by the circumstance that the soul is so connected with the body that it succumbs to great pain and withdraws; for the structure of our members and vital parts is so infirm that it cannot bear up against that violence which causes great or extreme agony. But in the life to come this connection of soul and body is of such a kind, that as it is dissolved by no lapse of time, so neither is it burst asunder by any pain. And so, although it be true that in this world there is no flesh which can suffer pain and yet cannot die, yet in the world to come there shall be flesh such as now there is not, as there will also be death such as now there is not. For death will not be abolished, but will be eternal, since the soul will neither be able to enjoy God and live, nor to die and escape the pains of the body. The first death drives the soul from the body against her will: the second death holds the soul in the body against her will. The two have this in common, that the soul suffers against her will what her own body inflicts.

Our opponents, too, make much of this, that in this world there is no flesh which can suffer pain and cannot die; while they make nothing of the fact that there is something which is greater than the body. For the spirit, whose presence animates and rules the body, can both suffer pain and cannot die. Here then is something which, though it can feel pain, is immortal. And this capacity, which we now see in the spirit of all, shall be hereafter in the bodies of the damned. Moreover, if we attend to the matter a little more closely, we see that what is called bodily pain is rather to be referred to the soul. For it is the soul not the body, which is pained, even when the pain originates with the body,—the soul feeling pain at the point where the body is hurt. As then we speak of bodies feeling and living, though the feeling and life of the body are from the soul, so also we speak of bodies being pained, though no pain can be suffered by the body apart from the soul. The soul, then, is pained with the body in that part where something occurs to hurt it; and it is pained alone, though it be in the body, when some invisible cause distresses it, while the body is safe and sound. Even when not associated with the body it is pained; for certainly that rich man was suffering in hell when he cried, “I am tormented in this flame.” (Luke 16:24) But as for the body, it suffers no pain when it is soulless; and even when animate it can suffer only by the soul’s suffering. If, therefore, we might draw a just presumption from the existence of pain to that of death, and conclude that where pain can be felt death can occur, death would rather be the property of the soul, for to it pain more peculiarly belongs. But, seeing that that which suffers most cannot die, what ground is there for supposing that those bodies, because destined to suffer, are therefore, destined to die? The Platonists indeed maintained that these earthly bodies and dying members gave rise to the fears, desires, griefs, and joys of the soul. “Hence,” says Virgil (*i.e.*, from these earthly bodies and dying members), “Hence wild desires and groveling fears, And human laughter, human tears.” (Aeneid vi. 733) But in the fourteenth book of this work (Chapters 3,5,6) we have proved that, according to the Platonists’ own theory, souls, even when purged from all pollution of the body, are yet possessed by a monstrous desire to return again into their bodies. But where desire can exist, certainly pain also can exist; for desire frustrated, either by missing what it aims at or losing what it had attained, is turned into pain. **And therefore, if the soul, which is either the only or the chief sufferer, has yet a kind of immortality of its own, it is inconsequent to say that because the bodies of the damned shall suffer pain, therefore they shall die. In fine, if the body causes the soul to suffer, why can the body not cause death as well as suffering, unless because it does not follow that what causes pain causes death as well? And why then is it incredible that**

these fires can cause pain but not death to those bodies we speak of, just as the bodies themselves cause pain, but not therefore death, to the souls? Pain is therefore no necessary presumption of death.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But, say they, there is no body which can suffer and cannot also die. How do we know this? For who can say with certainty that the devils do not suffer in their bodies, when they own that they are grievously tormented?”

We read in **Matthew 8 (KJV):**28 And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. 29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time? 30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. 31 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. 32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

The devils possessed these two men. They were tormenting the men, but they themselves were not in torment yet. The devils do not have bodies. That is why they are always looking for a body to possess.

Augustine continues, “And if it is replied that there is no earthly body—that is to say, no solid and perceptible body, or, in one word, no flesh—which can suffer and cannot die, is not this to tell us only what men have gathered from experience and their bodily senses? For they indeed have no acquaintance with any flesh but that which is mortal; and this is their whole argument, that what they have had no experience of they judge quite impossible.”

The devils who spoke with Jesus in Matthew 8:29 know that a time of torment is coming for them. Though they only have spiritual bodies, there will be a time of eternal torment for them when they are cast into the lake of fire.

Augustine continues, “For we cannot call it reasoning to make pain a presumption of death, while, in fact, it is rather a sign of life. For though it be a question whether that which suffers can continue to live for ever, yet it is certain that everything which suffers pain does live, and that pain can exist only in a living subject. It is necessary, therefore, that he who is pained be living, not necessary that pain kill him; for every pain does not kill even those mortal bodies of ours which are destined to die. And that any pain kills them is caused by the circumstance that the soul is so connected with the body that it succumbs to great pain and withdraws; for the structure of our members and vital parts is so infirm that it cannot bear up against that violence which causes great or extreme agony. But in the life to come this connection of soul and body is of such a kind, that as it is dissolved by no lapse of time, so neither is it burst asunder by any pain. And so, although it be true that in this world there is no flesh which can suffer pain and yet cannot die, yet in the world to come there shall be flesh such as now there is not, as there will also be death such as now there is not. For death will not be abolished, but will be eternal, since the soul will neither be able to enjoy God and live, nor to die and escape the pains of the body. The first death drives the soul from the body against her will: the second death holds the soul in the body against her will. The two have this in common, that the soul suffers against her will what her own body inflicts.”

And Augustine has explained it well, for the fire of Hell is a fire that shall never be quenched as Jesus warned in **Mark 9 (KJV):43** And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: 48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Augustine continues, “Our opponents, too, make much of this, that in this world there is no flesh which can suffer pain and cannot die; while they make nothing of the fact that there is something which is greater than the body. For the spirit, whose presence animates and rules the body, can both suffer pain and cannot die. Here then is something which, though it can feel pain, is immortal.”

We read of the anguish of spirit in **Exodus 6 (KJV):9** And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

And in **Job 7 (KJV):11** Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

And Jesus speaks of this in **Matthew 10 (KJV):28** And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

The word “destroy” in the Greek is *ἀπόλλυμι* (pronounced ä-po'l-lü-mē).

Vine says it is, “a strengthened form of *ollumi*, signifies “to destroy utterly;” in Middle Voice, “to perish.” The idea is not extinction but ruin, loss, not of being, but of well-being. This is clear from its use, as, e.g., of the marring of wine skins, Luke 5:37; of lost sheep, i.e., lost to the shepherd, metaphorical of spiritual destitution, Luke 15:4, 6, etc.; the lost son, Luke 15:24; of the perishing of food, John 6:27; of gold, 1 Peter 1:7. So of persons, Matthew 2:13, “destroy;” Matthew 8:25, “perish;” Matthew 22:7; 27:20; of the loss of well-being in the case of the unsaved hereafter, Mat 10:28; Luke 13:3, 5; John 3:16 (ver. 15 in some manuscripts); 10:28; 17:12; Romans 2:12; 1 Corinthians 15:18; 2 Corinthians 2:15, “are perishing;” 2 Corinthians 4:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:10; James 4:12; 2 Peter 3:9. Cp. B, II, No. 1.” **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. I, page 302.**

Augustine continues, “And this capacity, which we now see in the spirit of all, shall be hereafter in the bodies of the damned. Moreover, if we attend to the matter a little more closely, we see that what is called bodily pain is rather to be referred to the soul. For it is the soul not the body, which is pained, even when the pain originates with the body,—the soul feeling pain at the point where the body is hurt. As then we speak of bodies feeling and living, though the feeling and life of the body are from the soul, so also we speak of bodies being pained, though no pain can be suffered by the body apart from the soul. The soul, then, is pained with the body in that part where something occurs to hurt it; and it is pained alone, though it be in the body, when some invisible cause distresses it, while the body is safe and sound. Even when not associated with the body it is pained; for certainly that rich man was suffering in hell when he cried, “I am tormented in this flame.” (Luke 16:24)”

He refers in context to **Luke 16 (KJV):23** And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

Note that the rich man had a tongue, and Lazarus a finger.

Augustine continues, “**And therefore, if the soul, which is either the only or the chief sufferer, has yet a kind of immortality of its own, it is inconsequent to say that because the bodies of the damned shall suffer pain, therefore they shall die.**”

That is, he is saying that it is inconsequential because the soul still feels pain and is alive.

He continues, “**In fine, if the body causes the soul to suffer, why can the body not cause death as well as suffering, unless because it does not follow that what causes pain causes death as well?**”

That is, if pain does not necessitate death, the body can still cause the soul to suffer.

He concludes, “**And why then is it incredible that these fires can cause pain but not death to those bodies we speak of, just as the bodies themselves cause pain, but not therefore death, to the souls? Pain is therefore no necessary presumption of death.**”

So his reasoning is correct. Both soul and body can suffer pain in hell.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God Book XXI, Chapter 10, page 461-462**

Chapter 10.—Whether the Fire of Hell, If It Be Material Fire, Can Burn the Wicked Spirits, that is to Say, Devils, Who are Immaterial.

Here arises the question: If the fire is not to be immaterial, analogous to the pain of the soul, but material, burning by contact, so that bodies may be tormented in it, how can evil spirits be punished in it? For it is undoubtedly the same fire which is to serve for the punishment of men and of devils, according to the words of Christ: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;” (Matthew 25:41) unless, perhaps, as learned men have thought, the devils have a kind of body made of that dense and humid air which we feel strikes us when the wind is blowing. And if this kind of substance could not be affected by fire, it could not burn when heated in the baths. For in order to burn, it is first burned, and affects other things as itself is affected. But if any one maintains that the devils have no bodies, this is not a matter either to be laboriously investigated, or to be debated with keenness. For why may we not assert that even immaterial spirits may, in some extraordinary way, yet really be pained by the punishment of material fire, if the spirits of men, which also are certainly immaterial, are both now contained in material members of the body, and in the world to come shall be indissolubly united to their own bodies? Therefore, though the devils have no bodies, yet their spirits, that is, the devils themselves, shall be brought into thorough contact with the material fires, to be tormented by them; not that the fires themselves with which they are brought into contact shall be animated by their connection with these spirits, and become animals composed of body and spirit, but, as I said, this junction will be effected in a wonderful and ineffable way, so that they shall receive pain from the fires, but give no life to them. And, in truth, this other mode of union, by which bodies and spirits are bound together and become



animals, is thoroughly marvelous, and beyond the comprehension of man, though this it is which is man.

I would indeed say that these spirits will burn without any body of their own, as that rich man was burning in hell when he exclaimed, “I am tormented in this flame,” (Luke 16:24) were I not aware that it is aptly said in reply, that that flame was of the same nature as the eyes he raised and fixed on Lazarus, as the tongue on which he entreated that a little cooling water might be dropped, or as the finger of Lazarus, with which he asked that this might be done,—all of which took place where souls exist without bodies. Thus, therefore, both that flame in which he burned and that drop he begged were immaterial, and resembled the visions of sleepers or persons in an ecstasy, to whom immaterial objects appear in a bodily form. For the man himself who is in such a state, though it be in spirit only, not in body, yet sees himself so like to his own body that he cannot discern any difference whatever. But that hell, which also is called a lake of fire and brimstone, (Revelation 20:10) will be material fire, and will torment the bodies of the damned, whether men or devils,—the solid bodies of the one, aerial bodies of the others; or if only men have bodies as well as souls, yet the evil spirits, though without bodies, shall be so connected with the bodily fires as to receive pain without imparting life. One fire certainly shall be the lot of both, for thus the truth has declared.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Here arises the question: If the fire is not to be immaterial, analogous to the pain of the soul, but material, burning by contact, so that bodies may be tormented in it, how can evil spirits be punished in it? For it is undoubtedly the same fire which is to serve for the punishment of men and of devils, according to the words of Christ: “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;” (Matthew 25:41) unless, perhaps, as learned men have thought, the devils have a kind of body made of that dense and humid air which we feel strikes us when the wind is blowing.”

He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):41** Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Spirit has individuality, and identity, so it has a body of a sort.

Augustine continues, as he reasons, “And if this kind of substance could not be affected by fire, it could not burn when heated in the baths. For in order to burn, it is first burned, and affects other things as itself is affected. But if any one maintains that the devils have no bodies, this is not a matter either to be laboriously investigated, or to be debated with keenness. For why may we not assert that even immaterial spirits may, in some extraordinary way, yet really be pained by the punishment of material fire, if the spirits of men, which also are certainly immaterial, are both now contained in material members of the body, and in the world to come shall be indissolubly united to their own bodies?”

Whether material, or immaterial, the fire will be a torment to them. He continues, “Therefore, though the devils have no bodies, yet their spirits, that is, the devils themselves, shall be brought into thorough contact with the material fires, to be tormented by them; not that the fires themselves with which they are brought into contact shall be animated by their connection with these spirits, and become animals composed of body and spirit, but, as I said, this junction will be effected in a wonderful and ineffable way, so that they shall receive pain from the fires, but give no life to them. And, in truth, this other mode of union, by which bodies and spirits are bound together and become animals, is thoroughly marvelous, and beyond the

comprehension of man, though this it is which is man.”

He continues, “I would indeed say that these spirits will burn without any body of their own, as that rich man was burning in hell when he exclaimed, “I am tormented in this flame,” (Luke 16:24) were I not aware that it is aptly said in reply, that that flame was of the same nature as the eyes he raised and fixed on Lazarus, as the tongue on which he entreated that a little cooling water might be dropped, or as the finger of Lazarus, with which he asked that this might be done,—all of which took place where souls exist without bodies.”

As Augustine notes, they will be tormented in the flame as we read again in context in **Luke 16 (KJV):23** And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

He continues, “Thus, therefore, both that flame in which he burned and that drop he begged were immaterial, and resembled the visions of sleepers or persons in an ecstasy, to whom immaterial objects appear in a bodily form. For the man himself who is in such a state, though it be in spirit only, not in body, yet sees himself so like to his own body that he cannot discern any difference whatever. But that hell, which also is called a lake of fire and brimstone, (Revelation 20:10) will be material fire, and will torment the bodies of the damned, whether men or devils,—the solid bodies of the one, aerial bodies of the others; or if only men have bodies as well as souls, yet the evil spirits, though without bodies, shall be so connected with the bodily fires as to receive pain without imparting life. One fire certainly shall be the lot of both, for thus the truth has declared.

He refers to **Revelation 20 (KJV):10** And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

And this fire shall never be quenched as we read again in **Mark 9 (KJV):43** And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: 48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

How they actually feel the torment we cannot say. But let us instead focus on the joy of the Lord that we will enter when the time comes.

## Summary

Augustine did not understand the Biblical timeline in Daniel 9:24-27. This timeline gives us a complete outline of what will happen up until the time of the tribulation period of seven years. He offers many possible scenarios in the book of Revelation which are not helpful. He assumes that all Biblical prophecy in the Old Testament ultimately refers to the Church, which has replaced Israel in his thinking. He believed that the Church was in the thousand year reign

of Christ, apparently because the ruler of the world, Rome, had nominally accepted Christianity. This thinking caused him to completely misinterpret the book of Revelation. He thought that the Antichrist was to come after the thousand year reign of Christ in an additional three and one half year period. When the Biblical timeline in Daniel 9:24-27 is understood, the book of Revelation falls very neatly into place. A complete explanation of future events may be found in Book 10 Future Events, and Book 11, and Book 12 at

<http://www.theriskofchrist.com/library.html>

## Israel Replaced by the Church

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine  
On the Psalms, Psalm XLV, paragraph 15, page 150**

15. “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever” (ver. 6). Because God has “‘blessed Thee’ for ever,” on account of the “grace poured over Thy lips.” Now the throne of the Jewish Kingdom was a temporal one; belonging to those who were under the Law, not to those who were under “grace.” He came to “redeem those who were under the Law,” and to place them under “Grace.” His “Throne is for ever and ever.” Why? for that first throne of the Kingdom was but a temporal one: whence then have we a “throne for ever and ever”? Because it is God’s throne. O divine Attribute of Eternity! for God could not have a temporal throne. “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever—a sceptre of direction is the sceptre of Thy Kingdom.” “The sceptre of direction” is that which directs mankind: they were before crooked, distorted; they sought to reign for themselves: they loved themselves, loved their own evil deeds: they submitted not their own will to God; but would fain have bent God’s will to conformity with their own lusts. For the sinner and the unrighteous man is generally angry with God, because it rains not! and yet would have God not be angry with himself, because he is profligate. And it is pretty much for this very reason that men daily sit, to dispute against God: “This is what He ought to have done: this He has not well done.” Thou forsooth seest what thou doest; He knows not what He does! It is thou that art crooked! His ways are right. When wilt thou make the crooked coincide with the straight? It cannot be made to coincide with it. Just as if you were to place a crooked stick on a level pavement; it does not join on to it; it does not cohere; it does not fit into the pavement. The pavement is even in every part: but that is crooked; it does not fit into that which is level. The will of God then is “equal,” thine own is “crooked:” it is because thou canst not be conformed unto it, that it seems “crooked” unto thee: rule thou thyself by it; seek not to bend it to thine own will: for thou canst not accomplish it; that is at all times “straight”! Wouldest thou abide in Him? “Correct thou thyself;” so will the sceptre of Him who rules thee, be unto thee “a rule of direction.” Thence is He also called King, from “ruling.” For that is no “ruler” that does not correct. Hereunto is our King a King of “right ones.” Just as He is a Priest (Sacerdos) by sanctifying us, so is He our King, our Ruler, by “ruling” us....

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “‘Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever’ (ver. 6). Because God has “‘blessed Thee’ for ever,” on account of the “grace poured over Thy lips.””

He refers in context to **Psalm 45 (KJV):1** My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.  
2 Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

And to **Psalm 45 (KJV):6** Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

He continues, “Now the throne of the Jewish Kingdom was a temporal one; belonging to those who were under the Law, not to those who were under “grace.” He came to “redeem those

who were under the Law,” and to place them under “Grace.” His “Throne is for ever and ever.” Why? For that first throne of the Kingdom was but a temporal one: whence then have we a “throne for ever and ever”? Because it is God’s throne. O divine Attribute of Eternity! For God could not have a temporal throne. “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever—a sceptre of direction is the sceptre of Thy Kingdom.””

He refers again to **Psalm 45 (KJV):6** Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

So in Augustine’s thinking, God’s plan for Israel is over. Israel has been replaced by the Church.

He continues, ““The sceptre of direction” is that which directs mankind: they were before crooked, distorted; they sought to reign for themselves: they loved themselves, loved their own evil deeds: they submitted not their own will to God; but would fain have bent God’s will to conformity with their own lusts. For the sinner and the unrighteous man is generally angry with God, because it rains not! And yet would have God not be angry with himself, because he is profligate. And it is pretty much for this very reason that men daily sit, to dispute against God: “This is what He ought to have done: this He has not well done.” Thou forsooth seest what thou doest; He knows not what He does! It is thou that art crooked! His ways are right. When wilt thou make the crooked coincide with the straight? It cannot be made to coincide with it. Just as if you were to place a crooked stick on a level pavement; it does not join on to it; it does not cohere; it does not fit into the pavement. The pavement is even in every part: but that is crooked; it does not fit into that which is level. The will of God then is “equal,” thine own is “crooked:” it is because thou canst not be conformed unto it, that it seems “crooked” unto thee: rule thou thyself by it; seek not to bend it to thine own will: for thou canst not accomplish it; that is at all times “straight”! Wouldest thou abide in Him? “Correct thou thyself;” so will the sceptre of Him who rules thee, be unto thee “a rule of direction.” Thence is He also called King, from “ruling.” For that is no “ruler” that does not correct. Hereunto is our King a King of “right ones.” Just as He is a Priest (Sacerdos) by sanctifying us, so is He our King, our Ruler, by “ruling” us....”

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm XLV, paragraphs 27-30, page 154-155**

27. “All the glory of her, the King’s daughter, is from within” (ver. 13). Not only is her robe, outwardly, “of gold, and of divers colours;” but He who loved her beauty, knew her to be also beautiful within. What are those inward charms? Those of conscience. It is there Christ sees; it is there Christ loves her: it is there He addresses her, there punishes, there crowns. Let then thine alms be done in secret; for “all the glory of her, the King’s daughter, is from within.” “With fringes of gold, clothed with divers colours” (ver. 14). Her beauty is from within; yet in the “fringes of gold” is the diversity of languages: the beauty of doctrine. What do these avail, if them be not that beauty “from within”? “The virgins shall be brought unto the King after her.” It has been fulfilled indeed. The Church has believed; the Church has been formed throughout all nations. And to what a degree do virgins now seek to find favour in the eyes of that King! Whence are they moved to do so? Even because the Church preceded them. “The virgins shall be brought unto the King after her. Her near kinswomen shall be brought unto Thee.” For they



that are brought unto Him are not strangers, but her “near kinswomen,” that belong to her. And because he had said, “unto the King,” he says, turning the discourse to Him, “her near kinswomen shall be brought unto Thee.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““All the glory of her, the King’s daughter, is from within” (ver. 13).”

He refers to **Psalm 44 (Douay Rheims):** 14 All the glory of the king's daughter is within in golden borders, 15 Clothed round about with varieties. After her shall virgins be brought to the king: her neighbours shall be brought to thee.

And to **Psalm 45 (KJV):** 13 The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.

He continues, “Not only is her robe, outwardly, “of gold, and of divers colours;” but He who loved her beauty, knew her to be also beautiful within. What are those inward charms? Those of conscience. It is there Christ sees; it is there Christ loves her: it is there He addresses her, there punishes, there crowns. Let then thine alms be done in secret; for “all the glory of her, the King’s daughter, is from within.” “With fringes of gold, clothed with divers colours” (ver. 14).”

He refers to **Psalm 44 (Douay Rheims):** 15 Clothed round about with varieties. After her shall virgins be brought to the king: her neighbours shall be brought to thee.

And to **Psalm 45 (KJV):** 14 She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.

He continues, “Her beauty is from within; yet in the “fringes of gold” is the diversity of languages: the beauty of doctrine. What do these avail, if them be not that beauty “from within”? “The virgins shall be brought unto the King after her.” It has been fulfilled indeed. The Church has believed; the Church has been formed throughout all nations.”

Augustine imagines that this Psalm refers to the Church. He continues, “And to what a degree do virgins now seek to find favour in the eyes of that King! Whence are they moved to do so? Even because the Church preceded them. “The virgins shall be brought unto the King after her. Her near kinswomen shall be brought unto Thee.” For they that are brought unto Him are not strangers, but her “near kinswomen,” that belong to her. And because he had said, “unto the King,” he says, turning the discourse to Him, “her near kinswomen shall be brought unto Thee.”

He continues in the next paragraph.

28. “With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought and shall be led into the Temple of the King” (ver. 15). The “Temple of the King” is the Church itself: it is the Church itself that enters into “the Temple of the King.” Whereof is that Temple constructed? Of the men who enter the Temple? Who but God’s “faithful” ones are its “living stones”? (1 Peter 2:4) “They shall be led into the Temple of the King.” For there are virgins without the Temple of the King, the nuns among the heretics: they are virgins, it is true; but what will that profit them, unless they be led into the “Temple of the King”? The “Temple of the King” is in unity: the “Temple of the King” is not ruinous, is not rent asunder, is not divided. The cement of those living stones is “charity.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought and shall be led into the Temple of the King” (ver. 15).”

He refers to **Psalm 44 (Douay Rheims):16** They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing: they shall be brought into the temple of the king.

But we read in **Psalm 45 (KJV):15** With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.

He continues, as he interprets, “The “Temple of the King” is the Church itself: it is the Church itself that enters into “the Temple of the King.” Whereof is that Temple constructed? Of the men who enter the Temple? Who but God’s “faithful” ones are its “living stones”? (1 Peter 2:4)”

He refers to **1 Peter 2 (KJV):4** To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Augustine makes an allegory of this Psalm, with the Church as the temple. He continues, ““They shall be led into the Temple of the King.” For there are virgins without the Temple of the King, the nuns among the heretics: they are virgins, it is true; but what will that profit them, unless they be led into the “Temple of the King”? The “Temple of the King” is in unity: the “Temple of the King” is not ruinous, is not rent asunder, is not divided. The cement of those living stones is “charity.””

In Augustine’s thinking, the Church was now the focus of God’s attention. The Church had replaced Israel. So all of the Psalms now spoke of the Church. He continues in the next paragraph.

29. “Instead of thy fathers, children are born to thee” (ver. 16). Nothing can be more manifest. Now consider the “Temple of the King” itself, for it is on its behalf he speaks, on account of the unity of the body that is spread throughout all the world: for those very persons who have chosen to be virgins, cannot find favour with the King unless they be led into the Temple of the King. “Instead of thy fathers, are thy children born to thee.” It was the Apostles begat thee: they were “sent:” they were the preachers: they are “the fathers.” But was it possible for them to be with us in the body for ever? Although one of them said, “I desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better: to abide in the flesh is necessary for your sakes.” It is true he said this, but how long was it possible for him to remain here? Could it be till this present time, could it be to all futurity? Is the Church then left desolate by their departure? God forbid. “Instead of thy fathers, children have been born to thee.” What is that? The Apostles were sent to thee as “fathers,” instead of the Apostles sons have been born to thee: there have been appointed Bishops. For in the present day, whence do the Bishops, throughout all the world, derive their origin? The Church itself calls them fathers; the Church itself brought them forth, and placed them on the thrones of “the fathers.” Think not thyself abandoned then, because thou seest not Peter, nor seest Paul: seest not those through whom thou wert born. Out of thine own offspring has a body of “fathers” been raised up to thee. “Instead of thy fathers, have children been born to thee.” Observe how widely diffused is the “Temple of the King,” that “the virgins that are not led to the Temple of the King,” may know that they have nothing to do with that marriage. “Thou shalt make them princes over all the earth.” **This is the Universal Church: her**

children have been made “princes over all the earth:” her children have been appointed instead of the “fathers.” Let those who are cut off own the truth of this, let them come to the One Body: let them be led into the Temple of the King. God hath established His Temple everywhere: hath laid everywhere “the foundations of the Prophets and Apostles.” (Ephesians 2:20) The Church has brought “forth sons;” has made them “instead of her fathers” to be “princes over all the earth.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Instead of thy fathers, children are born to thee” (ver. 16).”

He refers to **Psalm 44 (Douay Rheims):17** Instead of thy fathers, sons are born to thee: thou shalt make them princes over all the earth.

And to **Psalm 45 (KJV):16** Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

He continues, “Nothing can be more manifest. Now consider the “Temple of the King” itself, for it is on its behalf he speaks, on account of the unity of the body that is spread throughout all the world: for those very persons who have chosen to be virgins, cannot find favour with the King unless they be led into the Temple of the King. “Instead of thy fathers, are thy children born to thee.” It was the Apostles begat thee: they were “sent:” they were the preachers: they are “the fathers.” But was it possible for them to be with us in the body for ever? Although one of them said, “I desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better: to abide in the flesh is necessary for your sakes.””

He refers to **Philippians 1 (KJV):23** For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

He continues, “It is true he said this, but how long was it possible for him to remain here? Could it be till this present time, could it be to all futurity? Is the Church then left desolate by their departure? God forbid. “Instead of thy fathers, children have been born to thee.” What is that? The Apostles were sent to thee as “fathers,” instead of the Apostles sons have been born to thee: there have been appointed Bishops. For in the present day, whence do the Bishops, throughout all the world, derive their origin? The Church itself calls them fathers; the Church itself brought them forth, and placed them on the thrones of “the fathers.””

In Augustine’s thinking, the Apostles gave their place of authority to the bishops.

He continues, “Think not thyself abandoned then, because thou seest not Peter, nor seest Paul: seest not those through whom thou wert born. Out of thine own offspring has a body of “fathers” been raised up to thee. “Instead of thy fathers, have children been born to thee.” Observe how widely diffused is the “Temple of the King,” that “the virgins that are not led to the Temple of the King,” may know that they have nothing to do with that marriage. “Thou shalt make them princes over all the earth.” **This is the Universal Church: her children have been made “princes over all the earth:” her children have been appointed instead of the “fathers.” Let those who are cut off own the truth of this, let them come to the One Body: let them be led into the Temple of the King. God hath established His Temple everywhere: hath laid everywhere “the foundations of the Prophets and Apostles.” (Ephesians 2:20) The Church has brought “forth sons;” has made them “instead of her fathers” to be “princes over all the earth.”**

He refers in context to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):19** Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

So the Temple of the King is now the Universal Church, according to Augustine. He continues in the next paragraph.

30. “They shall be mindful of thy name in every generation and generation; therefore shall the peoples confess unto Thee” (ver. 17). What does it profit then to “confess” indeed and yet to confess out of “the Temple”? What does it profit to pray, and yet not to pray on the Mount? “I cried,” says he, “unto the Lord with my voice: and He heard me out of His holy hill.” (Psalm 3:4) Out of what “hill”? Out of that of which it is said, “A city set upon a hill cannot be hid.” (Matthew 5:14) Of what “hill”? Out of that hill which Daniel saw “grow out of a small stone, and break all the kingdoms of the earth; and cover all the face of the earth.” (Daniel 2:34-35) There let him pray, who hopes to receive: there let him ask, who would have his prayer heard: there let him confess, who wishes to be pardoned. “Therefore shall the peoples confess unto thee for ever, world without end.” For in that eternal life it is true indeed there will no longer be the mourning over sins: but yet in the praises of God by that everlasting City which is above, there will not be wanting a perpetual confession of the greatness of that happiness. For to that City itself, to which another Psalm (Psalm 87:3) sings, “Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God,” to her who is the very Bride of Christ, the very Queen, a “King’s daughter, and a King’s consort;”...the peoples shall for this very cause confess even to herself; the hearts of all, now enlightened by perfect charity, being laid bare, and made manifest, that she may know the whole of herself most completely, who here is, in many parts of her, unknown to herself....

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““They shall be mindful of thy name in every generation and generation; therefore shall the peoples confess unto Thee” (ver. 17).”

He refers to **Psalm 44 (Douay Rheims):18** They shall remember thy name throughout all generations. Therefore shall people praise thee for ever; yea, for ever and ever.

And to **Psalm 45 (KJV):17** I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

He continues, “What does it profit then to “confess” indeed and yet to confess out of “the Temple”? What does it profit to pray, and yet not to pray on the Mount? “I cried,” says he, “unto the Lord with my voice: and He heard me out of His holy hill.” (Psalm 3:4)”

He refers to **Psalm 3 (KJV):4** I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

He continues, “Out of what “hill”? Out of that of which it is said, “A city set upon a hill cannot be hid.” (Matthew 5:14)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):14** Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

He continues, “Of what “hill”? Out of that hill which Daniel saw “grow out of a small stone, and break all the kingdoms of the earth; and cover all the face of the earth.” (Daniel 2:34-35)”

He refers to **Daniel 2 (KJV):34** Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands,

which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

He continues, “There let him pray, who hopes to receive: there let him ask, who would have his prayer heard: there let him confess, who wishes to be pardoned. “Therefore shall the peoples confess unto thee for ever, world without end.” For in that eternal life it is true indeed there will no longer be the mourning over sins: but yet in the praises of God by that everlasting City which is above, there will not be wanting a perpetual confession of the greatness of that happiness.”

The “City which is above” is mentioned in **Hebrews 12 (KJV)**:18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: 20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) 22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Augustine continues, “For to that City itself, to which another Psalm (Psalm 87:3) sings, “Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God,” to her who is the very Bride of Christ, the very Queen, a “King’s daughter, and a King’s consort;”...the peoples shall for this very cause confess even to herself; the hearts of all, now enlightened by perfect charity, being laid bare, and made manifest, that she may know the whole of herself most completely, who here is, in many parts of her, unknown to herself....”

He refers in context to **Psalms 87 (KJV)**:1 His foundation is in the holy mountains. 2 The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. 3 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.

And to **Revelation 21 (KJV)**:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

We read also of His holy hill in **Psalms 2 (KJV)**:6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

And in **Psalms 15 (KJV)**:1 Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in



thy holy hill?

And in **Psalm 24 (KJV):3** Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place?

And in **Psalm 99 (KJV):9** Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lord our God is holy.

And in **Psalm 48 (KJV):1** Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. 2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King. 3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge. 4 For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together. 5 They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away. 6 Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail. 7 Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind. 8 As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah. 9 We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple. 10 According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness. 11 Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments. 12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. 13 Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. 14 For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine  
On the Psalms, Psalm CXIV, paragraphs 3 and 6, page 550-551**

3. Let us therefore consider what we are taught here; since both those deeds were typical of us, and these words exhort us to recognise ourselves. For if we hold with a firm heart the grace of God which hath been given us, we are Israel, the seed of Abraham: unto us the Apostle saith, "Therefore are ye the seed of Abraham." (Galatians 3:29, Romans 4:10) ...Let therefore no Christian consider himself alien to the name of Israel. For we are joined in the corner stone with those among the Jews who believed, among whom we find the Apostles chief. Hence our Lord in another passage saith, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, that there may be one fold and one Shepherd." (John 10:16) **The Christian people then is rather Israel, and the same is preferably the house of Jacob; for Israel and Jacob are the same. But that multitude of Jews, which was deservedly reprobated for its perfidy, for the pleasures of the flesh sold their birthright, so that they belonged not to Jacob, but rather to Esau. For ye know that it was said with this hidden meaning, "That the elder shall serve the younger." (Genesis 25:33,23)**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "Let us therefore consider what we are taught here; since both those deeds were typical of us, and these words exhort us to recognise ourselves. For if we hold with a firm heart the grace of God which hath been given us, we are Israel, the seed of Abraham: unto us the Apostle saith, "Therefore are ye the seed of Abraham." (Galatians 3:29, Romans 4:10)"

He refers to **Galatians 3 (KJV):29** And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

And to **Romans 4 (KJV):10** How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

And we read also in **Romans 4 (KJV):16** Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

He continues, "...Let therefore no Christian consider himself alien to the name of Israel. For we are joined in the corner stone with those among the Jews who believed, among whom we find the Apostles chief. Hence our Lord in another passage saith, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, that there may be one fold and one Shepherd." (John 10:16)"

He refers to **John 10 (KJV):16** And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

He continues, "The Christian people then is rather Israel, and the same is preferably the house of Jacob; for Israel and Jacob are the same. But that multitude of Jews, which was deservedly reprobated for its perfidy, for the pleasures of the flesh sold their birthright, so that they belonged not to Jacob, but rather to Esau. For ye know that it was said with this hidden meaning, "That the elder shall serve the younger." (Genesis 25:33,23)"

He refers in context to **Genesis 25 (KJV):31** And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. 32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? 33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. 34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

And to **Genesis 25 (KJV):23** And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

We continue to read in paragraph 6.

6. What is it, most beloved? ye who know yourselves to be Israelites according to Abraham's seed, ye who are of the house of Jacob, heirs according to promise, know that even ye have gone forth from Egypt, since ye have renounced this world; that ye have gone forth from a foreign people, since by the confession of piety, ye have separated yourselves from the blasphemies of the Gentiles. For it is not your tongue, but a foreign one, which knoweth not how to praise God, to whom ye sing Allelujah. For "Judah" hath become "His sanctuary" in you; for "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and by circumcision of the heart." (Romans 2:28-29) Examine then your hearts, if faith hath circumcised them, if confession hath cleansed them; in you "Judah" hath become "His sanctuary," in you "Israel" hath become "His dominion." For "He gave" unto you "the power to become the sons of God." (John 1:12)...

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "What is it, most beloved? Ye who know yourselves to be Israelites according to Abraham's seed, ye who are of the house of Jacob, heirs according to promise, know that even ye have gone forth from Egypt, since ye have renounced this world; that ye have gone forth from a foreign people, since by the confession of piety, ye have separated yourselves from the blasphemies of the Gentiles. For it is not your tongue, but a

foreign one, which knoweth not how to praise God, to whom ye sing Allelujah. For “Judah” hath become “His sanctuary” in you; for “he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and by circumcision of the heart.” (Romans 2:28-29)”

He refers to **Romans 2 (KJV):28** For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

He continues, “Examine then your hearts, if faith hath circumcised them, if confession hath cleansed them; in you “Judah” hath become “His sanctuary,” in you “Israel” hath become “His dominion.” For “He gave” unto you “the power to become the sons of God.” (John 1:12)...”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Augustine did not understand that God will again restore Israel as head of the nations. Now is the times of the Gentiles. The Church is not Israel, but the Church and Israel are of the seed of Abraham as Augustine acknowledged.

#### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm CXXIX, paragraph 8, page 612**

8. “Let them be confounded and turned backward, as many as have evil will at Sion” (ver. 5). They who hate Sion, hate the Church: Sion is the Church. And they who hypocritically enter into the Church, hate the Church. They who refuse to keep the Word of God, hate the Church: “Upon my back have they built:” what will the Church do, save endure the burden even unto the end?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Let them be confounded and turned backward, as many as have evil will at Sion” (ver. 5).”

He refers to **Psalm 129 (KJV):5** Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.

He continues, “They who hate Sion, hate the Church: Sion is the Church. And they who hypocritically enter into the Church, hate the Church. They who refuse to keep the Word of God, hate the Church: “Upon my back have they built:” what will the Church do, save endure the burden even unto the end?”

He refers to **Psalm 128 (Douay Rheims):3** The wicked have wrought upon my back: they have lengthened their iniquity.

He refers to **Psalm 129 (KJV):3** The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.

#### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm CXXXII, paragraph 14, page 620**

14. “For the Lord hath chosen Sion to be an habitation for Himself” (ver. 13). Sion is the

Church Herself; She is also that Jerusalem unto whose peace we are running, who is in pilgrimage not in the Angels, but in us, who in her better part waiteth for the part that will return; whence letters have come unto us, which are every day read. This city is that very Sion, whom the Lord hath chosen.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““For the Lord hath chosen Sion to be an habitation for Himself” (ver. 13).”

He refers to **Psalm 132 (KJV):13** For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.

He concludes, “Sion is the Church Herself; She is also that Jerusalem unto whose peace we are running, who is in pilgrimage not in the Angels, but in us, who in her better part waiteth for the part that will return; whence letters have come unto us, which are every day read. This city is that very Sion, whom the Lord hath chosen.”

Augustine thought that the Church had replaced Israel. But the Lord has given His promise to Israel in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):35** Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

## Summary

In Augustine’s thinking, the Church had replaced Israel who had become apostate. Now all of the Psalms referred to the Church in his thinking, as he says, “Sion is the Church Herself”. And so he concludes, “That the elder shall serve the younger”, the “elder” being Israel and the “younger” being the Church.

But the prophet Isaiah prophesied in **Isaiah 11 (KJV):1** And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: 2 And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; 3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: 4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. 5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. 6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. 7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

This is speaking of the changes in the earth that will occur during the thousand year reign of Christ, when “with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the

meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked”, speaking of the reign of Christ.

Isaiah continues in **Isaiah 11 (KJV):10** And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. 11 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. 12 And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

The Lord promised in verse 11 that “it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people”, and in verse 12, “from the four corners of the earth”.

The first time they went into captivity had its beginning in approximately 721 B.C. when Assyria took the northern ten tribes of Israel into captivity, as we read of in **2 Kings 17 (KJV):1** In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. 2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him. 3 Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents. 4 And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. 5 Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. 6 In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. 7 For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, 8 And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.

Then in 605 B.C. when the Babylonians invaded Judah, and some Jews were taken to Babylon, in 586 B.C. King Nebuchadnezzar burned the Temple, and destroyed Jerusalem, and the two tribes, Benjamin and Judah, were deported to Babylon.

The first time they were recovered was after the seventy years of captivity in Babylon, which Jeremiah prophesied of in **Jeremiah 25 (KJV):11** And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. 12 And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

This first recovery was begun in 538 B.C. when King Cyrus of Persia allowed Jews to return to their land. Zerubbabel and Joshua the priest started to rebuild the temple in 536 B.C..

The second time will be at the second coming of Jesus Christ, at the time of Jacob’s trouble in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV):3** For, lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it. 4 And these are the words that



the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5 For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. 8 For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: 9 But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

# The Church

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2,  
On Christian Doctrine, A.D. 397, Book III, Chapter 34, paragraphs 47-49, page 569-571**

Chapter 34.—The Fourth Rule of Tichonius.

47. The fourth rule of Tichonius is about species and genus. For so he calls it, intending that by species should be understood a part, by genus the whole of which that which he calls species is a part: as, for example, every single city is a part of the great society of nations: the city he calls a species, all nations constitute the genus. There is no necessity for here applying that subtilty of distinction which is in use among logicians, who discuss with great acuteness the difference between a part and a species. The rule is of course the same, if anything of the kind referred to is found in Scripture, not in regard to a single city, but in regard to a single province, or tribe, or kingdom. Not only, for example, about Jerusalem, or some of the cities of the Gentiles, such as Tyre or Babylon, are things said in Scripture whose significance oversteps the limits of the city, and which are more suitable when applied to all nations; but in regard to Judea also, and Egypt, and Assyria, or any other nation you choose to take which contains numerous cities, but still is not the whole world, but only a part of it, things are said which pass over the limits of that particular country, and apply more fitly to the whole of which this is a part; or, as our author terms it, to the genus of which this is a species. **And hence these words have come to be commonly known, so that even uneducated people understand what is laid down specially, and what generally, in any given Imperial command. The same thing occurs in the case of men: things are said of Solomon, for example, the scope of which reaches far beyond him, and which are only properly understood when applied to Christ and His Church, of which Solomon is a part. (2 Samuel 7:14-16)**

48. Now the species is not always overstepped, for things are often said of such a kind as evidently apply to it also, or perhaps even to it exclusively. But when Scripture, having up to a certain point been speaking about the species, makes a transition at that point from the species to the genus, the reader must then be carefully on his guard against seeking in the species what he can find much better and more surely in the genus. Take, for example, what the prophet Ezekiel says: “When the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way, and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: and I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way, and according to their doings, I judged them.” (Ezekiel 36:17-19) **Now it is easy to understand that this applies to that house of Israel of which the apostle says, “Behold Israel after the flesh;” (1 Corinthians 10:18) because the people of Israel after the flesh did both perform and endure all that is here referred to.** What immediately follows, too, may be understood as applying to the same people. But when the prophet begins to say, “And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord,” (Ezekiel 36:23) the reader ought now carefully to observe the way in which the species

is overstepped and the genus taken in. For he goes on to say: "And I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my commandments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses." (Ezekiel 36:23-29) Now that this is a prophecy of the New Testament, to which pertain not only the remnant of that one nation of which it is elsewhere said, "For though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall be saved," (Isaiah 10:22) but also the other nations which were promised to their fathers and our fathers; and that there is here a promise of that washing of regeneration which, as we see, is now imparted to all nations, no one who looks into the matter can doubt. And that saying of the apostle, when he is commending the grace of the New Testament and its excellence in comparison with the Old, "Ye are our epistle . . . written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart," (2 Corinthians 3:2-3) has an evident reference to this place where the prophet says, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 38:26) Now the heart of flesh from which the apostle's expression, "the fleshy tables of the heart," is drawn, the prophet intended to point out as distinguished from the stony heart by the possession of sentient life; and by sentient he understood intelligent life. **And thus the spiritual Israel is made up, not of one nation, but of all the nations which were promised to the fathers in their seed, that is, in Christ.**

49. **This spiritual Israel, therefore, is distinguished from the carnal Israel which is of one nation, by newness of grace, not by nobility of descent, in feeling, not in race; but the prophet, in his depth of meaning, while speaking of the carnal Israel, passes on, without indicating the transition, to speak of the spiritual, and although now speaking of the latter, seems to be still speaking of the former; not that he grudges us the clear apprehension of Scripture, as if we were enemies, but that he deals with us as a physician, giving us a wholesome exercise for our spirit. And therefore we ought to take this saying, "And I will bring you into your own land," and what he says shortly afterwards, as if repeating himself, "And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers," not literally, as if they referred to Israel after the flesh, but spiritually, as referring to the spiritual Israel. For the Church, without spot or wrinkle, gathered out of all nations, and destined to reign for ever with Christ, is itself the land of the blessed, the land of the living; and we are to understand that this was given to the fathers when it was promised to them for what the fathers believed would be given in its own time was to them, on account of the unchangeableness of the promise and purpose, the same as if it were already given; just as the apostle, writing to Timothy, speaks of the grace which is given to the saints: "Not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour." (2 Timothy 1:9-10) He speaks of the grace as given at a time when those to whom it was to be given were not yet in existence; because he looks upon that as having been already done in the arrangement**

and purpose of God, which was to take place in its own time, and he himself speaks of it as now made manifest. **It is possible, however, that these words may refer to the land of the age to come, when there will be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein the unrighteous shall be unable to dwell. And so it is truly said to the righteous, that the land itself is theirs, no part of which will belong to the unrighteous; because it is the same as if it were itself given, when it is firmly settled that it shall be given.**

**Commentary:** In paragraph 47, Augustine begins as he says, “The fourth rule of Tichonius is about species and genus. For so he calls it, intending that by species should be understood a part, by genus the whole of which that which he calls species is a part: as, for example, every single city is a part of the great society of nations: the city he calls a species, all nations constitute the genus. There is no necessity for here applying that subtilty of distinction which is in use among logicians, who discuss with great acuteness the difference between a part and a species. The rule is of course the same, if anything of the kind referred to is found in Scripture, not in regard to a single city, but in regard to a single province, or tribe, or kingdom. Not only, for example, about Jerusalem, or some of the cities of the Gentiles, such as Tyre or Babylon, are things said in Scripture whose significance oversteps the limits of the city, and which are more suitable when applied to all nations; but in regard to Judea also, and Egypt, and Assyria, or any other nation you choose to take which contains numerous cities, but still is not the whole world, but only a part of it, things are said which pass over the limits of that particular country, and apply more fitly to the whole of which this is a part; or, as our author terms it, to the genus of which this is a species. **And hence these words have come to be commonly known, so that even uneducated people understand what is laid down specially, and what generally, in any given Imperial command. The same thing occurs in the case of men: things are said of Solomon, for example, the scope of which reaches far beyond him, and which are only properly understood when applied to Christ and His Church, of which Solomon is a part. (2 Samuel 7:14-16)”**

He may refer in context to the prophecy of Nathan the prophet to David in **2 Samuel 7 (KJV):** 12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. 14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: 15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. 16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. 17 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David. 18 Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? 19 And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God? 20 And what can David say more unto thee? For thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant. 21 For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them. 22 Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 23 And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and

to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? 24 For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, Lord, art become their God. 25 And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said.

Solomon was David's son. In verse 24 God spoke through Nathan to say that Israel would "be a people unto thee for ever". But Augustine sees Solomon as part of the Church, as the species is part of the genus.

He then applies his analogy of the species and the genus, as he continues in paragraph 48, "Now the species is not always overstepped, for things are often said of such a kind as evidently apply to it also, or perhaps even to it exclusively. But when Scripture, having up to a certain point been speaking about the species, makes a transition at that point from the species to the genus, the reader must then be carefully on his guard against seeking in the species what he can find much better and more surely in the genus. Take, for example, what the prophet Ezekiel says: "When the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way, and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: and I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way, and according to their doings, I judged them." (Ezekiel 36:17-19)"

So in Augustine's thinking, Israel is a species, a part of the genus, which is the nations. He refers to **Ezekiel 36 (KJV)**: 17 Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. 18 Wherefore I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it: 19 And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them.

He then explains further, "Now it is easy to understand that this applies to that house of Israel of which the apostle says, "Behold Israel after the flesh;" (1 Corinthians 10:18) because the people of Israel after the flesh did both perform and endure all that is here referred to."

He refers to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV)**: 18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

He continues, "What immediately follows, too, may be understood as applying to the same people. But when the prophet begins to say, "And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord," (Ezekiel 36:23) the reader ought now carefully to observe the way in which the species is overstepped and the genus taken in. For he goes on to say: "And I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my commandments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye



shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses.” (Ezekiel 36:23-29)”

He refers to **Ezekiel 36 (KJV):23** And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. 24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. 25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. 28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. 29 I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.

Augustine then explains, “Now that this is a prophecy of the New Testament, to which pertain not only the remnant of that one nation of which it is elsewhere said, “For though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall be saved,” (Isaiah 10:22) but also the other nations which were promised to their fathers and our fathers; and that there is here a promise of that washing of regeneration which, as we see, is now imparted to all nations, no one who looks into the matter can doubt.”

He refers to **Isaiah 10 (KJV):22** For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

It is true that this is a prophecy of the “washing of regeneration”, which happens to all who believe in Jesus Christ. However, it does not refer to the ritual of baptism.

He continues, “And that saying of the apostle, when he is commending the grace of the New Testament and its excellence in comparison with the Old, “Ye are our epistle . . . written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart,” (2 Corinthians 3:2-3) has an evident reference to this place where the prophet says, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.” (Ezekiel 38:26) Now the heart of flesh from which the apostle’s expression, “the fleshy tables of the heart,” is drawn, the prophet intended to point out as distinguished from the stony heart by the possession of sentient life; and by sentient he understood intelligent life. **And thus the spiritual Israel is made up, not of one nation, but of all the nations which were promised to the fathers in their seed, that is, in Christ.”**

Yes, the spiritual Israel is made up of all the nations. All who have been born again are part of the spiritual Israel. But the prophet Ezekiel is speaking of the time when Israel will be restored as a nation of believers.

He continues in paragraph 49, **“This spiritual Israel, therefore, is distinguished from the carnal Israel which is of one nation, by newness of grace, not by nobility of descent, in feeling, not in race; but the prophet, in his depth of meaning, while speaking of the carnal Israel, passes on, without indicating the transition, to speak of the spiritual, and although now speaking of the latter, seems to be still speaking of the former; not that he grudges us the clear apprehension of Scripture, as if we were enemies, but that he deals with us as a physician, giving us a**

wholesome exercise for our spirit.”

Augustine does not understand that although he is speaking of carnal Israel in his time, the prophet Ezekiel is prophesying of a time when carnal Israel will again be spiritual in the future as a nation of believers.

Augustine then asserts, “And therefore we ought to take this saying, “And I will bring you into your own land,” and what he says shortly afterwards, as if repeating himself, “And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers,” not literally, as if they referred to Israel after the flesh, but spiritually, as referring to the spiritual Israel. For the Church, without spot or wrinkle, gathered out of all nations, and destined to reign for ever with Christ, is itself the land of the blessed, the land of the living;”

But the Church is not a land. Augustine is making an allegory where there is none. He continues, “and we are to understand that this was given to the fathers when it was promised to them for what the fathers believed would be given in its own time was to them, on account of the unchangeableness of the promise and purpose, the same as if it were already given; just as the apostle, writing to Timothy, speaks of the grace which is given to the saints: “Not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour.” (2 Timothy 1:9-10)”

He refers to **2 Timothy 1 (KJV):9** Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

But the promise was to the literal nation of Israel as we shall see. Augustine did not understand the Scripture that explained the plan of God for Israel as we read again in **Daniel 9 (KJV):24** Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

One week, the seventieth, is still to come for Israel. It will be the week of the seven years of tribulation which will come upon the earth. And Antichrist will in that time come and try to take over the earth, and “in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate”, for he will declare himself to be God in the temple.

Augustine did not see that the time that Israel was to be scattered among the nations would be a fixed period of time as we read in **Luke 21 (KJV):22** For these be the days of

vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

When the times of the Gentiles will be fulfilled, then God will again deal with Israel as a nation.

God also addresses the nations, the “genus” as Augustine would say, in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV)**:10 Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. 11 For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. 12 Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all.

Who would dare to say that God is not literally speaking of Israel here? The one whom God scattered is the one He will gather.

God’s promise to Israel was that they would not cease to be a literal nation though they broke the first covenant. He will again gather them from all the nations where they have been scattered as we read in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV)**:27 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. 28 And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord. 29 In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. 30 But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge. 31 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

It is true that the New Covenant has begun with the blood of Jesus as we read in **Matthew 26 (NASB)**:27 While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” 27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you: 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

And in **Hebrews 12 (KJV)**:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

But God has emphatically promised that Israel will not cease to be a nation, that is, a nation of people who know the Lord, as we continue in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV)**:35 Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the

stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. 37 Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord. 38 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner. 39 And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath. 40 And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.

The tower of Hananeel is in the land of Israel. The hill Gareb, to Goath, and the brook of Kidron, are all literal places in the land of Israel. Israel as a nation will again find favor with the Lord when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Again, Augustine refers to **2 Timothy 1 (KJV):9** Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 10 But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

And he continues, “He speaks of the grace as given at a time when those to whom it was to be given were not yet in existence; because he looks upon that as having been already done in the arrangement and purpose of God, which was to take place in its own time, and he himself speaks of it as now made manifest.”

Again, Augustine allegorizes the Old Testament Scriptures to make them speak of the Church when they in fact speak of the literal nation of Israel.

He concludes, as he offers yet another allegory, and says, “It is possible, however, that these words may refer to the land of the age to come, when there will be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein the unrighteous shall be unable to dwell. And so it is truly said to the righteous, that the land itself is theirs, no part of which will belong to the unrighteous; because it is the same as if it were itself given, when it is firmly settled that it shall be given.”

The land shall be given to Israel who shall then be the head of the nations, for Christ shall rule with a rod of iron from Jerusalem, as we read in **Psalms 2 (KJV):7** Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. 7 I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. 8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. 9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. 10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. 11 Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

The Church will not replace Israel, though the Church will reign with Christ in the millennium.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings, A.D. 418  
On Original Sin, Book II, Chapter 8, page 239**

The venerable Pope Zosimus, keeping in view this deprecatory preamble, dealt with the man, puffed up as he was with the blasts of false doctrine, so as that he should condemn all the objectionable points which had been alleged against him by the deacon Paulinus, and that he should yield his assent to the rescript of the Apostolic See which had been issued by his predecessor of sacred memory. The accused man, however, refused to condemn the objections raised by the deacon, yet he did not dare to hold out against the letter of the blessed Pope Innocent; indeed, he went so far as to “promise that he would condemn all the points which the Apostolic See condemned.” Thus the man was treated with gentle remedies, as a delirious patient who required rest; but, at the same time, he was not regarded as being yet ready to be released from the restraints of excommunication. The interval of two months being granted him, until communications could be received from Africa, a place for recovery was conceded to him, under the mild restorative of the sentence which had been pronounced. For in truth, if he would have laid aside his vain obstinacy, and be now willing to carry out what he had undertaken, and would carefully read the very letter to which he had replied by promising submission, he would yet come to a better mind. **But after the rescripts were duly issued from the council of the African bishops, there were very good reasons why the sentence should be carried out against him, in strictest accordance with equity.** What these reasons were you may read for yourselves, for we have sent you all the particulars.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine refers here to the bishop of Rome as the Pope. So he refers to **Pope Zosimus** and to **Pope Innocent** here. The Apostolic See was a reference to any church which could show that they were planted by an apostle. When Augustine refers to the Apostolic See, he refers to the bishop of Rome.

The tradition of Rome as the preeminent authority in the Church was codified by Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, France from about 177 to 202 A.D., who states in **Adversus Heresies, Book 3: Chapter III, Paragraph 2**: “Since, however, it would be very tedious, in such a volume as this, to reckon up the successions of all the Churches, we do put to confusion all those who, in whatever manner, whether by an evil self-pleasing, by vainglory, or by blindness and perverse opinion, assemble in unauthorized meetings; [we do this, I say,] by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops. For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its preeminent authority that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere.”

<http://www.theriskofchrist.com/mainbook/commentary.pdf>, page 390

We also note that “**rescripts were duly issued from the council of the African bishops**”. The definition of “**rescripts**”:

1: a written answer of a Roman emperor or of a pope to a legal inquiry or petition



2: an official or authoritative order, decree, edict, or announcement (**Merriam Webster**)

By these terms, such as Pope, Apostolic See, and “**rescripts**” which “**were duly issued from the council of the African bishops**”, we see the government of the Church in the time of Augustine.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings, A.D. 418  
On Original Sin, Book II, Chapters 18-19, page 243**

Chapter 18 [XVII.]—The Condemnation of Pelagius.

**This being the case, you of course feel that episcopal councils, and the Apostolic See, and the whole Roman Church, and the Roman Empire itself,** (Possidius, in his Life of Augustin, ch. 18, says: “Even the most pious Emperor Honorius, upon hearing that the weighty sentence of the Catholic Church of God had been pronounced against them, in pursuance of the same, determined that they should be regarded as heretics, under condemnation by his own laws.” These enactments are printed by the Benedictine editors in the second part of their Appendix.) **which by God’s gracious favour has become Christian, has been most righteously moved against the authors of this wicked error, until they repent and escape from the snares of the devil.** For who can tell whether God may not give them repentance to discover, and acknowledge, and even proclaim His truth, (2 Timothy 2:25-26) and to condemn their own damnable error? But whatever may be the bent of their own will, we cannot doubt that the merciful kindness of the Lord has sought the good of many persons who followed them, for no other reason than because they saw them associated in communion with the Catholic Church.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “**This being the case, you of course feel that episcopal councils, and the Apostolic See, and the whole Roman Church, and the Roman Empire itself, which by God’s gracious favour has become Christian, has been most righteously moved against the authors of this wicked error, until they repent and escape from the snares of the devil.**”

The condemnation of Pelagius is noted in the note above, “(Possidius, in his Life of Augustin, ch. 18, says: “Even the most pious Emperor Honorius, upon hearing that the weighty sentence of the Catholic Church of God had been pronounced against them, in pursuance of the same, determined that they should be regarded as heretics, under condemnation by his own laws.” These enactments are printed by the Benedictine editors in the second part of their Appendix.)”

Augustine considered the Roman Empire to have “**become Christian**”. And we see that the “**episcopal councils, and the Apostolic See**” are governing the Church at this time. The “**authors of this wicked error**” he refers to are the Pelagians.

He continues, “For who can tell whether God may not give them repentance to discover, and acknowledge, and even proclaim His truth, (2 Timothy 2:25-26) and to condemn their own damnable error?”

He refers to **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):25** In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

He continues, “But whatever may be the bent of their own will, we cannot doubt that the merciful kindness of the Lord has sought the good of many persons who followed them, for no other reason than because they saw them associated in communion with the Catholic Church.”

Chapter 19.—Pelagius’ Attempt to Deceive the **Apostolic See**; He Inverts the Bearings of the Controversy.

But I would have you carefully observe the way in which Pelagius endeavoured by deception to overreach even the judgment of the bishop of the Apostolic See on this very question of the baptism of infants. He sent a letter to Rome to Pope Innocent of blessed memory; and when it found him not in the flesh, it was handed to the holy Pope Zosimus, and by him directed to us. In this letter he complains of being “defamed by certain persons for refusing the sacrament of baptism to infants, and promising the kingdom of heaven irrespective of Christ’s redemption.” The objections, however, are not urged against them in the manner he has stated. For they neither deny the sacrament of baptism to infants, nor do they promise the kingdom of heaven to any irrespective of the redemption of Christ. As regards, therefore, his complaint of being defamed by sundry persons, he has set it forth in such terms as to be able to give a ready answer to the alleged charge against him, without injury to his own dogma. [XVIII.] **The real objection against them is, that they refuse to confess that unbaptized infants are liable to the condemnation of the first man, and that original sin has been transmitted to them and requires to be purged by regeneration; their contention being that infants must be baptized solely for being admitted into the kingdom of heaven, as if they could only have eternal death apart from the kingdom of heaven, who cannot have eternal life without partaking of the Lord’s body and blood.** This, I would have you know, is the real objection to them respecting the baptism of infants; and not as he has represented it, for the purpose of enabling himself to save his own dogmas while answering what is actually a proposition of his own, under colour of meeting an objection.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But I would have you carefully observe the way in which Pelagius endeavoured by deception to overreach even the judgment of the bishop of the Apostolic See on this very question of the baptism of infants. He sent a letter to Rome to Pope Innocent of blessed memory; and when it found him not in the flesh, it was handed to the holy Pope Zosimus, and by him directed to us.”

We notice that “the judgment of the bishop of the Apostolic See” refers to “Pope Innocent of blessed memory”, and then to “the holy Pope Zosimus”, and then “and by him directed to us”, that is, to the bishop of Hippo, Augustine.

He continues, “In this letter he complains of being “defamed by certain persons for

refusing the sacrament of baptism to infants, and promising the kingdom of heaven irrespective of Christ's redemption.'"

He refers to the letter of Pelagius. He continues, "The objections, however, are not urged against them in the manner he has stated. For they neither deny the sacrament of baptism to infants, nor do they promise the kingdom of heaven to any irrespective of the redemption of Christ. As regards, therefore, his complaint of being defamed by sundry persons, he has set it forth in such terms as to be able to give a ready answer to the alleged charge against him, without injury to his own dogma. [XVIII.]"

Augustine then explains the real teaching of Pelagius, as he says, "The real objection against them is, that they refuse to confess that unbaptized infants are liable to the condemnation of the first man, and that original sin has been transmitted to them and requires to be purged by regeneration; their contention being that infants must be baptized solely for being admitted into the kingdom of heaven, as if they could only have eternal death apart from the kingdom of heaven, who cannot have eternal life without partaking of the Lord's body and blood."

That is, "partaking of the Lord's body and blood" was a requirement of Augustine and the Catholic Church in his time, in order to "have eternal life". And this could only be done if one had been baptized.

He continues, "This, I would have you know, is the real objection to them respecting the baptism of infants; and not as he has represented it, for the purpose of enabling himself to save his own dogmas while answering what is actually a proposition of his own, under colour of meeting an objection."

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1,  
Letters of St. Augustine, A.D. 418, LETTER CXCI, page 554-555**

Letter CXCI.  
(A.D. 418.)

To My Venerable Lord and Pious Brother and Co-Presbyter Sixtus, Worthy of Being Received in the Love of Christ, Augustin Sends Greeting in the Lord. (Sixtus, afterwards Sixtus III., Bishop of Rome, the immediate successor of Cælestine, to whom the next letter is addressed. His name is the forty-third in the list of Popes, and he was in office from 432 to 440 A.D. The 194th letter of Augustin was addressed to the same Sixtus, and is a very elaborate dissertation on Pelagianism. It is omitted from this selection as being rather a theological treatise than a letter.)

1. Since the arrival of the letter which, in my absence, your Grace forwarded by our holy brother the presbyter Firmus, and which I read on my return to Hippo, but not until after the bearer had departed, the present is my first opportunity of sending to you any reply, and it is with great pleasure that I entrust it to our very dearly beloved son, the acolyte Albinus. Your letter, addressed to Alypius and myself jointly, came at a time when we were not together, and this is the reason why you will now receive a letter from each of us, instead of one from both, in

reply. For the bearer of this letter has just gone, meanwhile, from me to visit **my venerable brother and co-bishop Alypius**, who will write a reply for himself to **your Holiness**, and he has carried with him your letter, which I had already perused. As to the great joy with which that letter filled my heart, why should a man attempt to say what it is impossible to express? Indeed, I do not think that you yourself have any adequate idea of the amount of good done by your sending that letter to us; but take our word for it, for as you bear witness to your feelings, so do we bear witness to ours, declaring how profoundly we have been moved by the perfectly transparent soundness of the views declared in that letter. For if, when you sent a very short letter on the same subject to the most blessed aged Aurelius, by **the acolyte Leo**, we transcribed it with joyful alacrity, and read it with enthusiastic interest to all who were within our reach, as an exposition of your sentiments, both in regard to that **most fatal dogma [of Pelagius]**, and in regard to the grace of God freely given by Him to small and great, to which that dogma is diametrically opposed; how great, think you, is the joy with which we have read this more extended statement in your writing, how great the zeal with which we take care that it be read by all to whom we have been able already or may yet be able to make it known! **For what could be read or heard with greater satisfaction than so clear a defense of the grace of God against its enemies, from the mouth of one who was before this proudly claimed by these enemies as a mighty supporter of their cause? (Sixtus had been not without reason reckoned as a sympathiser with Pelagius, until their views were finally condemned in this year 418 by Zosimus.)** Or is there anything for which we ought to give more abundant thanksgivings to God, than that His grace is so ably defended by those to whom it is given, against those to whom it is not given, or by whom, when given, it is not accepted, because in the secret and just judgment of God the disposition to accept it is not given to them?

2. Wherefore, my venerable lord, and holy brother worthy of being received in the love of Christ, although you render a most excellent service when you thus write on this subject to brethren before whom the adversaries are wont to boast themselves of your being their friend, nevertheless, there remains upon you the yet greater duty of seeing not only that those be punished with wholesome severity who dare to prate more openly their declaration of that error, most dangerously hostile to the Christian name, but also that with pastoral vigilance, on behalf of the weaker and simpler sheep of the Lord, most strenuous precautions be used against those who more covertly, indeed, and timidly, but perseveringly, and in whispers, as it were, teach this error, “creeping into houses,” as the apostle says, and doing with practiced impiety all those other things which are mentioned immediately afterwards in that passage. (2 Timothy 3:6) Nor ought those to be overlooked who under the restraint of fear hide their sentiments under the most profound silence, yet have not ceased to cherish the same perverse opinions as before. For some of their party might be known to you before that pestilence was denounced by the most explicit **condemnation of the apostolic see**, whom you perceive to have now become suddenly silent; nor can it be ascertained whether they have been really cured of it, otherwise than through their not only forbearing from **the utterance of these false dogmas**, but also defending the truths which are opposed to their former errors with the same zeal as they used to show on the other side. These are, however, to be more gently dealt with; for what need is there for causing further terror to those whom their silence itself proves to be sufficiently terrified already? At the same time, though they should not be frightened, they should be taught; and in my opinion they may more easily, while their fear of severity assists the teacher of the truth, be

so taught that by the Lord's help, after they have learned to understand and love His grace, they may speak out as antagonists of the error which meanwhile they dare not confess.

**Commentary:** Augustine commences his letter, as he says, **"To My Venerable Lord and Pious Brother and Co-Presbyter Sixtus"**.

He refers to Sixtus, who was at the time his co-presbyter, but who became Pope beginning in 432 A.D., after Augustine had died in 430 A.D.

He then begins in paragraph 1, "Since the arrival of the letter which, in my absence, **your Grace forwarded by our holy brother the presbyter Firmus**, and which I read on my return to Hippo, but not until after the bearer had departed, the present is my first opportunity of sending to you any reply, and it is with great pleasure that I entrust it to our very dearly beloved son, **the acolyte Albinus**. Your letter, addressed to Alypius and myself jointly, came at a time when we were not together, and this is the reason why you will now receive a letter from each of us, instead of one from both, in reply. For the bearer of this letter has just gone, meanwhile, from me to visit **my venerable brother and co-bishop Alypius**, who will write a reply for himself to **your Holiness**, and he has carried with him your letter, which I had already perused."

He refers to Sixtus as, **"your Grace"**, and then to the **"holy brother the presbyter Firmus"**. We notice such reverence for those in the hierarchy of the Church in Augustine's writing.

Augustine also mentions **"the acolyte Albinus"**, and **"my venerable brother and co-bishop Alypius"**, and **"your Holiness"** in referring to Sixtus, and **"the acolyte Albinus"** above.

An acolyte is "one who assists a member of the clergy in a liturgical service by performing minor duties". (**Merriam Webster**)

Augustine continues, "As to the great joy with which that letter filled my heart, why should a man attempt to say what it is impossible to express? Indeed, I do not think that you yourself have any adequate idea of the amount of good done by your sending that letter to us; but take our word for it, for as you bear witness to your feelings, so do we bear witness to ours, declaring how profoundly we have been moved by the perfectly transparent soundness of the views declared in that letter. For if, when you sent a very short letter on the same subject to the most blessed aged Aurelius, by **the acolyte Leo**, we transcribed it with joyful alacrity, and read it with enthusiastic interest to all who were within our reach, as an exposition of your sentiments, both in regard to that **most fatal dogma [of Pelagius]**, and in regard to the grace of God freely given by Him to small and great, to which that dogma is diametrically opposed; how great, think you, is the joy with which we have read this more extended statement in your writing, how great the zeal with which we take care that it be read by all to whom we have been able already or may yet be able to make it known!"

Augustine considered Pelagius the author of a **"most fatal dogma"**. Augustine then continues, as he says, **"For what could be read or heard with greater satisfaction than so clear a defense of the grace of God against its enemies, from the mouth of one who was before this proudly claimed by these enemies as a mighty supporter of their cause? (Sixtus had been not without reason reckoned as a sympathiser with Pelagius, until their views were finally condemned in this year 418 by Zosimus.)"**

And this letter was apparently written in 418 A.D. He then refers to the **"condemnation of the apostolic see"**, showing the authority of the Pope who was the bishop of the apostolic see.

He then continues, "Or is there anything for which we ought to give more abundant



thanksgivings to God, than that His grace is so ably defended by those to whom it is given, against those to whom it is not given, or by whom, when given, it is not accepted, because in the secret and just judgment of God the disposition to accept it is not given to them?”

In paragraph 2, he continues and warns, “Wherefore, my venerable lord, and holy brother worthy of being received in the love of Christ, although you render a most excellent service when you thus write on this subject to brethren before whom the adversaries are wont to boast themselves of your being their friend, nevertheless, there remains upon you the yet greater duty of seeing not only that those be punished with wholesome severity who dare to prate more openly their declaration of that error, most dangerously hostile to the Christian name, but also that with pastoral vigilance, on behalf of the weaker and simpler sheep of the Lord, most strenuous precautions be used against those who more covertly, indeed, and timidly, but perseveringly, and in whispers, as it were, teach this error, “creeping into houses,” as the apostle says, and doing with practiced impiety all those other things which are mentioned immediately afterwards in that passage. (2 Timothy 3:6)”

He refers to **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):6** For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, 7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

He continues, “Nor ought those to be overlooked who under the restraint of fear hide their sentiments under the most profound silence, yet have not ceased to cherish the same perverse opinions as before. For some of their party might be known to you before that pestilence was denounced by the most explicit **condemnation of the apostolic see**, whom you perceive to have now become suddenly silent; nor can it be ascertained whether they have been really cured of it, otherwise than through their not only forbearing from **the utterance of these false dogmas**, but also defending the truths which are opposed to their former errors with the same zeal as they used to show on the other side. These are, however, to be more gently dealt with; for what need is there for causing further terror to those whom their silence itself proves to be sufficiently terrified already? At the same time, though they should not be frightened, they should be taught; and in my opinion they may more easily, while their fear of severity assists the teacher of the truth, be so taught that by the Lord’s help, after they have learned to understand and love His grace, they may speak out as antagonists of the error which meanwhile they dare not confess.”

Augustine mentions **“the utterance of these false dogmas”**, referring to the writings of Pelagius, in which he denied that the Adamic sin nature, or original sin, was passed on to children at birth.

Here we see the offices in the Catholic Church in the time of Augustine. That is, there were Popes, bishops, presbyters, and acolytes.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5,  
Anti-Pelagian Writings, A.D. 420, or a Little Later  
Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, Book II, Chapter 5, page 392-393**

Chapter 5 [III.]—The Calumny of the Pelagians Against the Clergy of the Roman Church.

Moreover, they accuse the **Roman clergy**, writing, “That, driven by the fear of a

command, they have not blushed to be guilty of the crime of prevarication; so that, contrary to their previous judgment, wherein by their proceedings they had assented to the Catholic dogma, they subsequently pronounced that the nature of men is evil.” Nay, but the Pelagians had conceived, with a false hope, that the new and execrable dogma of Pelagius or Cœlestius could be made acceptable to the Catholic intelligences of certain Romans, when those crafty spirits—however perverted by a wicked error, yet not contemptible, since they appeared rather to be deserving of considerate correction than of easy condemnation—were treated with somewhat more of lenity than the stricter discipline of the Church required. **For while so many and such important ecclesiastical documents were passing and repassing between the Apostolical See and the African bishops,—and, moreover, when the proceedings in this matter in that See were completed, with Cœlestius present and making answer,—what sort of a letter, what decree, is found of Pope Zosimus, of venerable memory, wherein he prescribed that it must be believed that man is born without any taint of original sin? Absolutely he never said this—never wrote it at all.** But since Cœlestius had written this in his pamphlet, among those matters, merely, on which he confessed that he was still in doubt and desired to be instructed, the desire of amendment in a man of so acute an intellect, who, if he could be put right, would assuredly be of advantage to many, and not the falsehood of the doctrine, was approved. And therefore his pamphlet was called Catholic, because this also is the part of a Catholic disposition,—if by chance in any matters a man thinks differently from what the truth demands, not with the greatest accuracy to define those matters, but, if detected and demonstrated, to reject them. **For it was not to heretics, but to Catholics, that the apostle was speaking when he said, “Let us, therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” (Philippians 3:15) This was thought to have been the case in him when he replied that he consented to the letters of Pope Innocent of blessed memory, in which all doubt about this matter was removed.** And in order that this might be made fuller and more manifest in him, matters were delayed until letters should come from Africa, in which province his craftiness had in some sort become more evidently known. And afterwards these letters came to Rome containing this, that it was not sufficient for men of more sluggish and anxious minds that he confessed his general consent to the letters of **Bishop Innocent**, but that he ought openly to anathematize the mischievous statements which he had made in his pamphlet; lest if he did not do so, many people of better intelligence should rather believe that in his pamphlet those poisons of the faith had been approved by **the Catholic See**, because it had been affirmed by that See that that pamphlet was Catholic, than that they had been amended because of his answer that he consented to the letters of **Pope Innocent**. Then, therefore, when his presence was demanded, in order that by certain and clear answers either the craft of the man or his correction might plainly appear and remain doubtful to no one, he withdrew himself and refused the examination. Neither would the delay which had already been made for the advantage of others have taken place, if it could not be of advantage to the pertinacity and madness of those who were excessively perverse. But if, which be far from the case, it had so been judged in **the Roman Church** concerning Cœlestius or Pelagius, that those dogmas of theirs, which in themselves and with themselves **Pope Innocent had condemned**, should be pronounced worthy of approval and maintenance, the mark of prevarication would rather have to be branded on the **Roman clergy** for this. But now, when the first letters of **the most blessed Pope Innocent**, in reply to the letters of the African bishops, would have equally condemned

this error which these men are endeavouring to commend to us; and his successor, **the holy Pope Zosimus**, would never have said, never have written, that this dogma which these men think concerning infants is to be held; nay, would even have bound Cœlestius by a repeated sentence, when he endeavoured to clear himself, to a consent to the above mentioned letters of **the Apostolic See**;—assuredly, whatever in the meanwhile was done more leniently concerning Cœlestius, provided the stability of the most ancient and robust faith were maintained, was the most merciful persuasion of correction, not the most pernicious approval of wickedness; and that afterwards, by **the same priesthood**, Cœlestius and Pelagius were condemned by repeated authority, was the proof of a severity, for a little while intermitted, at length of necessity to be carried out, not a denial of a previously known truth or a new acknowledgment of truth.

**Commentary:** In summary, in the time of Augustine, the **“Roman clergy”** was **“the same priesthood”** just mentioned above. And we see the working of this clergy as we read when Augustine says, **“For while so many and such important ecclesiastical documents were passing and repassing between the Apostolical See and the African bishops,—and, moreover, when the proceedings in this matter in that See were completed, with Cœlestius present and making answer,—what sort of a letter, what decree, is found of Pope Zosimus, of venerable memory, wherein he prescribed that it must be believed that man is born without any taint of original sin? Absolutely he never said this—never wrote it at all.”**

Augustine is speaking of Pelagius’ belief **“that man is born without any taint of original sin”**, and the Pelagians claim that Pope Zosimus **“prescribed that it must be believed that man is born without any taint of original sin”**.

We notice that Augustine is referring to **“Pope Innocent”** when he refers to **“Bishop Innocent”**, for the Pope is a Bishop, only he is the head Bishop. And when he refers to **“the Catholic See”**, he is referring to **“the Roman Church”**. This gives us some idea of the organization that had developed in the Catholic Church in Augustine’s time.

#### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings, A.D. 426 or 427 On Rebuke and Grace, Chapter 46, page 490-491**

Chapter 46 [XV.]—Rebuke Must Be Varied According to the Variety of Faults. There is No Punishment in the Church Greater Than Excommunication.

**Therefore, let brethren who are subject be rebuked by those who are set over them, with rebukes that spring from love, varied according to the diversity of faults, whether smaller or greater. Because that very penalty that is called condemnation, which episcopal judgment inflicts, than which there is no greater punishment in the Church, may, if God will, result and be of advantage for most wholesome rebuke.** For we know not what may happen on the coming day; nor must any one be despaired of before the end of this life; nor can God be contradicted, that He may not look down and give repentance, and receive the sacrifice of a troubled spirit and a contrite heart, and absolve from the guilt of condemnation, however just, and so Himself not condemn the condemned person. Yet the necessity of the **pastoral office** requires, in order that the terrible contagion may not creep through the many, that the diseased sheep should be separated from the sound ones; perchance, by that very separation, to be healed by Him to

whom nothing is impossible. For as we know not who belongs to the number of the predestinated, we ought in such wise to be influenced by the affection of love as to will all men to be saved. For this is the case when we endeavour to lead every individual to that point where they may meet with those agencies by which we may prevail, to the accomplishment of the result, that being justified by faith they may have peace with God, (Romans 5:1)—which peace, moreover, the apostle announced when he said, “Therefore, we discharge an embassy for Christ, as though God were exhorting by us, we pray you in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20) For what is “to be reconciled” to Him but to have peace with Him? For the sake of which peace, moreover, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself said to His disciples, “Into whatsoever house ye enter first, say, Peace be to this house; and if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; but if not, it shall return to you again.” (Luke 10:5-6) When they preach the gospel of this peace of whom it is predicted, “How beautiful are the feet of those that publish peace, that announce good things!” (Isaiah 52:7) to us, indeed, every one then begins to be a son of peace who obeys and believes this gospel, and who, being justified by faith, has begun to have peace towards God; but, according to God’s predestination, he was already a son of peace. For it was not said, Upon whomsoever your peace shall rest, he shall become a son of peace; but Christ says, “If the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon that house.” Already, therefore, and before the announcement of that peace to him, the son of peace was there, as he had been known and foreknown, by—not the evangelist, but—God. For we need not fear lest we should lose it, if in our ignorance he to whom we preach is not a son of peace, for it will return to us again—that is, that preaching will profit us, and not him; but if the peace proclaimed shall rest upon him, it will profit both us and him.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Therefore, let brethren who are subject be rebuked by those who are set over them, with rebukes that spring from love, varied according to the diversity of faults, whether smaller or greater. Because that very penalty that is called condemnation, which episcopal judgment inflicts, than which there is no greater punishment in the Church, may, if God will, result and be of advantage for most wholesome rebuke.”

Augustine’s mention of “no greater punishment in the Church”, referring to “that very penalty that is called condemnation, which episcopal judgment inflicts”, reminds us of Paul’s judgment in **1 Corinthians 5 (KJV):1** It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

But this differs from the “penalty that is called condemnation, which episcopal judgment inflicts”. This “episcopal judgment” was the discipline of bishops who claimed that apostolic authority had been handed down to them by the apostles.

Augustine continues, “For we know not what may happen on the coming day; nor must any one be despaired of before the end of this life; nor can God be contradicted, that He may not look down and give repentance, and receive the sacrifice of a troubled spirit and a contrite



heart, and absolve from the guilt of condemnation, however just, and so Himself not condemn the condemned person.”

Augustine still allowed for repentance, as did Paul as we read in **2 Corinthians 2 (KJV):**5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. 6 Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. 7 So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. 8 Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. 9 For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. 10 To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; 11 Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Augustine then continues, “Yet the necessity of the **pastoral office** requires, in order that the terrible contagion may not creep through the many, that the diseased sheep should be separated from the sound ones; perchance, by that very separation, to be healed by Him to whom nothing is impossible.”

Augustine considered those in authority in the Church as holding the “**pastoral office**”. What was not understood then, or now for that matter, is that the office of pastor is not by man’s appointment, but is a gift from God as Paul reveals in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

“The words “pastors” and “teachers” are in a construction called Granville Sharp’s rule which indicates that they refer to one individual. The one who shepherds God’s flock is also a teacher of the Word, having both the gifts of shepherding and teaching the flock.” **Wuest Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Volume 1, Ephesians and Colossians in the Greek New Testament, Page 101.**

Augustine continues, “For as we know not who belongs to the number of the predestinated, we ought in such wise to be influenced by the affection of love as to will all men to be saved.”

And this agrees with **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):**4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

Augustine continues, “For this is the case when we endeavour to lead every individual to that point where they may meet with those agencies by which we may prevail, to the accomplishment of the result, that being justified by faith they may have peace with God, (Romans 5:1)—which peace, moreover, the apostle announced when he said, “Therefore, we discharge an embassy for Christ, as though God were exhorting by us, we pray you in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20)”



He refers first to **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

And then to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):20** Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

He continues, “For what is “to be reconciled” to Him but to have peace with Him?”

In fact, the word “peace” in the Greek is **εἰρήνη** (pronounced ā-rā'-nā); probably from a primary verb **εἶρω** eirō (to join); peace (literally or figuratively); by implication, prosperity:—one, peace, quietness, rest, +set at one again. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 1515.**

When we believe in Jesus Christ, and God justifies us, we are set at one again with Him.

Augustine continues, “For the sake of which peace, moreover, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself said to His disciples, “Into whatsoever house ye enter first, say, Peace be to this house; and if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; but if not, it shall return to you again.” (Luke 10:5-6)”

He refers to **Luke 10 (KJV):5** And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. 6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

He continues, “When they preach the gospel of this peace of whom it is predicted, “How beautiful are the feet of those that publish peace, that announce good things!” (Isaiah 52:7) to us, indeed, every one then begins to be a son of peace who obeys and believes this gospel, and who, being justified by faith, has begun to have peace towards God; but, according to God's predestination, he was already a son of peace.”

He refers to **Isaiah 52 (KJV):7** How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

And to **Romans 10 (KJV):15** And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

And in regards to our predestination, we could also read in **Romans 8 (KJV):28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

Augustine concludes, “For it was not said, Upon whomsoever your peace shall rest, he shall become a son of peace; but Christ says, “If the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon that house.” Already, therefore, and before the announcement of that peace to him, the son of peace was there, as he had been known and foreknown, by—not the evangelist, but—God. For we need not fear lest we should lose it, if in our ignorance he to whom we preach is not a son of peace, for it will return to us again—that is, that preaching will profit us, and not him; but if the peace proclaimed shall rest upon him, it will profit both us and him.”

Again, Augustine refers to our predestination. This is also stated in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):4** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be

holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Book II, Chapter XIX, paragraph 66, page 56**

66. Rarely, therefore, and in a case of great necessity, are rebukes to be administered; yet in such a way that even in these very rebukes we may make it our earnest endeavour, not that we, but that God, should be served. For He, and none else, is the end: so that we are to do nothing with a double heart, removing from our own eye the beam of envy, or malice, or pretence, in order that we may see to cast the mote out of a brother's eye. For we shall see it with the dove's eyes,—such eyes as are declared to belong to the spouse of Christ, (Song of Solomon 4:1) whom God hath chosen for Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, (Ephesians 5:27) *i.e.* pure and guileless.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Rarely, therefore, and in a case of great necessity, are rebukes to be administered; yet in such a way that even in these very rebukes we may make it our earnest endeavour, not that we, but that God, should be served. For He, and none else, is the end: so that we are to do nothing with a double heart, removing from our own eye the beam of envy, or malice, or pretense, in order that we may see to cast the mote out of a brother's eye. For we shall see it with the dove's eyes,—such eyes as are declared to belong to the spouse of Christ, (Song of Solomon 4:1) whom God hath chosen for Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, (Ephesians 5:27) *i.e.* pure and guileless.

He refers to **Song of Solomon 4 (KJV):1** Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead.

And to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):27** That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Augustine shows great wisdom here as a leader and shepherd of God's flock. And we read in **Proverbs 15 (KJV):1** A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermon XLIII. [XCIII. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel, Matt. xxv. 1, “then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins.”, paragraph 2, page 402**

2. So then let us understand, dearly Beloved, that this parable relates to us all, that is, to the whole Church together, not to the Clergy only of whom we spoke yesterday; nor to the laity only; but generally to all. Why then are the Virgins five and five? These five and five virgins are all Christian souls together. But that I may tell you what by the Lord's inspiration I think, it is not souls of every sort, but such souls as have the Catholic faith, and seem to have good

works in the Church of God; and yet even of them, “five are wise, and five are foolish.” First then let us see why they are called “five,” and why “virgins,” and then let us consider the rest. Every soul in the body is therefore denoted by the number five, because it makes use of five senses. For there is nothing of which we have perception by the body, but by the five folded gate, either by the sight, or the hearing, or the smelling, or the tasting, or the touching. Whoso then abstaineth from unlawful seeing, unlawful hearing, unlawful smelling, unlawful tasting, and unlawful touching, by reason of his uncorruptness hath gotten the name of virgin.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine begins, “So then let us understand, dearly Beloved, that this parable relates to us all, that is, to the whole Church together, not to the Clergy only of whom we spoke yesterday; nor to the laity only; but generally to all.” In Augustine’s time, there was already “Clergy” and “laity”. He refers to **Matthew 25 (KJV):** 1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

The teaching of this parable is very simply that we should not wait until He comes to buy oil for our lamps. The oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. If we have not the Holy Spirit, we are none of His as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):** 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

The remedy is as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):** 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermon LXIV. [CXIV. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel, Luke xvii. 3, “If thy brother sin, rebuke him,” etc., touching the remission of sins. Delivered at the Table of St. Cyprian, in the presence of Count Boniface., paragraph 4, page 453**

4. This would I say even if thou hadst no sin which thou mightest desire to be forgiven thee. But as it is, whosoever thou art, thou art a man; though thou be righteous, thou art a man; be thou layman, or monk, or clerk, or Bishop, or Apostle, thou art a man. Hear the Apostle’s voice, “If we shall say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.” (1 John 1:8) He, that famous

John and an Evangelist, he whom the Lord Christ loved beyond all the rest, who lay on His breast, he says, “If we shall say.” He did not say, “If ye shall say that ye have no sin,” but “if we shall say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” He joined himself in the guilt, that he might be joined in the pardon also. “If we shall say.” Consider who it is that says, “If we shall say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we shall confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity.” (1 John 1:9) How does He cleanse? By forgiving, not as though He found nothing to punish, but as finding something to forgive. So then, Brethren, if we have sins, let us forgive them that ask us. Let us not retain enmities in our heart against another. For the retaining of enmities more than anything corrupts this heart of ours.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “This would I say even if thou hadst no sin which thou mightest desire to be forgiven thee. But as it is, whosoever thou art, thou art a man; though thou be righteous, thou art a man; be thou layman, or monk, or clerk, or Bishop, or Apostle, thou art a man. Hear the Apostle’s voice, “If we shall say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.” (1 John 1:8)”

He refers to **1 John 1 (KJV):8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

He continues, “He, that famous John and an Evangelist, he whom the Lord Christ loved beyond all the rest, who lay on His breast, he says, “If we shall say.” He did not say, “If ye shall say that ye have no sin,” but “if we shall say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” He joined himself in the guilt, that he might be joined in the pardon also.”

Even though there were laymen, monks, clerks, and Bishops in Augustine’s time, he humbled himself and applied the Scripture to himself.

He continues, ““If we shall say.” Consider who it is that says, “If we shall say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we shall confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity.” (1 John 1:9)”

He refers to **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He continues, “How does He cleanse? By forgiving, not as though He found nothing to punish, but as finding something to forgive. So then, Brethren, if we have sins, let us forgive them that ask us. Let us not retain enmities in our heart against another. For the retaining of enmities more than anything corrupts this heart of ours.”

He refers again to **Matthew 6 (KJV):12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermon LXVI. [CXVI. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel, Luke xxiv. 36, “He himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, peace be unto you,” etc., paragraphs 5-7, page 457-458**

5. He showed himself then to the disciples. What is “Himself”? The Head of His Church. The Church was foreseen by Him as in thee to be throughout the world, by the disciples it was not yet seen. He showed the Head, He promised the Body. For what did He add next? “These

are the words which I spake to you, while I was yet with you.” (Luke 24:44) What is this, “While I was yet with you”? Was He not with them then when He was speaking to them? What is, “when I was yet with you”? was with you as mortal, which now I am not. I was with you when I had yet to die. What is, “with you”? With you who were to die, Myself to die. Now I am no more with you: for I am with those who are to die, Myself to die no more for ever. This then is what I said to you. What? “That all things must be fulfilled which are written in the Law, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me.” (Luke 24:44) I told you that all things must be fulfilled. “Then opened He their understanding.” (Luke 24:45) Come then, O Lord, employ Thy keys, open, that we may understand. Lo, Thou dost tell all things, and yet are not believed. Thou art thought to be a spirit, art touched, art rudely handled, and yet they who touch Thee hesitate. Thou dost admonish them out of the Scriptures, and yet they understand Thee not. Their hearts are closed, open, and enter in. He did so. “Then opened He their understanding.” Open, O Lord, yea, open the heart of him who is in doubt concerning Christ. Open “his” understanding who believes that Christ was a phantom. “Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “He showed himself then to the disciples. What is “Himself”? The Head of His Church. The Church was foreseen by Him as in thee to be throughout the world, by the disciples it was not yet seen. He showed the Head, He promised the Body.”

Augustine acknowledged Jesus Christ as the “Head of His Church”.

He continues, “For what did He add next? “These are the words which I spake to you, while I was yet with you.” (Luke 24:44)”

He refers to **Luke 24 (KJV):44** And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

He continues, “What is this, “While I was yet with you”? Was He not with them then when He was speaking to them? What is, “when I was yet with you”? Was with you as mortal, which now I am not. I was with you when I had yet to die. What is, “with you”? With you who were to die, Myself to die. Now I am no more with you: for I am with those who are to die, Myself to die no more for ever. This then is what I said to you. What? “That all things must be fulfilled which are written in the Law, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning Me.” (Luke 24:44) I told you that all things must be fulfilled. “Then opened He their understanding.” (Luke 24:45)”

He refers in context to **Luke 24 (KJV):44** And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. 45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

He continues, “Come then, O Lord, employ Thy keys, open, that we may understand. Lo, Thou dost tell all things, and yet are not believed. Thou art thought to be a spirit, art touched, art rudely handled, and yet they who touch Thee hesitate. Thou dost admonish them out of the Scriptures, and yet they understand Thee not. Their hearts are closed, open, and enter in. He did



so. “Then opened He their understanding.” Open, O Lord, yea, open the heart of him who is in doubt concerning Christ. Open “his” understanding who believes that Christ was a phantom. “Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.””

Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

6. And “He said unto them.” What? “That thus it behooved. That thus it is written, and thus it behooved.” What? “That Christ should suffer, and rise from the dead the third day.” (Luke 24:46) And this they saw, they saw Him suffering, they saw Him hanging, they saw Him with them alive after His resurrection. What then did they not see? The Body, that is, the Church. Him they saw, her they saw not. They saw the Bridegroom, the Bride yet lay hid. Let him promise her too. “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.” This is the Bridegroom, what of the Bride? “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:47) This the disciples did not yet see: they did not yet see the Church throughout all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. They saw the Head, and they believed the Head touching the Body. By this which they saw, they believed that which they saw not. We too are like to them: we see something which they saw not, and something we do not see which they did see. What do we see, which they saw not? The Church throughout all nations. What do we not see, which they saw? Christ present in the flesh. As they saw Him, and believed concerning the Body, so do we see the Body; let us believe concerning the Head. Let what we have respectively seen help us. The sight of Christ helped them to believe the future Church: the sight of the Church helps us to believe that Christ has risen. Their faith was made complete, and ours is made complete also. Their faith was made complete from the sight of the Head, ours is made complete by the sight of the Body. Christ was made known to them “wholly,” and to us is He so made known: but He was not seen “wholly” by them, nor by us has He been “wholly” seen. By them the Head was seen, the Body believed. By us the Body has been seen, the Head believed. Yet to none is Christ lacking: in all He is complete, though to this day His Body remains imperfect. The Apostles believed; through them many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem believed; Judæa believed. Samaria believed. **Let the members be added on, the building added on to the foundation. “For no other foundation can any man lay,” says the Apostle, “than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus.” (1 Corinthians 3:11)** Let the Jews rage madly, and be filled with jealousy: Stephen be stoned, Saul keep the raiment of them who stone him, Saul, one day to be the Apostle Paul. (Acts 7:58) Let Stephen be killed, the Church of Jerusalem dispersed in confusion: out of it go forth burning brands, and spread themselves and spread their flame. For in the Church of Jerusalem, as it were burning brands were set on fire by the Holy Spirit, when they had all one soul, and one heart to Godward. (Acts 4:32) When Stephen was stoned, that pile suffered persecution: the brands were dispersed, and the world was set on fire.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “And “He said unto them.” What? “That thus it behooved. That thus it is written, and thus it behooved.” What? “That Christ should suffer, and rise from the dead the third day.” (Luke 24:46)”

He refers to **Luke 24 (KJV):46** And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

He continues, “And this they saw, they saw Him suffering, they saw Him hanging, they

saw Him with them alive after His resurrection. What then did they not see? The Body, that is, the Church. Him they saw, her they saw not. They saw the Bridegroom, the Bride yet lay hid. Let him promise her too. "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." This is the Bridegroom, what of the Bride? "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:47)"

He refers to **Luke 24 (KJV):47** And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

He continues, "This the disciples did not yet see: they did not yet see the Church throughout all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. They saw the Head, and they believed the Head touching the Body. By this which they saw, they believed that which they saw not. We too are like to them: we see something which they saw not, and something we do not see which they did see. What do we see, which they saw not? The Church throughout all nations. What do we not see, which they saw? Christ present in the flesh. As they saw Him, and believed concerning the Body, so do we see the Body; let us believe concerning the Head. Let what we have respectively seen help us. The sight of Christ helped them to believe the future Church: the sight of the Church helps us to believe that Christ has risen. Their faith was made complete, and ours is made complete also. Their faith was made complete from the sight of the Head, ours is made complete by the sight of the Body. Christ was made known to them "wholly," and to us is He so made known: but He was not seen "wholly" by them, nor by us has He been "wholly" seen. By them the Head was seen, the Body believed. By us the Body has been seen, the Head believed. Yet to none is Christ lacking: in all He is complete, though to this day His Body remains imperfect. The Apostles believed; through them many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem believed; Judæa believed. Samaria believed. **Let the members be added on, the building added on to the foundation. "For no other foundation can any man lay," says the Apostle, "than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus." (1 Corinthians 3:11)"**

He refers to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Augustine acknowledged that Jesus Christ was the foundation of the Church, and that He is the Head of the Church.

He continues, "Let the Jews rage madly, and be filled with jealousy: Stephen be stoned, Saul keep the raiment of them who stone him, Saul, one day to be the Apostle Paul. (Acts 7:58)"

He refers in context to **Acts 7 (KJV):58** And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

He continues, "Let Stephen be killed, the Church of Jerusalem dispersed in confusion: out of it go forth burning brands, and spread themselves and spread their flame. For in the Church of Jerusalem, as it were burning brands were set on fire by the Holy Spirit, when they had all one soul, and one heart to Godward. (Acts 4:32)"

He refers to **Acts 4 (KJV):32** And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his

own; but they had all things common.

He continues, "When Stephen was stoned, that pile suffered persecution: the brands were dispersed, and the world was set on fire."

He refers in context to **Acts 8 (KJV):1** And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. **2** And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. **3** As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. **4** Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

7. And then intent on his furious schemes, that Saul received letters from the chief of the priests, and began his journey in his cruel rage, breathing out slaughter, thirsting for blood, to drag bound and to hurry off to punishment whomsoever he could, and from every quarter that he could, and to satiate himself with the shedding of their blood. But where was God, where was Christ, where He that had crowned Stephen? Where, but in heaven? Let Him now look on Saul, and mock him in his fury, and call from heaven, "'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?' (Acts 9:4) I am in heaven, and thou in earth, and yet thou persecutest Me. Thou dost not touch the body, but my members thou art treading down. Yet what art thou doing? What art thou gaining? 'It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.' Kick as thou wilt, thou only distressest thyself. Lay aside thy fury then, recover soundness. Lay aside evil counsel, seek after good succour." By that voice he was struck to the earth. Who was struck to the earth? The persecutor. Lo, by that one word was he overcome. After what wast thou going, after what was thy fury carrying thee? Those whom thou wast seeking out, now thou followest; whom thou wast persecuting, now for them thou sufferest persecution. He rises up the preacher, who was struck to the earth, the persecutor. He heard the Lord's voice. He was blinded, but in the body only, that he might be enlightened in heart. He was brought to Ananias, catechised on sundry points, baptized, and so came forth an Apostle. Speak then, preach, preach Christ, spread His doctrine, O thou goodly leader of the flock, but lately a wolf. See him, mark him, who once was raging. "But for me, God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world." (Galatians 6:14) Spread the Gospel: scatter with thy mouth what thou hast conceived in thine heart. Let the nations hear, let the nations believe; let the nations multiply, let the Lord's empurpled spouse spring forth from the blood of Martyrs. And from her how many have come already, how many members have cleaved to the Head, and cleave to Him still and believe! They were baptized, and others shall be baptized, and after them shall others come. Then I say, at the end of the world shall the stones be joined to the foundation, living stones, holy stones, that at the end the whole edifice may be built by that Church, yea by this very Church which now sings the new song, while the house is in building. For so the Psalm itself says, "When the house was in building after the captivity;" and what says it, "Sing unto the Lord a new song, sing unto the Lord all the earth." (Psalm 96:1) How great a house is this! But when does it sing the new song? When it is in building. When is it dedicated? At the end of the world. Its foundation has been already dedicated, because He hath ascended into heaven, and dieth no more. When we too shall have

risen to die no more, then shall we be dedicated.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “And then intent on his furious schemes, that Saul received letters from the chief of the priests, and began his journey in his cruel rage, breathing out slaughter, thirsting for blood, to drag bound and to hurry off to punishment whomsoever he could, and from every quarter that he could, and to satiate himself with the shedding of their blood. But where was God, where was Christ, where He that had crowned Stephen? Where, but in heaven? Let Him now look on Saul, and mock him in his fury, and call from heaven, “‘Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?’ (Acts 9:4)”

He refers in context to **Acts 9 (KJV):1** And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

Augustine continues, “I am in heaven, and thou in earth, and yet thou persecutest Me. Thou dost not touch the body, but my members thou art treading down. Yet what art thou doing? What art thou gaining? ‘It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.’ Kick as thou wilt, thou only distressest thyself. Lay aside thy fury then, recover soundness. Lay aside evil counsel, seek after good succour.” By that voice he was struck to the earth. Who was struck to the earth? The persecutor.”

He refers in context to **Acts 9 (KJV):5** And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

He continues, “Lo, by that one word was he overcome. After what wast thou going, after what was thy fury carrying thee? Those whom thou wast seeking out, now thou followest; whom thou wast persecuting, now for them thou sufferest persecution. He rises up the preacher, who was struck to the earth, the persecutor. He heard the Lord’s voice. He was blinded, but in the body only, that he might be enlightened in heart. He was brought to Ananias, catechised on sundry points, baptized, and so came forth an Apostle. Speak then, preach, preach Christ, spread His doctrine, O thou goodly leader of the flock, but lately a wolf. See him, mark him, who once was raging. “But for me, God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.” (Galatians 6:14)”

He refers to **Galatians 6 (KJV):14** But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

He continues, “Spread the Gospel: scatter with thy mouth what thou hast conceived in thine heart. Let the nations hear, let the nations believe; let the nations multiply, let the Lord’s empurpled spouse spring forth from the blood of Martyrs. And from her how many have come already, how many members have cleaved to the Head, and cleave to Him still and believe! They were baptized, and others shall be baptized, and after them shall others come. Then I say, at the end of the world shall the stones be joined to the foundation, living stones, holy stones, that at the end the whole edifice may be built by that Church, yea by this very Church which now sings the new song, while the house is in building.”

He refers in context to **1 Peter 2 (KJV):**3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

He continues, “For so the Psalm itself says, “When the house was in building after the captivity;” and what says it, “Sing unto the Lord a new song, sing unto the Lord all the earth.” (Psalm 96:1)”

He refers in context to **Psalm 96 (Septuagint):**1 Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. 2 Sing to the Lord, bless his name: proclaim his salvation from day to day. 3 Publish his glory among the Gentiles, his wonderful works among all people.

He concludes, “How great a house is this! But when does it sing the new song? When it is in building. When is it dedicated? At the end of the world. Its foundation has been already dedicated, because He hath ascended into heaven, and dieth no more. When we too shall have risen to die no more, then shall we be dedicated.”

Jesus promised to build His Church as we read in **Matthew 16 (KJV):**18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And Paul gives us a vision of the growth of this Church in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Church, and He is the Christ, the Son of God, and He is the rock upon which the Church is being built. And as the Head of the body, He is directing all of the building.

#### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermon LXXXV. [CXXXV. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel, John ix. 4 and 31, “We must work the works of him that sent me,” etc. Against the Arians. And of that which the man who was born blind and received his sight said, “We know that God heareth not**



**sinners.”, paragraph 7, page 514**

7. ...Of a truth, Brethren, for that God hath so willed, I am His priest; I am a sinner; with you do I beat the breast, with you I ask for pardon, with you I hope that God will be merciful.

**Commentary:** In summary, we note that Augustine was a priest.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine  
Sermon LXXXVII. [CXXXVII. Ben.] The tenth chapter of the Gospel of John. Of the shepherd, and the hireling, and the thief., paragraph 7, page 519-520**

7. When wicked clerics hear this which is said against them, they would pervert it. For I have heard that some do wish to pervert this sentence. Would they not, if they might, efface it from the Gospel? But because they cannot efface it, they go about to pervert it. **But the grace and mercy of the Lord is present, and allows them not to do so; for He hath hedged round all His declarations with His truth, and in such wise balanced them; that if any one would wish to cut off anything from them, or to introduce anything by a bad reading or interpretation, any right hearted man may join to the Scripture what has been cut off from the Scripture, and read what went above or below, and he will find the sense which the other wished to interpret wrongly. What then, think ye, do they say of whom it is said, “Do what they say”? That it is (and in truth it is so) addressed to laymen. For what does the layman who wishes to live well say to himself, when he takes notice of a wicked cleric? “The Lord said, ‘What they say, do; what they do, do not.’ Let me walk in the way of the Lord, not follow this man’s conversation. Let me hear from him not his words, but God’s. I will follow God, let him follow his own lust. For if I should wish to defend myself in such wise before God as to say, ‘Lord, I saw that thy cleric living evilly, and therefore I lived evilly;’ would He not say to me, ‘Thou wicked servant, hadst thou not heard from Me, “What they say, do, but what they do, do not”?’ But a wicked layman, an unbeliever, who belongs not to Christ’s flock, who belongs not to Christ’s wheat, who as chaff is only borne with in the floor, what does he say to himself when the word of God begins to reprove him? “Away; why talkest thou to me? The very Bishops and Clergy do not do it, and dost thou force me to do it?” Thus he seeks for himself not a patron for his bad cause, but a companion for punishment. For will that wicked one whosoever he be that he has chosen to imitate, will he ever defend him in the day of judgment? For as with all whom the devil seduces, he seduces them not to be partakers of a kingdom, but of his damnation; so all who follow the wicked, seek companions for themselves to hell, not protection unto the kingdom of heaven.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “When wicked clerics hear this which is said against them, they would pervert it. For I have heard that some do wish to pervert this sentence. Would they not, if they might, efface it from the Gospel?”

He speaks of a Scripture he quoted in the previous paragraph 6, in **Matthew 23 (KJV):1** Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, 2 Saying The scribes and the Pharisees

sit in Moses' seat: 3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

He continues, “But because they cannot efface it, they go about to pervert it. **But the grace and mercy of the Lord is present, and allows them not to do so; for He hath hedged round all His declarations with His truth, and in such wise balanced them; that if any one would wish to cut off anything from them, or to introduce anything by a bad reading or interpretation, any right hearted man may join to the Scripture what has been cut off from the Scripture, and read what went above or below, and he will find the sense which the other wished to interpret wrongly.**”

Augustine agrees with the Scripture, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):** 26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

And by reading the context, that is, “**what went above or below**”, one may “**find the sense which the other wished to interpret wrongly.**”

He continues, “**What then, think ye, do they say of whom it is said, ‘Do what they say’? That it is (and in truth it is so) addressed to laymen. For what does the layman who wishes to live well say to himself, when he takes notice of a wicked cleric? ‘The Lord said, ‘What they say, do; what they do, do not.’ Let me walk in the way of the Lord, not follow this man’s conversation. Let me hear from him not his words, but God’s. I will follow God, let him follow his own lust.**”

Again, Augustine agrees with the Scripture here.

He continues, “For if I should wish to defend myself in such wise before God as to say, ‘Lord, I saw that thy cleric living evilly, and therefore I lived evilly;’ would He not say to me, ‘Thou wicked servant, hadst thou not heard from Me, “What they say, do, but what they do, do not”?’ But a wicked layman, an unbeliever, who belongs not to Christ’s flock, who belongs not to Christ’s wheat, who as chaff is only borne with in the floor, what does he say to himself when the word of God begins to reprove him? “Away; why talkest thou to me? The very Bishops and Clergy do not do it, and dost thou force me to do it?” Thus he seeks for himself not a patron for his bad cause, but a companion for punishment. For will that wicked one whosoever he be that he has chosen to imitate, will he ever defend him in the day of judgment? For as with all whom the devil seduces, he seduces them not to be partakers of a kingdom, but of his damnation; so all who follow the wicked, seek companions for themselves to hell, not protection unto the kingdom of heaven.”

Again, we can agree with Augustine here. Every believer must listen to the Holy Spirit who leads and guides us into all truth. And we can read the word of God ourselves and put it in the right context. We can join “**to the Scripture what has been cut off from the Scripture, and read what went above or below**”, and we “**will find the sense which the other wished to interpret wrongly.**”

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate CXXI. Chapter XX. 10–29, paragraph 4, page 438**

4. “Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples, I have seen the Lord, and He hath spoken these things unto me. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side.” For nails had pierced His hands, a spear had laid open His side: and there the marks of the wounds are preserved for healing the hearts of the doubting. But the shutting of doors presented no obstacle to the matter of His body, wherein Godhead resided. He indeed could enter without their being opened, by whose birth the virginity of His mother remained inviolate, “Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said He unto them again, Peace be unto you.” Reiteration is confirmation; for He Himself gives by the prophet a promised peace upon peace. (Isaiah 26:3) “As the Father hath sent me,” He adds, “even so send I you.” We know the Son to be equal to the Father; but here we recognize the words of the Mediator. For He exhibits Himself as occupying a middle position when He says, He me, and I you. “And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” By breathing on them He signified that the Holy Spirit was the Spirit, not of the Father alone, but likewise His own. “Whose soever sins,” He continues, “ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever ye retain, they are retained.” The Church’s love, which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, discharges the sins of all who are partakers with itself, but retains the sins of those who have no participation therein. Therefore it is, that after saying “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” He straightway added this regarding the remission and retention of sins.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples, I have seen the Lord, and He hath spoken these things unto me. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side.””

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):**18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. 19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

He continues, “For nails had pierced His hands, a spear had laid open His side: and there the marks of the wounds are preserved for healing the hearts of the doubting. But the shutting of doors presented no obstacle to the matter of His body, wherein Godhead resided. He indeed could enter without their being opened, by whose birth the virginity of His mother remained inviolate, “Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. Then said He unto them again, Peace be unto you.” Reiteration is confirmation; for He Himself gives by the prophet a promised peace upon peace. (Isaiah 26:3)”

He refers in context to **Isaiah 26 (Septuagint):**2 Open ye the gates, let the nation enter that keeps righteousness, and keeps truth, 3 supporting truth, and keeping peace: for on thee, O Lord, 4 they have trusted with confidence for ever, the great, the eternal God;

Or to **Isaiah 26 (Douay Rheims):**2 Open ye the gates, and let the just nation, that keepeth the truth, enter in. 3 The old error is passed away: thou wilt keep peace: peace, because we have hoped in thee. 4 You have hoped in the Lord for evermore, in the Lord God mighty for ever.

Or to **Isaiah 26 (KJV):**2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. 3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. 4 Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength:

He continues, ““As the Father hath sent me,” He adds, “even so send I you.””

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):**21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

He continues, “We know the Son to be equal to the Father; but here we recognize the words of the Mediator. For He exhibits Himself as occupying a middle position when He says, He me, and I you. **“And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.”**”

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):**22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

He continues, **“By breathing on them He signified that the Holy Spirit was the Spirit, not of the Father alone, but likewise His own. “Whose soever sins,” He continues, “ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever ye retain, they are retained.”**”

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):**23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

He continues, **“The Church’s love, which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, discharges the sins of all who are partakers with itself, but retains the sins of those who have no participation therein. Therefore it is, that after saying “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” He straightway added this regarding the remission and retention of sins.”**

Augustine makes it a necessity to participate in the Church, which in his time was the Catholic Church. If you were not a partaker with it, the Catholic Church, your sins were retained.

It was Augustine’s perception that the Catholic Church in his time was the true Church which had maintained the word of God, preached to them by the apostles, and this Church had maintained even the traditions handed down to them by the apostles. The proof of this was apostolic succession which was codified by Irenaeus, who lived between 120 and 202 AD, approximately, and was a bishop in Lyons, France from 177 to 202 A.D.

First of all, Irenaeus wrote in **Adversus Heresies (Against Heresies), Book 3: Chapter II. Paragraph 2**, “But, again, when we refer them to that tradition which originates from the apostles, [and] which is preserved by means of the succession of presbyters in the Churches, they object to tradition, saying that they themselves are wiser not merely than the presbyters, but even than the apostles, because they have discovered the unadulterated truth. For [they maintain] that the apostles intermingled the things of the law with the words of the Saviour; and that not the apostles alone, but even the Lord Himself, spoke as at one time from the Demiurge, at another from the intermediate place, and yet again from the Pleroma, but that they themselves, indubitably, unsulliedly, and purely, have knowledge of the hidden mystery: this is,

indeed, to blaspheme their Creator after a most impudent manner! It comes to this, therefore, that these men do now consent neither to Scripture nor to tradition.”

Irenaeus is speaking against the Gnostic heretics, who allege “that one Being suffered and was born, and that this was Jesus; but that there was another who descended upon Him, and that this was Christ, who also ascended again; and they argue, that he who proceeded from the Demiurge, or he who was dispensational, or he who sprang from Joseph, was the Being subject to suffering”. **Adversus Heresies (Against Heresies), Book 3: Chapter XVI. Paragraph 6.**

Now we see that Augustine was relying on “that tradition which originates from the apostles, [and] which is preserved by means of the succession of presbyters in the Churches”.

Irenaeus then wrote in **Adversus Heresies (Against Heresies), Book 3: Chapter III. Paragraph 1-2:**

1. It is within the power of all, therefore, in every Church, who may wish to see the truth, to contemplate clearly the tradition of the apostles manifested throughout the whole world; and we are in a position to reckon up those who were by the apostles instituted bishops in the Churches, and [to demonstrate] the succession of these men to our own times; those who neither taught nor knew of anything like what these [heretics] rave about. For if the apostles had known hidden mysteries, which they were in the habit of imparting to “the perfect” apart and privily from the rest, they would have delivered them especially to those to whom they were also committing the Churches themselves. For they were desirous that these men should be very perfect and blameless in all things, whom also they were leaving behind as their successors, delivering up their own place of government to these men; which men, if they discharged their functions honestly, would be a great boon [to the Church], but if they should fall away, the direst calamity.

2. Since, however, it would be very tedious, in such a volume as this, to reckon up the successions of all the Churches, we do put to confusion all those who, in whatever manner, whether by an evil self-pleasing, by vainglory, or by blindness and perverse opinion, assemble in unauthorized meetings; [we do this, I say,] by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops. For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its preeminent authority, that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere.”

In paragraph one of the quote from Irenaeus above, we see the concern of Irenaeus for the Church against the heretics who were teaching things that the apostles “neither taught nor knew of anything like what these [heretics] rave about”, which he refers to as “hidden mysteries”. To combat this heresy, he points “to those to whom they were also committing the Churches themselves”, that is the bishops, to “whom also they were leaving behind as their successors, delivering up their own place of government to these men”.

In paragraph two, we see that Irenaeus believed any Church which could not show their succession of bishops from the appointment of an apostle were assembling “in unauthorized meetings”. He then points to “that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul”, as being the most reliable. And he concludes, “For it is a



matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its preeminent authority, that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere.”

However, the apostles did not commit “their own place of government to these men”, that is the bishops. Rather they committed them to God and the word of His grace. We begin reading in **Acts 20 (KJV):** 17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, 21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. 26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. 28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

The “elders” in verse 17 are the “overseers” in verse 28. The word “overseers” in the Greek is **ἐπίσκοπος** (pronounced e-pē'-sko-pos), “from (G1909 (**ἐπί** (pronounced e-pē'), meaning upon, on, at, by, before, over) and (G4649 (in the sense of G1983) **σκοπός** (pronounced sko-po's), meaning to peer about, watch); a superintendent, i.e. Christian officer in genitive case charge of a (or the) church (literally or figuratively):—bishop, overseer.” **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, 1985.**

The elders, which were the overseers, were to look over or watch the flock of God.

We continue in **Acts 20 (KJV):** 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. 32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

The Apostles' place of government was not theirs to give, for we read that God has placed the members in the body as it has pleased Him in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):** 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

And it is God who has set some in the church as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):** 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Augustine was a participant of the Catholic Church in his time, and toed the line.

## First Epistle of John, Homily III. 1 John II. 18–27, paragraph 1, page 476

1. “Children, it is the last hour.” In this lesson he addresses the children that they may make haste to grow, because “it is the last hour.” (1 John 2:27) Age or stature of the body is not at one’s own will. A man does not grow in respect of the flesh when he will, any more than he is born when he will: but where the being born rests with the will, the growth also rests with the will. No man is “born of water and the Spirit,” (John 3:5) except he be willing. Consequently if he will, he grows or makes increase: if he will, he decreases. What is it to grow? To go onward by proficiency. What is it to decrease? To go backward by deficiency. Whoso knows that he is born, let him hear that he is an infant; let him eagerly cling to the breasts of his mother, and he grows apace. Now his mother is the Church; and her breasts are the two Testaments of the Divine Scriptures. Hence let him suck the milk of all the things that as signs of spiritual truths were done in time for our eternal salvation, that being nourished and strengthened, he may attain to the eating of solid meat, which is, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Our milk is Christ in His humility; our meat, the selfsame Christ equal with the Father. With milk He nourisheth thee, that He may feed thee with bread: for with the heart spiritually to touch Christ is to know that He is equal with the Father.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Children, it is the last hour.” In this lesson he addresses the children that they may make haste to grow, because “it is the last hour.” (1 John 2:18)”

He refers to **1 John 2 (KJV):18** Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

He continues, “Age or stature of the body is not at one’s own will. A man does not grow in respect of the flesh when he will, any more than he is born when he will: but where the being born rests with the will, the growth also rests with the will. No man is “born of water and the Spirit,” (John 3:5) except he be willing.”

Actually, it is not of our own will that we are born of God as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

It is God who opens the heart as we read in **Acts 16 (KJV):14** And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

Augustine continues, “Consequently if he will, he grows or makes increase: if he will, he decreases. What is it to grow? To go onward by proficiency. What is it to decrease? To go backward by deficiency. Whoso knows that he is born, let him hear that he is an infant; let him eagerly cling to the breasts of his mother, and he grows apace.”

The word “apace” means “swiftly”, or “quickly”. Our growth in the Lord is effected by what we will, or choose. Augustine continues, as he explains, “Now his mother is the Church; and her breasts are the two Testaments of the Divine Scriptures. Hence let him suck the milk of all the things that as signs of spiritual truths were done in time for our eternal salvation, that being nourished and strengthened, he may attain to the eating of solid meat, which is, “In the

beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Our milk is Christ in His humility; our meat, the selfsame Christ equal with the Father. With milk He nourisheth thee, that He may feed thee with bread: for with the heart spiritually to touch Christ is to know that He is equal with the Father.”

The Church is never said to be our mother in the Scriptures. But in that he made an analogy, as he says, “her breasts are the two Testaments of the Divine Scriptures”, and that he encourages when he says, “Hence let him suck the milk of all the things that as signs of spiritual truths were done in time for our eternal salvation, that being nourished and strengthened, he may attain to the eating of solid meat”, he points the believer to the Scriptures.

## **No Forgiveness Outside of the Church**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermon XVII. [LXVII. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel, Matthew 11:25, “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding,” etc., paragraphs 28-37 page 328-331**

28. And thus sins, because they are not forgiven out of the Church, must be forgiven by that Spirit, by whom the Church is gathered together into one. In fact, if any one out of the Church repent him of his sins, and for this so great sin whereby he is an alien from the Church of God, has an heart impenitent, what doth that other repentance profit him? Seeing by this alone he speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost, whereby he is alienated from the Church, which hath received this gift, that in her remission of sins should be given in the Holy Ghost? Which remission though it be the work of the Whole Trinity, is yet understood specially to belong to the Holy Spirit. For He is the Spirit of the adoption of sons, “in whom we cry Abba, Father;” (Romans 8:15) that we may be able to say to Him, “Forgive us our debts.” (Matthew 6:12) And, “Hereby we know” as the Apostle John says, “that Christ dwelleth in us, by His Spirit which He hath given us.” (1 John 3:24) “The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” (Romans 8:16) For to Him appertains the fellowship, by which we are made the one body of the One only Son of God. Whence it is written, “If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit.” (Philippians 2:1) With a view to this fellowship they to whom He first came spake with the tongues of all nations. Because as by tongues the fellowship of mankind is more closely united; so it behooved that this fellowship of the sons of God and members of Christ which was to be among all nations should be signified by the tongues of all nations; that as at that time he was known to have received the Holy Ghost, who spake with the tongues of all nations; so now he should acknowledge that he has received the Holy Ghost, who is held by the bond of the peace of the Church, which is spread throughout all nations. Whence the Apostle says, “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “And thus sins, because they are not forgiven out of the Church, must be forgiven by that Spirit, by whom the Church is gathered together into one. In fact, if any one out of the Church repent him of his sins, and for this so great sin

whereby he is an alien from the Church of God, has an heart impenitent, what doth that other repentance profit him?”

So according to Augustine, “if any one out of the Church repent him of his sins”, he is already bound by “so great sin whereby he is an alien from the Church of God”, by which he “has an heart impenitent”, his repentance will not profit him. He implies that no repentance of sin would be valid unless he joined the Church again.

He continues, “Seeing by this alone he speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost, whereby he is alienated from the Church, which hath received this gift, that in her remission of sins should be given in the Holy Ghost?”

So what Augustine is saying is that the Catholic Church has received the gift of the Holy Ghost in order that “in her remission of sins should be given in the Holy Ghost”. But remission of sins is given by faith in Jesus Christ, as we read again in **Romans 3 (KJV):25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Augustine is making it a sin to be outside the Catholic Church, because the Holy Ghost is in the Catholic Church, as he says, “by this alone he speaketh a word against the Holy Ghost, whereby he is alienated from the Church”.

He continues, “Which remission though it be the work of the Whole Trinity, is yet understood specially to belong to the Holy Spirit. For He is the Spirit of the adoption of sons, “in whom we cry Abba, Father;” (Romans 8:15) that we may be able to say to Him, “Forgive us our debts.” (Matthew 6:12)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):15** For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

And to **Matthew 6 (KJV):12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

He continues, “And, “Hereby we know” as the Apostle John says, “that Christ dwelleth in us, by His Spirit which He hath given us.” (1 John 3:24) “The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God.” (Romans 8:16)”

He refers to **1 John 3 (KJV):24** And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

And to **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

He continues, “For to Him appertains the fellowship, by which we are made the one body of the One only Son of God. Whence it is written, “If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit.” (Philippians 2:1)”

He refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):1** If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

He continues, “With a view to this fellowship they to whom He first came spake with the tongues of all nations. Because as by tongues the fellowship of mankind is more closely united; so it behooved that this fellowship of the sons of God and members of Christ which was to be among all nations should be signified by the tongues of all nations; that as at that time he was known to have received the Holy Ghost, who spake with the tongues of all nations; so now he should acknowledge that he has received the Holy Ghost, who is held by the bond of the peace of the Church, which is spread throughout all nations. Whence the Apostle says, “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:3)”

He refers to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):3** Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The Presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life is not dependent on our fellowship with any Church denomination. The presence of the Holy Spirit enters a believer's life the moment he truly believes in Jesus Christ. It is not faith in man that keeps the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Once we have the Holy Spirit, He abides with us forever as Jesus promised in **John 14 (KJV):16** And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

It is our individual faith that makes us a believer, and a part of the body of Christ. He continues in the next paragraph.

29. Now that He is the Spirit of the Father, the Son Himself saith, "He proceedeth from the Father." (John 15:26) And in another place, "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." (Matthew 10:20) And that He is the Spirit of the Son also the Apostle saith, "God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father;" (Galatians 4:6) that is, making you cry. For it is we that cry; but in Him, that is, by His shedding abroad love in our hearts, without which whoso crieth, crieth in vain. Whence he says again, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Romans 8:9) To which Person then in the Trinity could the communion of this fellowship peculiarly appertain, but to that Spirit which is common to the Father and the Son?

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, "Now that He is the Spirit of the Father, the Son Himself saith, "He proceedeth from the Father." (John 15:26) And in another place, "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." (Matthew 10:20)"

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):26** But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

And to **Matthew 10 (KJV):20** For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

He continues, "And that He is the Spirit of the Son also the Apostle saith, "God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father;" (Galatians 4:6) that is, making you cry. For it is we that cry; but in Him, that is, by His shedding abroad love in our hearts, without which whoso crieth, crieth in vain. Whence he says again, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Romans 8:9) To which Person then in the Trinity could the communion of this fellowship peculiarly appertain, but to that Spirit which is common to the Father and the Son?"

He refers to **Galatians 4 (KJV):6** And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

And to **Romans 8 (KJV):9** But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

And as the Scripture says, it is because we are sons that we have the Spirit of his Son in our hearts crying Abba, Father. We are sons by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by who we fellowship with. And we have the Spirit of God in us because of our faith, and not because of our fellowship with other believers, or their faith.



He continues in the next paragraph.

30. That they who have separated from the Church have not this Spirit, the Apostle Jude has declared most plainly, saying, “Who separate themselves, natural, having not the Spirit.” (Jude 19) Whence the Apostle Paul reproving those even in the Church itself, who by the names of men, though having a place in her unity, were raising a kind of schism, says amongst other things, “But the natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:14) This shows his meaning, “doth not perceive,” that is doth not receive the word of knowledge. These as having a place in the Church, he speaks of as babes, not yet spiritual, but still carnal, and such as are to be fed with milk, not with meat. “Even,” he says, “as unto babes in Christ, have I given you milk and not meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.” (1 Corinthians 3:1-3) When we say, “not yet,” we must not despair, if that which is “not yet” tends to be. For he says, “ye are yet carnal.” And showing how it is that they are carnal, he says, “For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” And again more plainly, “For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I of Apollos, are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?” (1 Corinthians 3:4-5) These then, that is, Paul and Apollos, agreed together in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace; and yet because the Corinthians began to divide them among themselves, and “to be puffed up for one against another,” they are said to be men—carnal and natural men, not able to receive the things of the Spirit of God; and yet because they are not separated from the Church, they are called “babes in Christ;” for indeed he desired that they should be either Angels, or even Gods, whom he reproved because they were men, that is, in those contentions, “They savoured not the things which be of God, but the things which be of men.” (Matthew 16:23) But of those who are separated from the Church it is not merely said, “perceiving not the things of the Spirit of God,” lest it should be referred to the perception of knowledge; but it is said, “Having not the Spirit.” For it does not follow, that he who hath it, should also by knowledge perceive what he hath.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he then asserts, “That they who have separated from the Church have not this Spirit, the Apostle Jude has declared most plainly, saying, “Who separate themselves, natural, having not the Spirit.” (Jude 1:19)”

He refers in context to **Jude 1 (KJV):** 17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; 18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. 19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

Before commenting on this, let us continue to read Augustine, as he continues, “Whence the Apostle Paul reproving those even in the Church itself, who by the names of men, though having a place in her unity, were raising a kind of schism, says amongst other things, “But the natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:14)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):** 14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

He continues, “This shows his meaning, “doth not perceive,” that is doth not receive the word of knowledge. These as having a place in the Church, he speaks of as babes, not yet spiritual, but still carnal, and such as are to be fed with milk, not with meat. “Even,” he says, “as unto babes in Christ, have I given you milk and not meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.” (1 Corinthians 3:1-3)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. **2** I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. **3** For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

When we are born again by faith in Jesus Christ, we begin as spiritual babes in Christ. We must then grow in grace and knowledge as Peter encourages in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

But being a babe does not mean that we are not children of God. This is how we begin in the faith when we are born again.

Augustine continues, “When we say, “not yet,” we must not despair, if that which is “not yet” tends to be. For he says, “ye are yet carnal.” And showing how it is that they are carnal, he says, “For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” And again more plainly, “For while one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I of Apollos, are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?” (1 Corinthians 3:4-5)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):3** For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? **4** For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? **5** Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

He continues, “These then, that is, Paul and Apollos, agreed together in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace; and yet because the Corinthians began to divide them among themselves, and “to be puffed up for one against another,” they are said to be men—carnal and natural men, not able to receive the things of the Spirit of God; and yet because they are not separated from the Church, they are called “babes in Christ;””

However, Paul did not say that they “are said to be men—carnal and natural men”, but that they “walk as men” in verse 3 above. They were walking as if they didn’t have the Spirit of God. But they still had the Spirit of God, as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):16** Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

They were “babes in Christ”. Being in Christ, they were saved. Being saved, they were in the body of Christ, the Church, of which Christ is the Head.

Augustine continues, “for indeed he desired that they should be either Angels, or even Gods, whom he reproved because they were men, that is, in those contentions, “They savoured not the things which be of God, but the things which be of men.” (Matthew 16:23)”

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):23** But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

He continues, “But of those who are separated from the Church it is not merely said,

“perceiving not the things of the Spirit of God,” lest it should be referred to the perception of knowledge; but it is said, “Having not the Spirit.” For it does not follow, that he who hath it, should also by knowledge perceive what he hath.”

But those whom Jude speaks of never had the Spirit of God as we read again in context in **Jude 1 (KJV):**17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; 18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. 19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

The ones whom Jude speaks of are those who have not the Spirit. They were never in the Church, that is, the body of Christ, as we read in **Colossians 1 (KJV):**24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

The Corinthians had the Holy Spirit in them, for they were temples of the Holy Spirit. But they were walking as if they were mere men, without the Spirit of God. Growth comes as we continue in the word as Jesus reveals in **John 8 (KJV):**31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

The Church is not mentioned by Jude. There is nothing in the Scripture that makes being part of a particular fellowship of believers a condition of salvation, or of having the Spirit of God. The body of Christ is a spiritual body composed of all who truly believe in Jesus Christ. We are encouraged to assemble with other believers as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):**25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

But it is not a condition of salvation. Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

31. The “babes” then “in Christ” who have yet place in the Church, who are still natural and carnal, and cannot “perceive,” that is, understand and know what they have, have this Spirit. For how could they be babes in Christ except they were born anew of the Holy Spirit? Nor ought it to seem any wonder that one may have something, and yet not know what he hath. For to say nothing of the Divinity of the Almighty, and the Unity of the Unchangeable Trinity, who can easily perceive by knowledge what the soul is; and yet who is there that hath not a soul? Finally, that we may know most certainly that “babes in Christ,” who do not “perceive the things of the Spirit of God,” have notwithstanding the Spirit of God; let us look how the Apostle Paul, when a little while after he is rebuking them, saith, “Know ye not that ye are the temples of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16) This surely he would in no wise say to those who are separated from the Church, who are described as “having not the Spirit.”

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he then explains, “The “babes” then “in Christ” who have yet place in the Church, who are still natural and carnal, and cannot “perceive,” that is, understand and know what they have, have this Spirit. For how could they be babes in Christ except they were born anew of the Holy Spirit?”

And we can agree with Augustine here. As long as they “walk as men”, they will not perceive spiritual things, or things of the Spirit. But they are still “in Christ”.

He continues, “Nor ought it to seem any wonder that one may have something, and yet not know what he hath. For to say nothing of the Divinity of the Almighty, and the Unity of the Unchangeable Trinity, who can easily perceive by knowledge what the soul is; and yet who is there that hath not a soul? Finally, that we may know most certainly that “babes in Christ,” who do not “perceive the things of the Spirit of God,” have notwithstanding the Spirit of God; let us look how the Apostle Paul, when a little while after he is rebuking them, saith, “Know ye not that ye are the temples of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):16** Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

Again, we can agree with Augustine here. He then concludes, “This surely he would in no wise say to those who are separated from the Church, who are described as “having not the Spirit.”

But Augustine’s conclusion exceeds the Scripture. We have the Spirit of God when we are born again by faith in Jesus Christ. We are also baptized into the body of Christ when we believe. We are made members of a spiritual body, and not an earthly body.

He continues in the next paragraph.

32. But neither can he be said to be in the Church, and to belong to that fellowship of the Spirit, who is mixed up with Christ’s sheep by a bodily intercourse only in deceitfulness of heart. For the “Holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit.” (Wisdom 1:5) Wherefore whosoever are baptized in the congregations or separations rather of schismatics or heretics, although they have not been born again of the Spirit, like as it were to Ishmael, who was Abraham’s son after the flesh; not like Isaac, who was his son after the Spirit, (Galatians 4:29) because by promise; yet when they come to the Catholic Church, and are joined to the fellowship of the Spirit which without the Church they beyond doubt had not, the washing of the flesh is not repeated in their case. For “this form of godliness” was not wanting to them even when they were without; but there is added to them “the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” which cannot be given but within. Before they were Catholics indeed, they were as they of whom the Apostle says, “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” (2 Timothy 3:5) For the visible form of the branch may exist even when separated from the vine; but the invisible life of the root cannot be had, but in the vine. Wherefore the bodily sacraments, which even they who are separated from the Unity of Christ’s Body bear and celebrate, may give “the form of godliness;” but the invisible and spiritual power of godliness cannot in any wise be in them, just as sensation does not accompany a man’s limb, when it is amputated from the body.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “But neither can he be said to be in the Church, and to belong to that fellowship of the Spirit, who is mixed up with Christ’s sheep by a bodily intercourse only in deceitfulness of heart. For the “Holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit.” (Wisdom 1:5)”

He refers to **Wisdom 1 (KJV):5** For the holy spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and remove from thoughts that are without understanding, and will not abide when unrighteousness cometh in.

The one who goes to Church and participates in the fellowship, and the rituals is not saved if they have not believed in Jesus Christ and His resurrection. But the one who has been

born of God cannot die spiritually because they are born of the Spirit of God. They now have eternal life. God has justified them, and put His righteousness down to their account. He has also adopted them into the family of God, and given them a full standing as sons and daughters in Christ. He will never leave us or forsake us, not under any circumstances as we read again in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):5** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

This does not mean He will not discipline us for the Lord disciplines every son whom he receives as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):6** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

The Holy Spirit is the one who guides us into all truth as we read in **John 16 (KJV):13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

But the Holy Spirit also reproves of sin as we read in **John 16 (KJV):8** And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

The book of Wisdom is an apocryphal book and is not recognized as one of the 66 books in the Biblical canon. The Holy Spirit will not stand for deceit, or unrighteousness, but He will never leave us.

Augustine continues, “Wherefore whosoever are baptized in the congregations or separations rather of schismatics or heretics, although they have not been born again of the Spirit, like as it were to Ishmael, who was Abraham’s son after the flesh; not like Isaac, who was his son after the Spirit, (Galatians 4:29) because by promise; yet when they come to the Catholic Church, and are joined to the fellowship of the Spirit which without the Church they beyond doubt had not, the washing of the flesh is not repeated in their case.”

He refers in context to **Galatians 4 (KJV):22** For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

And to **Galatians 4 (KJV):29** But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

Those who have not been born of the Spirit are not in the body of Christ, and therefore not in the Church, which is His body. But in Augustine’s time, there was a lot of diverse teaching and heresy. Even so, this does not mean that anyone who truly believed in Jesus Christ outside of the Catholic Church was not saved. Yet it is interesting that, though Augustine believed those outside of the Catholic Church were not born again, even though they had been baptized, that “the washing of the flesh is not repeated in their case.” But if one is regenerated by baptism, and those outside the Catholic Church are not born again, why would they not have to be baptized again in order to be born again once they had joined the Catholic Church?

Augustine then explains, “For “this form of godliness” was not wanting to them even when they were without; but there is added to them “the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” which cannot be given but within.”

He refers in context to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):1** I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.



But this Scripture is instruction by Paul of how to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. It is not about keeping ourselves saved, or a proof that we are saved. It is about how we are to walk in the Spirit.

He continues, “Before they were Catholics indeed, they were as they of whom the Apostle says, “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” (2 Timothy 3:5)”

He refers in context to **2 Timothy 3 (KJV)**:1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. 2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, 4 Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; 5 Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. 6 For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, 7 Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

This Scripture speaks of the unsaved, that is, those who have not truly believed. The ones spoken of here are “reprobate concerning the faith”, as in verse 8. The form of godliness Paul is talking about here is a fake godliness. They have not the Spirit of God. So there is nothing to add to them. What they need is to acknowledge the power of godliness, and surrender to God, and receive His Son, Jesus Christ to be born again.

Augustine concludes, “For the visible form of the branch may exist even when separated from the vine; but the invisible life of the root cannot be had, but in the vine. Wherefore the bodily sacraments, which even they who are separated from the Unity of Christ’s Body bear and celebrate, may give “the form of godliness;” but the invisible and spiritual power of godliness cannot in any wise be in them, just as sensation does not accompany a man’s limb, when it is amputated from the body.”

The body of Christ is made up of all believers. Whether they are Catholic, or now Protestant, or nondenominational, it makes no difference. When anyone believes in Jesus Christ and His resurrection, and is born again of the Spirit of God, we must encourage them as Peter describes in **1 Peter 2 (KJV)**:1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, 2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: 3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. 4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

We first must grow in the things of God by first receiving the milk of the word. We must lay aside our old sinful ways. As we walk in the light of the word, we become aware of what these old sinful ways are. As we become aware, we lay them aside. This takes time. This is how we grow up in Him. Augustine treats everyone who separates from the Catholic Church as a limb “amputated from the body”. We are not saved by having fellowship with any body of believers. We are saved by our faith in Jesus Christ, and faith in Him alone. It is our faith in Jesus Christ that makes us a member of the body of Christ, which is not a physical body but a spiritual body.

33. And since this is so, remission of sins, seeing it is not given but by the Holy Spirit, can only be given in that Church which hath the Holy Spirit. For this is the effect of the remission of sins, that the prince of sin, the spirit who is divided against himself, should no more reign in us, and that being delivered from the power of the unclean spirit, we should thenceforward be made the temple of the Holy Spirit, and receive Him, by whom we are cleansed through receiving pardon, to dwell in us, to work, increase, and perfect righteousness. For at His first coming, when they who had received Him spake with the tongues of all nations, and the Apostle Peter addressed those who were present in amazement, they were pricked in heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” show us. “And Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 2:37-38) In the Church truly in which was the Holy Ghost, were both brought to pass, that is, both the remission of sins, and the receiving of this gift. And therefore was it “In the Name of Jesus Christ;” because when He promised the same Holy Ghost; He said, “Whom the Father will send in My Name.” (John 14:26) For the Spirit dwelleth in no man without the Father and the Son; as neither doth the Son without the Father and the Holy Spirit, nor the Father without them. Their indwelling is inseparable, as their operation is inseparable; but sometimes they manifest themselves separately by symbols borrowed from the creatures, not in their own substance; just as they are pronounced separately by the voice in syllables which occupy separately their own spaces, and yet they are not separated from each other by any intervals, or moments of time. For they never can be pronounced together, whereas they can never exist, except together. But as I have already said, and not once only, the remission of sins, whereby the kingdom of the spirit which is divided against himself is overthrown and driven out, and the fellowship of the unity of the Church of God, out of which this remission of sins is not, are regarded as the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit, with the cooperation doubtless of the Father and the Son, because the Holy Spirit is Himself in some sort the fellowship of the Father and the Son. For the Father is not possessed as Father by the Son and the Holy Spirit in common; because He is not the Father of Both. And the Son is not possessed as Son by the Father and the Holy Spirit in common; because He is not the Son of Both. But the Holy Spirit is possessed as the Spirit by the Father and the Son in common, because He is the One Spirit of Both.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he argues, “And since this is so, remission of sins, seeing it is not given but by the Holy Spirit, can only be given in that Church which hath the Holy Spirit.”

The remission of sins is never said to be “given but by the Holy Spirit” in the Scriptures. Jesus said it was His blood that was shed for the remission of sins in **Matthew 26 (KJV):28** For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

And it is through faith in His blood that we receive remission of sins as we read again in **Romans 3 (KJV):25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Augustine continues, “For this is the effect of the remission of sins, that the prince of sin, the spirit who is divided against himself, should no more reign in us, and that being delivered from the power of the unclean spirit, we should thenceforward be made the temple of the Holy Spirit, and receive Him, by whom we are cleansed through receiving pardon, to dwell in us, to

work, increase, and perfect righteousness.”

And we are a temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells in each believer individually as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

We are as living stones built into a spiritual house as Peter reveals in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):4** to whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

This building of stones grows also into a holy temple as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):19** Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

And in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):16** Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

As a lively stone we are a part of the temple. If we defile the temple, God will discipline us for He is a good, good Father.

Augustine continues, “For at His first coming, when they who had received Him spake with the tongues of all nations, and the Apostle Peter addressed those who were present in amazement, they were pricked in heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” show us. “And Peter said to them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 2:37-38)”

The promise of the Holy Spirit is for every believer individually as Peter revealed in **Acts 2 (KJV):38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

The promise is for all who repent and are baptized “in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins”. That is, the promise to receive the Holy Spirit is for every believer. We do not have to belong to a specific fellowship to receive the Holy Spirit. We are made members of the body of Christ when we believe.

Augustine continues, “In the Church truly in which was the Holy Ghost, were both brought to pass, that is, both the remission of sins, and the receiving of this gift. And therefore was it “In the Name of Jesus Christ,” because when He promised the same Holy Ghost; He said, “Whom the Father will send in My Name.” (John 14:26)”

He refers to **John 14 (KJV):26** But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The Church is the body of Christ, that is, all the believers in Christ.

He continues, “For the Spirit dwelleth in no man without the Father and the Son; as neither doth the Son without the Father and the Holy Spirit, nor the Father without them. Their

indwelling is inseparable, as their operation is inseparable; but sometimes they manifest themselves separately by symbols borrowed from the creatures, not in their own substance; just as they are pronounced separately by the voice in syllables which occupy separately their own spaces, and yet they are not separated from each other by any intervals, or moments of time. For they never can be pronounced together, whereas they can never exist, except together. But as I have already said, and not once only, the remission of sins, whereby the kingdom of the spirit which is divided against himself is overthrown and driven out, and the fellowship of the unity of the Church of God, out of which this remission of sins is not, are regarded as the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit, with the cooperation doubtless of the Father and the Son, because the Holy Spirit is Himself in some sort the fellowship of the Father and the Son.”

Our fellowship with the Lord is dependent on walking in the light as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):**6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

So our fellowship one with another is dependent on our walking in the light, as in verse 7 above. Our fellowship with the Lord is not dependent on “the fellowship of the unity of the Church of God”, for the Church of God is made up of believers who are all in a different place in their growth in the Lord. Our growth in the Lord is dependent on our walking in the light of the word of God. And as we walk in this light, “we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”.

Paul mentions the “unity of the Spirit” as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

We must become spiritual in our thinking. The body of Christ is composed of all believers in Jesus Christ. We must keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It is not about maintaining our church boundaries, but about keeping the unity of the Spirit.

Augustine concludes, “For the Father is not possessed as Father by the Son and the Holy Spirit in common; because He is not the Father of Both. And the Son is not possessed as Son by the Father and the Holy Spirit in common; because He is not the Son of Both. But the Holy Spirit is possessed as the Spirit by the Father and the Son in common, because He is the One Spirit of Both.”

Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

34. Whosoever therefore shall be guilty of impenitence against the Spirit, in whom the unity and fellowship of the communion of the Church is gathered together, shall never have forgiveness; because he has stopped the source of forgiveness against himself, and deservedly shall he be condemned with the spirit, which is divided against himself, who is himself also divided against the Holy Spirit which is not divided against Himself. And of this the very testimonies of the Gospel warn us, would we with good attention search them. For according to Luke the Lord does not say, “That he who blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven.” in that place where He is answering those who said that He cast out devils by the

prince of the devils. Whence it would seem that this was not said once only by the Lord; but we must not carelessly pass over the consideration of the occasion on which this last also was spoken. For He was speaking of those who should have confessed or denied Him before men, when He said, “Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the Angels of God. But he that denieth Me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God.” (Luke 12:8-9) And lest from this the salvation of the Apostle Peter should be despaired of, he immediately subjoined, “And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven; (Luke 12:10) blasphemeth,” that is, with that blasphemy of an impenitent heart, by which resistance is made to remission of sins which is granted in the Church by the Holy Ghost. And this blasphemy Peter had not, who presently repented, when “he wept bitterly,” (Matthew 26:75) and who after he had overcome the spirit who is divided against himself, and who had desired to “have him to harass him,” (Luke 22:31) and against whom the “Lord prayed for him that his faith might not fail,” even received the Very Holy Spirit whom he resisted not, that not only his sin might be forgiven him, but that through him remission of sins might be preached and dispensed.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he then argues, “Whosoever therefore shall be guilty of impenitence against the Spirit, in whom the unity and fellowship of the communion of the Church is gathered together, shall never have forgiveness; because he has stopped the source of forgiveness against himself, and deservedly shall he be condemned with the spirit, which is divided against himself, who is himself also divided against the Holy Spirit which is not divided against Himself.”

What Augustine is saying here is that it is necessary to submit to the authority resident in the Catholic Church in his time. This is where the Spirit dwells, “in whom the unity and fellowship of the communion of the Church is gathered together”. If one is impenitent to the Catholic Church in his time, they “shall never have forgiveness; because he has stopped the source of forgiveness against himself, and deservedly shall he be condemned with the spirit, which is divided against himself, who is himself also divided against the Holy Spirit which is not divided against Himself.”

We should understand that the Church is a work in progress, as Paul reveals in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

No one is condemned for not maintaining the unity of the Church. But we are not to be any “more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive”. We are to be



“speaking the truth in love”, in order that we “may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ”.

Augustine continues, “And of this the very testimonies of the Gospel warn us, would we with good attention search them. For according to Luke the Lord does not say, “That he who blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven:” in that place where He is answering those who said that He cast out devils by the prince of the devils. Whence it would seem that this was not said once only by the Lord; but we must not carelessly pass over the consideration of the occasion on which this last also was spoken. For He was speaking of those who should have confessed or denied Him before men, when He said, “Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the Angels of God. But he that denieth Me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God.” (Luke 12:8-9)”

He refers to **Luke 12 (KJV):8** Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: 9 But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

He continues, “And lest from this the salvation of the Apostle Peter should be despaired of, he immediately subjoined, “And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven; (Luke 12:10)”

He refers to **Luke 12 (KJV):10** And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.

He continues, ““blasphemeth,” that is, with that blasphemy of an impenitent heart, by which resistance is made to remission of sins which is granted in the Church by the Holy Ghost.”

Remission is not granted in the Church by the Holy Ghost. That is, belonging to any church is not a condition for forgiveness by the Holy Spirit. If we sin, we confess our sins as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We are not dependent on man for forgiveness, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

There is only one mediator between God and man as we read in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

We pray to God alone for forgiveness.

Augustine continues, “And this blasphemy Peter had not, who presently repented, when “he wept bitterly,” (Matthew 26:75) and who after he had overcome the spirit who is divided against himself, and who had desired to “have him to harass him,” (Luke 22:31) and against whom the “Lord prayed for him that his faith might not fail,” even received the Very Holy Spirit whom he resisted not, that not only his sin might be forgiven him, but that through him remission of sins might be preached and dispensed.”

He refers first to **Matthew 26 (KJV):75** And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

And then in context to **Luke 22 (KJV):31** And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. 33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. 34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

We can agree with Augustine that Peter did not blaspheme the Holy Spirit. Peter repented and was forgiven.

He continues in the next paragraph.

35. And in the narrative of the two other Evangelists, the occasion of speaking out this sentence of the blasphemy of the Spirit arose from the mention of the unclean spirit, who is divided against himself. For it had been said of the Lord, that “He cast out devils by the prince of the devils.” In that place the Lord says, that “by the Holy Spirit He casteth out devils,” that so the spirit who is not divided against Himself may overcome and cast out him who is divided against himself; but that that man would abide in his perdition, who refuses through impenitence to pass over into His peace, who is not divided against Himself. For thus runs the narrative of Mark; “Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but shall be held guilty of an eternal offence.” (Mark 3:28-29) When he had delivered these words of the Lord, he then subjoined his own, saying, “Because they said He hath an unclean spirit;” (Mark 3:30) that He might show that the cause of His saying this arose hence, because they had said that “He cast out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.” Not that this was a blasphemy which shall not be forgiven, forasmuch as even this shall be forgiven, if a right repentance follow it; but because, as I have said, there arose hence a cause for that sentence to be delivered by the Lord, since mention had been made of the unclean spirit whom the Lord shows to be divided against himself, because of the Holy Spirit who is not only not divided against Himself, but who also makes those whom He gathers together undivided, by forgiving those sins which are divided against themselves, and by inhabiting those who are cleansed, that it may be with them, as it is written in the Acts of the Apostles, “The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.” (Acts 4:32) And this gift of forgiveness none resists, but he who has the hardness of an impenitent heart. For in another place also the Jews said of the Lord that He had a devil, (John 7:20, 8:48) yet He spake nothing there of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit; because they did not so bring forward the mention of the unclean spirit as that he could be shown out of their own mouths to be divided against himself, as Beelzebub, by whom they said that devils could be cast out.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he then argues, “And in the narrative of the two other Evangelists, the occasion of speaking out this sentence of the blasphemy of the Spirit arose from the mention of the unclean spirit, who is divided against himself. For it had been said of the Lord, that “He cast out devils by the prince of the devils.” In that place the Lord says, that “by the Holy Spirit He casteth out devils,” that so the spirit who is not divided against Himself may overcome and cast out him who is divided against himself; but that that man would abide in his perdition, who refuses through impenitence to pass over into His peace, who is not divided against Himself. For thus runs the narrative of Mark; “Verily I say unto you, All

sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but shall be held guilty of an eternal offence.” (Mark 3:28-29)”

He refers to **Mark 3 (KJV):28** Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: 29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.

He continues, “When he had delivered these words of the Lord, he then subjoined his own, saying, “Because they said He hath an unclean spirit;” (Mark 3:30) that He might show that the cause of His saying this arose hence, because they had said that “He cast out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.””

He refers to **Mark 3 (KJV):30** Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

And to **Mark 3 (KJV):22** And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

He continues, “Not that this was a blasphemy which shall not be forgiven, forasmuch as even this shall be forgiven, if a right repentance follow it; but because, as I have said, there arose hence a cause for that sentence to be delivered by the Lord, since mention had been made of the unclean spirit whom the Lord shows to be divided against himself, because of the Holy Spirit who is not only not divided against Himself, but who also makes those whom He gathers together undivided, by forgiving those sins which are divided against themselves, and by inhabiting those who are cleansed, that it may be with them, as it is written in the Acts of the Apostles, “The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.” (Acts 4:32)”

He refers to **Acts 4 (KJV):32** And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

He continues, “And this gift of forgiveness none resists, but he who has the hardness of an impenitent heart. For in another place also the Jews said of the Lord that He had a devil, (John 7:20, 8:48) yet He spake nothing there of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit; because they did not so bring forward the mention of the unclean spirit as that he could be shown out of their own mouths to be divided against himself, as Beelzebub, by whom they said that devils could be cast out.”

He refers in context to **John 7 (KJV):19** Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? 20 The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?

And in context to **John 8 (KJV):37** I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. 38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. 39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. 41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. 42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 43 Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. 44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in

him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. 45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. 46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? 47 He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. 48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? 49 Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. 50 And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a matter of the heart. It is an unrepentent heart that commits this sin. That is, it is one who does not repent, and accept Christ. Unless we, at some point in our lives, repent, and accept Christ, we will not have forgiveness.

36. But in this passage according to Matthew, the Lord far more plainly explained what he intended to be understood here; namely, that he it is who speaks a word against the Holy Ghost, who with an impenitent heart resists the Unity of the Church, where in the Holy Spirit is given the remission of sins. For this spirit they have not, as has been said already, who even though they bear and handle the sacraments of Christ, are separated from His congregation. For when He spoke of the division of Satan against Satan, and how that He Himself cast out devils by the Holy Spirit, that Spirit, namely, which is not, as the other, divided against Himself; lest any one should think because of those who gather together their irregular assemblies under the Name of Christ, but without His fold, that the kingdom of Christ also was divided against itself, He immediately added, “He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad,” (Matthew 12:30) that He might show that they did not belong to Him who by gathering “without” wished not to “gather” but “to scatter abroad.” And afterwards He subjoined, “Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven.” (Matthew 12:31) What is this “wherefore?” Shall the blasphemy of the Spirit only not be forgiven, because “he who is not with Christ is against Him, and he who gathereth not with Him scattereth abroad?” Even so, doubtless. For he that gathereth not with Him, howsoever he may gather under His name, hath not the Holy Ghost.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he then argues, “But in this passage according to Matthew, the Lord far more plainly explained what he intended to be understood here; namely, that he it is who speaks a word against the Holy Ghost, who with an impenitent heart resists the Unity of the Church, where in the Holy Spirit is given the remission of sins.”

The issue he is speaking of begins in **Matthew 12 (KJV):22** Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? 24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. 25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: 26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? 27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

But the Scripture never says to abide in the “Unity of the Church, where in the Holy Spirit is given the remission of sins”, or to abide in the “Unity of the Church” in order to obtain “the remission of sins”.

He continues, “For this spirit they have not, as has been said already, who even though they bear and handle the sacraments of Christ, are separated from His congregation.”

So those he is speaking of do not have the spirit, that is the Holy Spirit, “even though they bear and handle the sacraments of Christ”, because they “are separated from His congregation”. By “His congregation” Augustine means the Catholic Church. He is relying on ritual.

He then explains, “For when He spoke of the division of Satan against Satan, and how that He Himself cast out devils by the Holy Spirit, that Spirit, namely, which is not, as the other, divided against Himself;”

So the Holy Spirit is not “divided against Himself” as the Satanic spirits would be if Jesus cast them out by Beelzebub. Therefore, according to Augustine, if you do not abide in the unity of the Catholic Church, you are causing a division which shows that you don’t have the Holy Spirit.

Augustine continues, “lest any one should think because of those who gather together their irregular assemblies under the Name of Christ, but without His fold, that the kingdom of Christ also was divided against itself, He immediately added, “He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad,” (Matthew 12:30) that He might show that they did not belong to Him who by gathering “without” wished not to “gather” but “to scatter abroad.””

He refers in context to **Matthew 12 (KJV):29** Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then he will spoil his house. 30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

So, according to Augustine, “those who gather together their irregular assemblies under the Name of Christ”, are separated from “His fold”, that is, the Catholic Church. And since they don’t gather under the authority of the Catholic Church, they do not gather with the Lord, but “scatter abroad”. But Jesus is speaking in Matthew 12:29. We must gather with Him.

He continues, “And afterwards He subjoined, “Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy of the Spirit shall not be forgiven.” (Matthew 12:31) What is this “wherefore?” Shall the blasphemy of the Spirit only not be forgiven, because “he who is not with Christ is against Him, and he who gathereth not with Him scattereth abroad?” Even so, doubtless. For he that gathereth not with Him, howsoever he may gather under His name, hath not the Holy Ghost.”

He refers to **Matthew 12 (KJV):31** Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

He thus makes any assembly of Christians outside the Catholic Church as unlawful, and guilty of blaspheming the Holy Spirit, for they are not “with Christ”, but “against Him”.

Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

37. Thus then hath He altogether forced us to understand that the remission of no sin nor



blasphemy can be effected anywhere else, save in the gathering together of Christ, which scattereth not abroad. For it is gathered together in the Holy Spirit, which is not as that unclean spirit, divided against Himself. And therefore all congregations, or dispersions rather, which call themselves Churches of Christ, and are divided against themselves and contrary one to the other, and hostile to the congregation of Unity, which is His True Church, do not therefore belong to His congregation, because they seem to have His Name. But they might belong to it, if the Holy Spirit in whom this congregation is joined together, were divided against Himself. But because this is not so (“for he that is not with Christ is against Him, and he that gathereth not with Him scattereth abroad”); therefore all manner of sin and all blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men in this congregation, which Christ gathereth together in the Holy Spirit, who is not divided against Himself. But that blasphemy of the Spirit Himself, whereby in an impenitent heart resistance is made to this so great gift of God even to the end of this present life, shall not be forgiven. For though a man so oppose himself to the truth, as to resist God speaking, not in the Prophets, but in His Only Son (since for our sakes He was pleased that He should be the Son of Man, that He might speak to us in Him), yet shall he be forgiven when in repentance he shall have recourse to the goodness of God, who forasmuch as He “willeth not the death of the wicked, but rather that he should turn from his way and live,” (Ezekiel 33:11) hath given the Holy Spirit to His Church, that whosoever forgiveth sins in the Spirit, they should be forgiven. But whoso stands out as an enemy to this gift, so as not in repentance to seek it, but by impenitence to gainsay it, his sin becomes unpardonable; not sin of any one specific kind, but the contempt, or even opposing of the remission of sins itself. And so a word is spoken against the Holy Spirit, when men never come from the dispersion to the congregation which has received the Holy Spirit for the remission of sins. Unto which congregation if any come without hypocrisy, though it be through the ministry of a wicked clergyman, a reprobate and a hypocrite, so he be a Catholic minister, he shall receive remission of sins in this Holy Spirit. For such is the working of this Spirit in the Holy Church, even in this present time, when the corn is as it were being threshed with the chaff, that he despises no man’s sincere confession, and is deceived by no man’s false pretences, and so flies from the reprobate, as yet by their ministry to gather together those that are approved, One refuge then there is against unpardonable blasphemy, that we take heed of an impenitent heart; and that it be not thought that repentance can avail ought, unless the Church be kept to, in which remission of sins is given, and the fellowship of the Spirit is preserved in the bond of peace.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he then argues, “Thus then hath He altogether forced us to understand that the remission of no sin nor blasphemy can be effected anywhere else, save in the gathering together of Christ, which scattereth not abroad. For it is gathered together in the Holy Spirit, which is not as that unclean spirit, divided against Himself. And therefore all congregations, or dispersions rather, which call themselves Churches of Christ, and are divided against themselves and contrary one to the other, and hostile to the congregation of Unity, which is His True Church, do not therefore belong to His congregation, because they seem to have His Name.”

Again, he thus makes any assembly of Christians outside the Catholic Church in his time as unlawful, and guilty of blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

He continues, “But they might belong to it, if the Holy Spirit in whom this congregation

is joined together, were divided against Himself. But because this is not so (“for he that is not with Christ is against Him, and he that gathereth not with Him scattereth abroad”); therefore all manner of sin and all blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men in this congregation, which Christ gathereth together in the Holy Spirit, who is not divided against Himself.”

By “this congregation, which Christ gathereth together in the Holy Spirit”, he means the Catholic Church in his time.

He continues, “But that blasphemy of the Spirit Himself, whereby in an impenitent heart resistance is made to this so great gift of God even to the end of this present life, shall not be forgiven.”

We can agree with Augustine here, that the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, “whereby in an impenitent heart resistance is made to this so great gift of God even to the end of this present life, shall not be forgiven”, for this is what the Scripture says.

He continues, “For though a man so oppose himself to the truth, as to resist God speaking, not in the Prophets, but in His Only Son (since for our sakes He was pleased that He should be the Son of Man, that He might speak to us in Him), yet shall he be forgiven when in repentance he shall have recourse to the goodness of God, who forasmuch as He “willeth not the death of the wicked, but rather that he should turn from his way and live,” (Ezekiel 33:11) hath given the Holy Spirit to His Church, that whosoever forgiveth sins in the Spirit, they should be forgiven.”

He refers to **Ezekiel 33 (KJV):11** Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

The Spirit of God has sovereignly baptized all believers into His body as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):12** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. **13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. **14** For the body is not one member, but many.

And God has set the members in the body as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

And as members of His body, we must grow up in Him as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):14** That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; **15** But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: **16** From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Divisions in the body are caused by carnality as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. **2** I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. **3** For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? **4** For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Uniting in Christ is part of the growth of the members in the body of Christ. All of the members are in a different stage of growth. This does not mean that they are blaspheming the

Holy Spirit because some say they are of Paul, or some say they are Baptists, or Presbyterians, or even Catholics. As we join together in rightly dividing the word of truth, we will unite. This may mean we will have to let go of our traditions, just as Jesus taught the Jews in **Matthew 15 (KJV)**: 1 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, 2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. 3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. 5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; 6 And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. 7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Augustine concludes, as he then asserts, “But whoso stands out as an enemy to this gift, so as not in repentance to seek it, but by impenitence to gainsay it, his sin becomes unpardonable; not sin of any one specific kind, but the contempt, or even opposing of the remission of sins itself. And so a word is spoken against the Holy Spirit, when men never come from the dispersion to the congregation which has received the Holy Spirit for the remission of sins. Unto which congregation if any come without hypocrisy, though it be through the ministry of a wicked clergyman, a reprobate and a hypocrite, so he be a Catholic minister, he shall receive remission of sins in this Holy Spirit. For such is the working of this Spirit in the Holy Church, even in this present time, when the corn is as it were being threshed with the chaff, that he despises no man’s sincere confession, and is deceived by no man’s false pretences, and so flies from the reprobate, as yet by their ministry to gather together those that are approved, One refuge then there is against unpardonable blasphemy, that we take heed of an impenitent heart; and that it be not thought that repentance can avail ought, unless the Church be kept to, in which remission of sins is given, and the fellowship of the Spirit is preserved in the bond of peace.”

So even “through the ministry of a wicked clergyman, a reprobate and a hypocrite, so he be a Catholic minister”, one can “receive remission of sins in this Holy Spirit”, that is, the Holy Spirit in the Catholic Church, “the congregation of Unity, which is His True Church”, according to Augustine.

## **The Apostle Peter**

### **Volume 1, Letters of Augustine, A.D. 400**

#### **Letter LIII, Chapter I, paragraphs 1-3, page 298**

Letter LIII. (A.D. 400.)

To Generosus, Our Most Loved and Honourable Brother, Fortunatus, Alypius, and Augustin  
Send Greeting in the Lord.

Chap. I.

1. Since you were pleased to acquaint us with the letter sent to you by a Donatist presbyter, although, with the spirit of a true Catholic, you regarded it with contempt, nevertheless, to aid you in seeking his welfare if his folly be not incurable, we beg you to forward to him the following reply. He wrote that an angel had enjoined him to declare to you the episcopal succession of the Christianity of your town; to you, forsooth, who hold the Christianity not of your own town only, nor of Africa only, but of the whole world, the Christianity which has been published, and is now published to all nations. This proves that they think it a small matter that they themselves are not ashamed of being cut off, and are taking no measures, while they may, to be engrafted anew; they are not content unless they do their utmost to cut others off, and bring them to share their own fate, as withered branches fit for the flames. Wherefore, even if you had yourself been visited by that angel whom he affirms to have appeared to him,—a statement which we regard as a cunning fiction; and if the angel had said to you the very words which he, on the warrant of the alleged command, repeated to you,—even in that case it would have been your duty to remember the words of the apostle: “Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” (Galatians 1:8) For to you it was proclaimed by the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, that His “gospel shall be preached unto all nations, and then shall the end come.” (Matthew 24:14) To you it has moreover been proclaimed by the writings of the prophets and of the apostles, that the promises were given to Abraham and to his seed, which is Christ, (Galatians 3:16) when God said unto him: “In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed.” Having then such promises, if an angel from heaven were to say to thee, “Let go the Christianity of the whole earth, and cling to the faction of Donatus, the episcopal succession of which is set forth in a letter of their bishop in your town,” he ought to be accursed in your estimation; because he would be endeavouring to cut you off from the whole Church, and thrust you into a small party, and make you forfeit your interest in the promises of God.

2. For if the lineal succession of bishops is to be taken into account, with how much more certainty and benefit to the Church do we reckon back till we reach Peter himself, to whom, as bearing in a figure the whole Church, the Lord said: “Upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!” (Matthew 16:18) The successor of Peter was Linus, and his successors in unbroken continuity were these:—Clement, Anacletus, Evaristus, Alexander, Sixtus, Telesphorus, Iginus, Anicetus, Pius, Soter, Eleutherius, Victor, Zephyrinus, Calixtus, Urbanus, Pontianus, Antherus, Fabianus, Cornelius, Lucius, Stephanus, Xystus, Dionysius, Felix, Eutychianus, Gaius, Marcellinus, Marcellus, Eusebius, Miltiades, Sylvester, Marcus, Julius, Liberius, Damasus, and Siricius, whose successor is the present Bishop Anastasius. In this order of succession no Donatist bishop is found. But, reversing the natural course of things, the Donatists sent to Rome from Africa an ordained bishop, who, putting himself at the head of a few Africans in the great metropolis, gave some notoriety to the name of “mountain men,” or Cutzupits, by which they were known.

3. Now, even although some traditor had in the course of these centuries, through inadvertence, obtained a place in that order of bishops, reaching from Peter himself to Anastasius, who now occupies that See,—this fact would do no harm to the Church and to Christians having no share in the guilt of another; for the Lord, providing against such a case, says, concerning officers in the Church who are wicked: “All whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.” (Matthew 23:3)

Thus the stability of the hope of the faithful is secured, inasmuch as being fixed, not in man, but in the Lord, it never can be swept away by the raging of impious schism; whereas they themselves are swept away who read in the Holy Scriptures the names of churches to which the apostles wrote, and in which they have no bishop. For what could more clearly prove their perversity and their folly, than their saying to their clergy, when they read these letters, "Peace be with thee," at the very time that they are themselves disjoined from the peace of those churches to which the letters were originally written?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins in paragraph 1, "Since you were pleased to acquaint us with the letter sent to you by a Donatist presbyter, although, with the spirit of a true Catholic, you regarded it with contempt, nevertheless, to aid you in seeking his welfare if his folly be not incurable, we beg you to forward to him the following reply."

**Wikipedia** says:

**Donatism** (Latin: *Donatismus*, Greek: Δονατισμός *Donatismós*) was a heresy leading to schism in the Church of Carthage from the fourth to the sixth centuries AD. Donatists argued that Christian clergy must be faultless for their ministry to be effective and their prayers and sacraments to be valid. Donatism had its roots in the long-established Christian community of the Roman Africa province (now Algeria and Tunisia) in the persecutions of Christians under Diocletian. Named after the Berber Christian bishop Donatus Magnus, Donatism flourished during the fourth and fifth centuries.

### Origin and controversy

The Roman governor of North Africa, lenient to the large Christian minority under his rule throughout the persecutions, was satisfied when Christians handed over their scriptures as a token repudiation of faith. When the persecution ended, Christians who did so were called *traditors*—"those who handed (the holy things) over"—by their critics (who were mainly from the poorer classes).

Like third-century Novatianism, the Donatists were rigorists; the church must be a church of "saints" (not "sinners"), and sacraments administered by *traditors* were invalid. In 311 Caecilian (a new bishop of Carthage) was consecrated by Felix of Aptungi, an alleged *traditor*. His opponents consecrated Majorinus, a short-lived rival who was succeeded by Donatus.

Two years later, a commission appointed by Pope Miltiades condemned the Donatists. They persisted, seeing themselves as the true Church with valid sacraments. Because of their association with the Circumcellions, the Donatists were repressed by Roman authorities. Although they had local support, their opponents were supported by Rome. The Donatists were still a force during the lifetime of Augustine of Hippo, and disappeared only after the seventh and eighth century Muslim conquest. The Donatists refused to accept the sacraments and spiritual authority of priests and bishops who were *traditors* during the persecution. The *traditors* had returned to positions of authority under Constantine I; according to the Donatists, sacraments administered by the *traditors* were invalid. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donatism>

Augustine continues, speaking of a Donatist presbyter, "He wrote that an angel had



enjoined him to declare to you the episcopal succession of the Christianity of your town; to you, forsooth, who hold the Christianity not of your own town only, nor of Africa only, but of the whole world, the Christianity which has been published, and is now published to all nations. This proves that they think it a small matter that they themselves are not ashamed of being cut off, and are taking no measures, while they may, to be engrafted anew; they are not content unless they do their utmost to cut others off, and bring them to share their own fate, as withered branches fit for the flames. Wherefore, even if you had yourself been visited by that angel whom he affirms to have appeared to him,—a statement which we regard as a cunning fiction; and if the angel had said to you the very words which he, on the warrant of the alleged command, repeated to you,—even in that case it would have been your duty to remember the words of the apostle: “Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” (Galatians 1:8)”

He refers to **Galatians 1 (KJV):8** But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

He continues, “For to you it was proclaimed by the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, that His “gospel shall be preached unto all nations, and then shall the end come.” (Matthew 24:14)”

He refers to **Matthew 24 (KJV):14** And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

He continues, “To you it has moreover been proclaimed by the writings of the prophets and of the apostles, that the promises were given to Abraham and to his seed, which is Christ, (Galatians 3:16) when God said unto him: “In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed.””

He refers to **Genesis 12 (KJV):1** Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

And to **Galatians 3 (KJV):16** Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Augustine continues, “Having then such promises, if an angel from heaven were to say to thee, “Let go the Christianity of the whole earth, and cling to the faction of Donatus, the episcopal succession of which is set forth in a letter of their bishop in your town,” he ought to be accursed in your estimation; because he would be endeavouring to cut you off from the whole Church, and thrust you into a small party, and make you forfeit your interest in the promises of God.”

In his time, Augustine considered the Catholic Church to be “the Christianity of the whole earth”.

He continues in paragraph 2, as he says, “For if the lineal succession of bishops is to be taken into account, with how much more certainty and benefit to the Church do we reckon back till we reach Peter himself, to whom, as bearing in a figure the whole Church, the Lord said: “Upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!” (Matthew 16:18)”

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):18** And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Augustine does not explain what he means by saying, “...Peter himself, to whom, as bearing in a figure the whole Church...”. This statement does give Peter an inordinate amount of authority which the Scripture does not support, as Augustine will himself explain shortly.

He continues, “The successor of Peter was Linus, and his successors in unbroken continuity were these:—Clement, Anacletus, Evaristus, Alexander, Sixtus, Telesphorus, Iginus, Anicetus, Pius, Soter, Eleutherius, Victor, Zephyrinus, Calixtus, Urbanus, Pontianus, Antherus, Fabianus, Cornelius, Lucius, Stephanus, Xystus, Dionysius, Felix, Eutychianus, Gaius, Marcellinus, Marcellus, Eusebius, Miltiades, Sylvester, Marcus, Julius, Liberius, Damasus, and Siricius, whose successor is the present Bishop Anastasius. In this order of succession no Donatist bishop is found. But, reversing the natural course of things, the Donatists sent to Rome from Africa an ordained bishop, who, putting himself at the head of a few Africans in the great metropolis, gave some notoriety to the name of “mountain men,” or Cutzupits, by which they were known.”

Augustine continues in paragraph 3, as he then says, “Now, even although some traditor had in the course of these centuries, through inadvertence, obtained a place in that order of bishops, reaching from Peter himself to Anastasius, who now occupies that See,—this fact would do no harm to the Church and to Christians having no share in the guilt of another; for the Lord, providing against such a case, says, concerning officers in the Church who are wicked: “All whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.” (Matthew 23:3)”

He refers to **Matthew 23 (KJV):3** All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

He continues, “Thus the stability of the hope of the faithful is secured, inasmuch as being fixed, not in man, but in the Lord, it never can be swept away by the raging of impious schism; whereas they themselves are swept away who read in the Holy Scriptures the names of churches to which the apostles wrote, and in which they have no bishop. For what could more clearly prove their perversity and their folly, than their saying to their clergy, when they read these letters, “Peace be with thee,” at the very time that they are themselves disjoined from the peace of those churches to which the letters were originally written?”

A church is not valid just because it was started by an apostle, though apostolic ministry is to plant churches, as Paul taught in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):5** Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

A church is valid where two or three come together as Jesus taught in **Matthew 18 (KJV):20** For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

We must proceed to the next section to see Augustine’s explanation.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

### **Sermons on New-Testament Lessons, Sermon XXVI, paragraphs 1-9, page 340-342**

Sermon XXVI. [LXXVI. Ben.] Again on Matt. xiv. 25: Of the Lord walking on the waves of

the sea, and of Peter tottering.

1. The Gospel which has just been read touching the Lord Christ, who walked on the waters of the sea; (Matthew 14:25) and the Apostle Peter, who as he was walking, tottered through fear, and sinking in distrust, rose again by confession, gives us to understand that the sea is the present world, and the Apostle Peter the type of the One Church. For Peter in the order of Apostles first, and in the love of Christ most forward, answers oftentimes alone for all the rest. Again, when the Lord Jesus Christ asked, whom men said that He was, and when the disciples gave the various opinions of men, and the Lord asked again and said, "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." One for many gave the answer, Unity in many. Then said the Lord to Him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjonas: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 16:17) Then He added, "and I say unto thee." As if He had said, "Because thou hast said unto Me, 'Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God;' I also say unto thee, 'Thou art Peter.'" For before he was called Simon. Now this name of Peter was given him by the Lord, and that in a figure, that he should signify the Church. For seeing that Christ is the rock (Petra), Peter is the Christian people. For the rock (Petra) is the original name. Therefore Peter is so called from the rock; not the rock from Peter; as Christ is not called Christ from the Christian, but the Christian from Christ. "Therefore," he saith, "Thou art Peter; and upon this Rock" which thou hast confessed, upon this Rock which thou hast acknowledged, saying, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, will I build My Church;" that is upon Myself, the Son of the living God, "will I build My Church." I will build thee upon Myself, not Myself upon thee.

2. For men who wished to be built upon men, said, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas," (1 Corinthians 1:12) who is Peter. But others who did not wish to be built upon Peter, but upon the Rock, said, "But I am of Christ." And when the Apostle Paul ascertained that he was chosen, and Christ despised, he said, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:13) And, as not in the name of Paul, so neither in the name of Peter; but in the name of Christ: that Peter might be built upon the Rock, not the Rock upon Peter.

3. This same Peter therefore who had been by the Rock pronounced "blessed," bearing the figure of the Church, holding the chief place in the Apostleship, a very little while after that he had heard that he was "blessed," a very little while after that he had heard that he was "Peter," a very little while after that he had heard that he was to be "built upon the Rock," displeased the Lord when He had heard of His future Passion, for He had foretold His disciples that it was soon to be. He feared lest he should by death, lose Him whom he had confessed as the fountain of life. He was troubled, and said, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be to Thee." (Matthew 16:22) Spare Thyself, O God, I am not willing that Thou shouldest die. Peter said to Christ, I am not willing that Thou shouldest die; but Christ far better said, I am willing to die for thee. And then He forthwith rebuked him, whom He had a little before commended; and calleth him Satan, whom he had pronounced "blessed." "Get thee behind Me, Satan," he saith, "thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (Matthew 16:23) What would He have us do in our present state, who thus findeth fault because we are men? Would you know what He would have us do? Give ear to the Psalm; "I have said, Ye are gods, and ye are all the children of the Most High." But by savouring the

things of men; “ye shall die like men.” (Psalm 82:6-7) The very same Peter a little while before blessed, afterwards Satan, in one moment, within a few words! Thou wonderest at the difference of the names, mark the difference of the reasons of them. Why wonderest thou that he who was a little before blessed, is afterwards Satan? Mark the reason wherefore he is blessed. “Because flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 16:17) Therefore blessed, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee. For if flesh and blood revealed this to thee, it were of thine own; but because flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven, it is of Mine, not of thine own. Why of Mine? “Because all things that the Father hath are Mine.” (John 16:15) So then thou hast heard the cause, why he is “blessed,” and why he is “Peter.” But why was he that which we shudder at, and are loth to repeat, why, but because it was of thine own? “For thou savourest not the things which be of God, but those that be of men.”

4. Let us, looking at ourselves in this member of the Church, distinguish what is of God, and what of ourselves. For then we shall not totter, then shall we be founded on the Rock, shall be fixed and firm against the winds, and storms, and streams, the temptations, I mean, of this present world. Yet see this Peter, who was then our figure; now he trusts, and now he totters; now he confesses the Undying, and now he fears lest He should die. Wherefore? because the Church of Christ hath both strong and weak ones; and cannot be without either strong or weak; whence the Apostle Paul says, “Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.” (Romans 15:1) In that Peter said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” he represents the strong: but in that he totters, and would not that Christ should suffer, in fearing death for Him, and not acknowledging the Life, he represents the weak ones of the Church. In that one Apostle then, that is, Peter, in the order of Apostles first and chiefest, in whom the Church was figured, both sorts were to be represented, that is, both the strong and weak; because the Church doth not exist without them both.

5. And hence also is that which was just now read, “Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.” (Matthew 14:28) For I cannot do this in myself, but in Thee. He acknowledged what he had of himself, and what of Him, by whose will he believed that he could do that, which no human weakness could do. Therefore, “if it be Thou, bid me;” because when thou biddest, it will be done. What I cannot do by taking it upon myself, Thou canst do by bidding me. And the Lord said “Come.” (Matthew 14:29) And without any doubting, at the word of Him who bade him, at the presence of Him who sustained, at the presence of Him who guided him, without any delay, Peter leaped down into the water, and began to walk. He was able to do what the Lord was doing, not in himself, but in the Lord. “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:8) What no one can do in Paul, no one in Peter, no one in any other of the Apostles, this can he do in the Lord. Therefore well said Paul by a wholesome despising of himself, and commending of Him; “Was Paul crucified for you, or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Corinthians 1:13) So then, ye are not in me, but together with me; not under me, but under Him.

6. Therefore Peter walked on the water by the bidding of the Lord, knowing that he could not have this power of himself. By faith he had strength to do what human weakness could not do. These are the strong ones of the Church. Mark this, hear, understand, and act accordingly. For we must not deal with the strong on any other principle than this, that so they should become weak; but thus we must deal with the weak, that they may become strong. But the

presuming on their own strength keeps many back from strength. No one will have strength from God, but he who feels himself weak of himself. "God setteth apart a spontaneous rain for His inheritance." (Ps. lxxvii. 10, Sept. (lxxviii. 9, English version)) Why do you, who know what I was about to say, anticipate me? Let your quickness be moderated, that the slowness of the rest may follow. This I said, and I say it again; hear it, receive it, and act on this principle. No one is made strong by God, but he who feels himself weak of his own self. And therefore a "spontaneous rain," as the Psalm says, "spontaneous," not of our deserts, but "spontaneous." "A spontaneous rain" therefore "God setteth apart for his inheritance;" for "it was weak; but Thou hast perfected it." Because Thou "hast set apart for it a spontaneous rain," not looking to men's deserts, but to Thine own grace and mercy. This inheritance then was weakened, and acknowledged its own weakness in itself, that it might be strong in Thee. It would not be strengthened, if it were not weak, that by Thee it might be "perfected" in Thee.

7. See Paul a small portion of this inheritance, see him in weakness, who said, "I am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God." Why then art thou an Apostle? "By the grace of God I am what I am. I am not meet, but by the grace of God I am what I am." Paul was "weak," but Thou hast "perfected" him. But now because by "the grace of God he is what he is," look what follows; "And His grace in me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all." (1 Corinthians 15:9) Take heed lest thou lose by presumption what thou hast attained through weakness. This is well, very well; that "I am not meet to be called an Apostle. By His grace I am what I am, and His grace in me was not in vain:" all most excellent. But, "I laboured more abundantly than they all;" thou hast begun, it would seem, to ascribe to thyself what a little before thou hadst given to God. Attend and follow on; "Yet not I, but the grace of God with me." Well! thou weak one; thou shalt be exalted in exceeding strength, seeing thou art not unthankful. Thou art the very same Paul, little in thyself; and great in the Lord. Thou art he who didst thrice beseech the Lord, that "the thorn of the flesh, the messenger of Satan, by whom thou wast buffeted, might be taken away from thee." (2 Corinthians 12:7-8) And what was said to thee? What didst thou hear when thou madest this petition? "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9) For he was "weak," but Thou didst "perfect" him.

8. So Peter also said, "Bid me come unto Thee on the water." I who dare this am but a man, but it is no man whom I beseech. Let the God-man bid, that man may be able to do what man cannot do. "Come," said He. And He went down, and began to walk on the water; and Peter was able, because the Rock had bidden him. Lo, what Peter was in the Lord; what was he in himself? "When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, Lord, I perish, save me." When he looked for strength from the Lord, he had strength from the Lord; as a man he tottered, but he returned to the Lord. "If I said, my foot hath slipped" (Psalm 94:18) (they are the words of a Psalm, the notes of a holy song; and if we acknowledge them they are our words too; yea, if we will, they are ours also). "If I said my foot hath slipped." How slipped, except because it was mine own. And what follows? "Thy mercy, Lord, helped me." Not mine own strength, but Thy mercy. For will God forsake him as he totters, whom He heard when calling upon Him? Where then is that, "Who hath called upon God, and hath been forsaken by Him?" (Ecclus. ii. 10, Sept.) where again is that, "Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord, shall be delivered." (Joel 2:32) Immediately reaching forth the help of His right hand, He lifted him up as he was sinking, and rebuked his distrust; "O thou of little



faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Once thou didst trust in Me, hast thou now doubted of Me?

9. Well, brethren, my sermon must be ended. Consider the world to be the sea; the wind is boisterous, and there is a mighty tempest. Each man's peculiar lust is his tempest. Thou dost love God; thou walkest upon the sea, and under thy feet is the swelling of the world. Thou dost love the world, it will swallow thee up. It skilleth only how to devour its lovers, not to carry them. But when thy heart is tossed about by lust, in order that thou mayest get the better of thy lust, call upon the Divinity of Christ. Think ye that the wind is then contrary, when there is this life's adversity? For so when there are wars, when there is tumult, when there is famine, when there is pestilence, when even to every individual man his private calamity arriveth, then the wind is thought to be contrary, then it is thought that God must be called upon. But when the world wears her smile of temporal happiness, it is as if there were no contrary wind. But do not ask upon this matter the tranquil state of the times: ask only your own lust. See if there be tranquility within thee: see if there be no inner wind which overturns thee; see to this. There needs great virtue to struggle with happiness, lest this very happiness allure, corrupt, and overthrow thee. There needs, I say, great virtue to struggle with happiness, and great happiness not to be overcome by happiness. Learn then to tread upon the world; remember to trust in Christ. And "if thy foot have slipped;" if thou totter, if some things there are which thou canst not overcome, if thou begin to sink, say, "Lord, I perish, save me." Say, "I perish," that thou perish not. For He only can deliver thee from the death of the body, who died in the body for thee. Let us turn to the Lord, etc.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says in paragraph 1, "The Gospel which has just been read touching the Lord Christ, who walked on the waters of the sea; (Matthew 14:25) and the Apostle Peter, who as he was walking, tottered through fear, and sinking in distrust, rose again by confession, gives us to understand that the sea is the present world, and the Apostle Peter the type of the One Church."

He refers in context to **Matthew 14 (KJV):25** And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. 27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. 28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. 31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? 32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

Augustine then explains his allegory of "the Apostle Peter the type of the One Church", as he says, "For Peter in the order of Apostles first, and in the love of Christ most forward, answers oftentimes alone for all the rest."

Though Peter is in many dialogs in the Gospels, we read of who is the chief apostle in **Hebrews 3 (KJV):1** Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

Christ Jesus is the first Apostle and High Priest of our profession. Paul never mentions Peter as the first apostle in **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):5** For I suppose I was not a whit behind the

very chiefest apostles.

Or again in **2 Corinthians 12 (KJV):11** I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.

Augustine continues, “Again, when the Lord Jesus Christ asked, whom men said that He was, and when the disciples gave the various opinions of men, and the Lord asked again and said, “But whom say ye that I am?” Peter answered, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” One for many gave the answer, Unity in many. Then said the Lord to Him, “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjonas: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 16:17)”

He refers in context to **Mathew 16 (KJV):13** When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? 14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

Augustine then explains, “Then He added, “and I say unto thee.” As if He had said, “Because thou hast said unto Me, ‘Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God;’ I also say unto thee, ‘Thou art Peter.’” For before he was called Simon. Now this name of Peter was given him by the Lord, and that in a figure, that he should signify the Church. For seeing that Christ is the rock (Petra), Peter is the Christian people. For the rock (Petra) is the original name.”

The word for Peter in the Greek is Πέτρος (pronounced pe'-tros), “apparently a primary word; a (piece of) rock (larger than G3037); as a name, Petrus, an apostle:—Peter, rock. Compare G2786” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4074.**

G3037 refers to λίθος (pronounced lē'-thos), “apparently a primary word; a stone (literally or figuratively):—(mill-, stumbling-) stone.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3037.**

This Greek word λίθος (pronounced lē'-thos), is translated “stone” in **Matthew 4 (KJV):3** And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

And in **Matthew 21 (KJV):42** Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

And in **Matthew 28 (KJV):1** In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. 2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

Concerning this Greek word λίθος (pronounced lē'-thos), The **KJV** translates **Strong's G3037** in the following manner: stone (49x), one stone (4x), another (4x), stumbling

stone (with G4348) (2x), mill stone (with G3457) (1x).

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G3037>

But the word “rock” in Matthew 16:18 above in the Greek is **πέτρα** (pronounced pe'-trā), “feminine of the same as G4074; a (mass of) rock (literally or figuratively):—rock.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4073.**

This Greek word **πέτρα** (pronounced pe'-trā) is also translated “rock” in **Matthew 7 (KJV):24** Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And in **Luke 6 (KJV):48** He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

Concerning this Greek word **πέτρα** (pronounced pe'-trā), The **KJV** translates **Strong’s G4073** in the following manner: rock (16x).

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G4073&t=KJV>

The Greek word *petra* is feminine in case, whereas *petros* is masculine in case. Therefore when Jesus used the word rock, he was referring not to Peter, but to Peter’s testimony that He was the Christ, as Augustine then explains, “Therefore Peter is so called from the rock; not the rock from Peter; as Christ is not called Christ from the Christian, but the Christian from Christ. “Therefore,” he saith, “Thou art Peter; and upon this Rock” which thou hast confessed, upon this Rock which thou hast acknowledged, saying, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, will I build My Church,” that is upon Myself, the Son of the living God, “will I build My Church.” I will build thee upon Myself, not Myself upon thee.”

And there is another Greek word for Peter that is used in **John 1 (KJV):42** And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

And in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):12** Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

And in **Galatians 2 (KJV):9** And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

This Greek word is **Κηφᾱς** (pronounced kā-fā's), “kay-fas’; of Chaldee origin (compare H3710); the Rock; Cephas (i.e. Kepha), a surname of Peter:—Cephas.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2786.** H3710 in **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H3710**, is **רָק** (pronounced kāf), “from H3721; a hollow rock:—rock.”

But Augustine is clear that Christ is the rock upon which the Church is built, and not Peter. But he still holds “Peter in the order of Apostles first”, and that “this name of Peter was given him by the Lord, and that in a figure, that he should signify the Church. For seeing that Christ is the rock (Petra), Peter is the Christian people. For the rock (Petra) is the original name.”

Peter is only a member of the Church, and so he does not “signify the Church”, any more than any other member signifies the Church. Peter says as much in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):4** To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Peter points to Christ as the “living stone” we come to. And he refers to the members of the Church “as lively stones” who “are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ”. And Peter refers to Christ as the “chief corner stone, elect, precious” that we should believe “on him” who is “the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner”, and “a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence”.

The Greek word for “stone” in verse 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 is lithos, and for “rock” in verse 8 is petra.

Augustine continues in paragraph 2, and says, “For men who wished to be built upon men, said, “I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas,” (1 Corinthians 1:12) who is Peter. But others who did not wish to be built upon Peter, but upon the Rock, said, “But I am of Christ.” And when the Apostle Paul ascertained that he was chosen, and Christ despised, he said, “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Corinthians 1:13) And, as not in the name of Paul, so neither in the name of Peter; but in the name of Christ: that Peter might be built upon the Rock, not the Rock upon Peter.”

We can agree with Augustine here, that Peter is “built upon the Rock, not the Rock upon Peter.”

Christ is the foundation of the building as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):9** For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

And Augustine continues in paragraph 3, and says, “This same Peter therefore who had been by the Rock pronounced “blessed,” bearing the figure of the Church, holding the chief place in the Apostleship, a very little while after that he had heard that he was “blessed,” a very little while after that he had heard that he was “Peter,” a very little while after that he had heard that he was to be “built upon the Rock,” displeased the Lord when He had heard of His future Passion, for He had foretold His disciples that it was soon to be.”

Augustine does not refer to any Scripture to support his assertion that Peter is “bearing the figure of the Church, holding the chief place in the Apostleship”.

Peter never assumed any first place in apostleship, and when addressing the elders, he points them to Christ as the chief shepherd as we read in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):1** The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Augustine then continues, “He feared lest he should by death, lose Him whom he had confessed as the fountain of life. He was troubled, and said, “Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be to Thee.” (Matthew 16:22)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 16 (KJV):21** From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. 22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

Augustine continues, “Spare Thyself, O God, I am not willing that Thou shouldest die. Peter said to Christ, I am not willing that Thou shouldest die; but Christ far better said, I am willing to die for thee. And then He forthwith rebuked him, whom He had a little before commended; and calleth him Satan, whom he had pronounced “blessed.” “Get thee behind Me, Satan,” he saith, “thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” (Matthew 16:23)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 16 (KJV):23** But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. 24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

He continues, “What would He have us do in our present state, who thus findeth fault because we are men? Would you know what He would have us do? Give ear to the Psalm; “I have said, Ye are gods, and ye are all the children of the Most High.” But by savouring the things of men; “ye shall die like men.” (Psalm 82:6-7)”

He refers to **Psalms 82 (KJV):6** I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High. 7 But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

Augustine continues, “The very same Peter a little while before blessed, afterwards Satan, in one moment, within a few words! Thou wonderest at the difference of the names, mark the difference of the reasons of them. Why wonderest thou that he who was a little before blessed, is afterwards Satan? Mark the reason wherefore he is blessed. “Because flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 16:17) Therefore blessed, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee. For if flesh and blood revealed this to thee, it were of thine own; but because flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven, it is of Mine, not of thine own. Why of Mine? “Because all things that the Father hath are Mine.” (John 16:15)”

He refers to **John 16 (KJV):15** All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

He continues, “So then thou hast heard the cause, why he is “blessed,” and why he is “Peter.” But why was he that which we shudder at, and are loth to repeat, why, but because it was of thine own? “For thou savourest not the things which be of God, but those that be of men.””

Peter was just a man, like us.

Augustine then continues in paragraph 4, as he says, “Let us, looking at ourselves in this member of the Church, distinguish what is of God, and what of ourselves. For then we shall not totter, then shall we be founded on the Rock, shall be fixed and firm against the winds, and storms, and streams, the temptations, I mean, of this present world. Yet see this Peter, who was then our figure; now he trusts, and now he totters; now he confesses the Undying, and now he



fears lest He should die. Wherefore? because the Church of Christ hath both strong and weak ones; and cannot be without either strong or weak; whence the Apostle Paul says, “Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.” (Romans 15:1)”

He refers to **Romans 15 (KJV):1** We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

He continues, “In that Peter said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” he represents the strong: but in that he totters, and would not that Christ should suffer, in fearing death for Him, and not acknowledging the Life, he represents the weak ones of the Church. In that one Apostle then, that is, Peter, in the order of Apostles first and chiefest, in whom the Church was figured, both sorts were to be represented, that is, both the strong and weak; because the Church doth not exist without them both.”

We can agree with his analogy of Peter as representing the strong and weak ones in the Church, but the Scripture does not support his assertion that “Peter, in the order of Apostles first and chiefest, in whom the Church was figured”.

Augustine continues in paragraph 5, as he says, “And hence also is that which was just now read, “Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.” (Matthew 14:28) For I cannot do this in myself, but in Thee. He acknowledged what he had of himself, and what of Him, by whose will he believed that he could do that, which no human weakness could do. Therefore, “if it be Thou, bid me;” because when thou biddest, it will be done. What I cannot do by taking it upon myself, Thou canst do by bidding me. And the Lord said “Come.” (Matthew 14:29)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 14 (KJV):25** And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. 27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. 28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

He continues, “And without any doubting, at the word of Him who bade him, at the presence of Him who sustained, at the presence of Him who guided him, without any delay, Peter leaped down into the water, and began to walk. He was able to do what the Lord was doing, not in himself, but in the Lord. “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:8) What no one can do in Paul, no one in Peter, no one in any other of the Apostles, this can he do in the Lord. Therefore well said Paul by a wholesome despising of himself, and commending of Him; “Was Paul crucified for you, or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (1 Corinthians 1:13) So then, ye are not in me, but together with me; not under me, but under Him.”

He refers to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):8** For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

And to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):13** Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

And we can agree with Augustine as he has concluded, “So then, ye are not in me, but together with me; not under me, but under Him.”

He continues in paragraph 6, as he says, “Therefore Peter walked on the water by the bidding of the Lord, knowing that he could not have this power of himself. By faith he had

strength to do what human weakness could not do. These are the strong ones of the Church. Mark this, hear, understand, and act accordingly. For we must not deal with the strong on any other principle than this, that so they should become weak; but thus we must deal with the weak, that they may become strong. But the presuming on their own strength keeps many back from strength. No one will have strength from God, but he who feels himself weak of himself. “God setteth apart a spontaneous rain for His inheritance.” (Ps. lxxvii. 10, Sept. (lxxviii. 9, English version))”

He refers to **Psalm 67 (Douay Rheims)**: 10 Thou shalt set aside for thy inheritance a free rain, O God: and it was weakened, but thou hast made it perfect.

And to **Psalm 68 (KJV)**: 9 Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.

And to **Psalm 68 (Septuagint)**: 9 O God, thou wilt grant to thine inheritance a gracious rain; for it was weary, but thou didst refresh it. 10 Thy creatures dwell in it: thou hast in thy goodness prepared for the poor.

He continues, “Why do you, who know what I was about to say, anticipate me? Let your quickness be moderated, that the slowness of the rest may follow. This I said, and I say it again; hear it, receive it, and act on this principle. No one is made strong by God, but he who feels himself weak of his own self. And therefore a “spontaneous rain,” as the Psalm says, “spontaneous;” not of our deserts, but “spontaneous.””

Or “free” in the **Douay Rheims**, or “plentiful” in the **King James Version** or “gracious” in the **Septuagint** as we read above. He continues, ““A spontaneous rain” therefore “God setteth apart for his inheritance;” for “it was weak; but Thou hast perfected it.” Because Thou “hast set apart for it a spontaneous rain,” not looking to men’s deserts, but to Thine own grace and mercy. This inheritance then was weakened, and acknowledged its own weakness in itself, that it might be strong in Thee. It would not be strengthened, if it were not weak, that by Thee it might be “perfected” in Thee.”

And now the saints say as in **Philippians 4 (KJV)**: 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

He continues in paragraph 7, as he says, “See Paul a small portion of this inheritance, see him in weakness, who said, “I am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.” Why then art thou an Apostle? “By the grace of God I am what I am. I am not meet, but by the grace of God I am what I am.” Paul was “weak,” but Thou hast “perfected” him. But now because by “the grace of God he is what he is,” look what follows; “And His grace in me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all.” (1 Corinthians 15:9)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV)**: 9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

He continues, “Take heed lest thou lose by presumption what thou hast attained through weakness. This is well, very well; that “I am not meet to be called an Apostle. By His grace I am what I am, and His grace in me was not in vain:” all most excellent. But, “I laboured more abundantly than they all;” thou hast begun, it would seem, to ascribe to thyself what a little before thou hadst given to God. Attend and follow on; “Yet not I, but the grace of God with

me.” Well! thou weak one; thou shalt be exalted in exceeding strength, seeing thou art not unthankful. Thou art the very same Paul, little in thyself; and great in the Lord. Thou art he who didst thrice beseech the Lord, that “the thorn of the flesh, the messenger of Satan, by whom thou wast buffeted, might be taken away from thee.” (2 Corinthians 12:7-8) And what was said to thee? What didst thou hear when thou madest this petition? “My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Corinthians 12:9) For he was “weak,” but Thou didst “perfect” him.”

He refers in context to **2 Corinthians 12 (KJV):7** And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Augustine continues in paragraph 8, as he says, “So Peter also said, “Bid me come unto Thee on the water.” I who dare this am but a man, but it is no man whom I beseech. Let the God-man bid, that man may be able to do what man cannot do. “Come,” said He. And He went down, and began to walk on the water; and Peter was able, because the Rock had bidden him. Lo, what Peter was in the Lord; what was he in himself? “When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, Lord, I perish, save me.” When he looked for strength from the Lord, he had strength from the Lord; as a man he tottered, but he returned to the Lord. “If I said, my foot hath slipped” (Psalm 94:18) (they are the words of a Psalm, the notes of a holy song; and if we acknowledge them they are our words too; yea, if we will, they are ours also). “If I said my foot hath slipped.” How slipped, except because it was mine own. And what follows? “Thy mercy, Lord, helped me.” Not mine own strength, but Thy mercy. For will God forsake him as he totters, whom He heard when calling upon Him?”

He refers to **Psalms 94 (KJV):18** When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.

He continues, “Where then is that, “Who hath called upon God, and hath been forsaken by Him?” (Ecclus. ii. 10, Sept.) where again is that, “Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord, shall be delivered.” (Joel 2:32)”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 2 (KJV):10** Look at the generations of old, and see; did ever any trust in the Lord, and was confounded? Or did any abide in his fear, and was forsaken? Or whom did he ever despise, that called upon him?

And to **Joel 2 (KJV):32** And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

Augustine then continues, “Immediately reaching forth the help of His right hand, He lifted him up as he was sinking, and rebuked his distrust; “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” Once thou didst trust in Me, hast thou now doubted of Me?”

He refers again to **Matthew 14 (KJV):31** And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Augustine concludes in paragraph 9, as he says, “Well, brethren, my sermon must be

ended. Consider the world to be the sea; the wind is boisterous, and there is a mighty tempest. Each man's peculiar lust is his tempest. Thou dost love God; thou walkest upon the sea, and under thy feet is the swelling of the world. Thou dost love the world, it will swallow thee up. It skilleth only how to devour its lovers, not to carry them. But when thy heart is tossed about by lust, in order that thou mayest get the better of thy lust, call upon the Divinity of Christ."

And this is according to the Scripture as we read again in **Philippians 4 (KJV):13** I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Augustine continues, "Think ye that the wind is then contrary, when there is this life's adversity? For so when there are wars, when there is tumult, when there is famine, when there is pestilence, when even to every individual man his private calamity arriveth, then the wind is thought to be contrary, then it is thought that God must be called upon. But when the world wears her smile of temporal happiness, it is as if there were no contrary wind. But do not ask upon this matter the tranquil state of the times: ask only your own lust. See if there be tranquility within thee: see if there be no inner wind which overturns thee; see to this. There needs great virtue to struggle with happiness, lest this very happiness allure, corrupt, and overthrow thee. There needs, I say, great virtue to struggle with happiness, and great happiness not to be overcome by happiness. Learn then to tread upon the world; remember to trust in Christ. And "if thy foot have slipped;" if thou totter, if some things there are which thou canst not overcome, if thou begin to sink, say, "Lord, I perish, save me." Say, "I perish," that thou perish not. For He only can deliver thee from the death of the body, who died in the body for thee. Let us turn to the Lord, etc."

And we can say "Amen!" to this sermon of Augustine.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Book II, Chapter XXV, Paragraph 87, page 63**

On the latter part of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, contained in the sixth and seventh chapters of Matthew.

87. Hence we must take special notice how terribly the conclusion of the whole sermon is introduced: "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, is like unto a wise man, which built his house upon the rock." (Matthew 7:24) For no one confirms what he hears or understands, unless by doing. **And if Christ is the rock, as many Scripture testimonies proclaim (1 Corinthians 10:4) that man builds in Christ who does what he hears from Him.**

"The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock." (Matthew 7:25) Such an one, therefore, is not afraid of any gloomy superstitions (for what else is understood by rain, when it is put in the sense of anything bad?), or of turnouts of men, which I think are compared to winds; or of the river of this life, as it were flowing over the earth in carnal lusts. For it is the man who is seduced by the prosperity that is broken down by the adversities arising from these three things; none of which is feared by him who has his house founded upon a rock, i.e. who not only hears, but also does, the Lord's commands. And the man who hears and does them not is in dangerous proximity to all these, for he has no stable foundation; but by hearing and not doing, he builds a ruin. For He goes on to say: "And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be

like unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.” (Matthew 7:26-29) This is what I said before was meant by the prophet in the Psalms, when he says: “I will act confidently in regard of him. The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried and proved in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” (Psalm 12:5-6) And from this number, I am admonished to trace back those precepts also to the seven sentences which He has placed in the beginning of this sermon, when He was speaking of those who are blessed; and to those seven operations of the Holy Spirit, which the prophet Isaiah mentions; (Isaiah 11:2-3) but whether the order before us, or some other, is to be considered in these, the things we have heard from the Lord are to be done, if we wish to build upon a rock.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Hence we must take special notice how terribly the conclusion of the whole sermon is introduced: “Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, is like unto a wise man, which built his house upon the rock. (Matthew 7:24)”

He refers to **Matthew 7 (KJV):24** Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

He continues, “For no one confirms what he hears or understands, unless by doing. **And if Christ is the rock, as many Scripture testimonies proclaim (1 Corinthians 10:4) that man builds in Christ who does what he hears from Him.**”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):4** And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

Augustine is clear here, who the rock is, as he says, “Christ is the rock, as many Scripture testimonies proclaim”. And the Greek word for rock in 1 Corinthians 10:4 is **πέτρα** (pronounced pe'-trā).

He continues, ““The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.” (Matthew 7:25)”

He refers to **Matthew 7 (KJV):25** And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

He continues, “Such an one, therefore, is not afraid of any gloomy superstitions (for what else is understood by rain, when it is put in the sense of anything bad?), or of turnouts of men, which I think are compared to winds; or of the river of this life, as it were flowing over the earth in carnal lusts. For it is the man who is seduced by the prosperity that is broken down by the adversities arising from these three things; none of which is feared by him who has his house founded upon a rock, i.e. who not only hears, but also does, the Lord’s commands. And the man who hears and does them not is in dangerous proximity to all these, for he has no stable foundation; but by hearing and not doing, he builds a ruin. For He goes on to say: “And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be like unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.” (Matthew 7:26-29)”



He refers to **Matthew 7 (KJV):**26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. 28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: 29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

He continues, “This is what I said before was meant by the prophet in the Psalms, when he says: “I will act confidently in regard of him. The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried and proved in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” (Psalm 12:5-6)”

He refers to **Psalms 12 (Septuagint):**5 Because of the misery of the poor, and because of the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord, I will set them in safety; I will speak to them thereof openly. 6 The oracles of the Lord are pure oracles; as silver tried in the fire, proved in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

And to **Psalms 12 (KJV):**5 For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him. 6 The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

Augustine continues, “And from this number, I am admonished to trace back those precepts also to the seven sentences which He has placed in the beginning of this sermon, when He was speaking of those who are blessed; and to those seven operations of the Holy Spirit, which the prophet Isaiah mentions; (Isaiah 11:2-3) but whether the order before us, or some other, is to be considered in these, the things we have heard from the Lord are to be done, if we wish to build upon a rock.”

Those “who are blessed” are those in **Matthew 5 (KJV):**1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

He then refers “those seven operations of the Holy Spirit” which, in context, are referred to in **Isaiah 11 (KJV):**1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: 2 And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; 3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: 4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he

shall smite the earth: with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. 5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

So the “seven operations of the Holy Spirit” he mentions could be wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, fear of the Lord, and quick understanding.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

#### **The Harmony of the Gospels, Book IV, Chapter 10, Paragraph 20, page 235**

20. Finally, He here commits His sheep to the care of Peter, who loves Him, and thrice confesses that love, and then He states that He wills this very John so to tarry until He comes. (John 21:23) In which utterance, again, He seems to me to have conveyed in a profound and mystical way the fact that this evangelical stewardship of John's, in which he is borne aloft into the most liquid light of the Word, where it is possible to behold the equality and unchangeableness of the Trinity, and in which, above all, we see at what a distance from all others in respect of essential character that humanity stands by whose assumption it occurred that the Word was made flesh, cannot be clearly discerned and recognized until the Lord Himself comes. Consequently, it will tarry thus until He comes. At present it will tarry in the faith of believers, but hereafter it will be possible to contemplate it face to face, (1 Corinthians 13:12) when He, our Life, shall appear, and when we shall appear with Him in glory. (Colossians 3:4) But if any one supposes that with man, living, as he still does, in this mortal life, it may be possible for a person to dispel and clear off every obscurity induced by corporeal and carnal fancies, and to attain to the serenest light of changeless truth, and to cleave constantly and unswervingly to that with a mind thoroughly estranged from the course of this present life, that man understands neither what he asks, nor who he is that put such a supposition. Let such an individual rather accept the authority, at once lofty and free from all deceitfulness, which tells us that, as long as we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord, and that we walk by faith and not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:6-7) And thus, with all perseverance keeping and guarding his faith and hope and charity, let him look forward to the sight which is promised, in accordance with that earnest which we have received of the Holy Ghost, who shall teach us all truth, (John 16:13) when God, who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, shall also quicken our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us. (Romans 8:10-11) But before this body, which is dead by reason of sin, is quickened, it is without doubt corruptible, and presseth down the soul. (Wisdom of Solomon 9:13) And if, in the body, man is ever helped to reach beyond the cloud with which the whole earth is covered, (Ecclesiasticus 24:3) —that is to say, beyond this carnal darkness with which the whole life of earth is covered,—it is simply as if he were touched with a rapid coruscation, only to sink swiftly into his natural infirmity, the desire surviving by which he may again be excited (to what is evil), and the purity being insufficient to establish him (in what is good). The more, however, any one can do this, the greater is he; while the less he can do so, the less is he. And if the mind of a man has as yet had no such experience—in which mind nevertheless Christ dwells by faith—he ought to strive earnestly to diminish the lusts of this world, and to make an end of them by the exercise of moral virtue, walking, as it were, in the company of these three evangelists with Christ the Mediator. And, with the joy of large hope, let him in faith hold Him who is alway the

Son of God, but who, for our sakes, became the Son of man, in order that His eternal power and Godhead might be united with our weakness and mortality, and, on the basis of what is ours, make a way for us in Himself and to Himself. That a man may be kept from sinning, he should be ruled by Christ the King. If he happens to sin, he may obtain remission from Christ, who is also priest. And thus, nurtured in the exercise of a good conversation and life, and borne out of the atmosphere of earth on the wings of a twofold love, as on a pair of strong pinions, so may he be enlightened by the same Christ, who is also the Word, the Word who was in the beginning, the Word who was with God, and the Word who was God; and although that will still be through a glass darkly, it will be a sublime kind of illumination far superior to every corporeal similitude. Wherefore, although it is the gifts of the active virtue that shine preeminent in the first three evangelists, while it is the gift of the contemplative virtue that discerns such subjects, nevertheless, this Gospel of John, in so far as it also is in part, will so tarry until that which is perfect comes. (1 Corinthians 13:9,10) And to one, indeed, is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:8) One man regardeth the day to the Lord; (Romans 14:6) another receives a clearer draught from the breast of the Lord; another is caught up even to the third heaven, and hears unspeakable words. (2 Corinthians 12:2-4) But all, as long as they are in the body, are absent from the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:6) And for all believers living in the good hope, whose names are written in the book of life, there is still in reserve that which is referred to in the words, “And I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.” (John 14:21) Nevertheless, the greater the advance which a man may make in the apprehension and knowledge of this theme during the time of this absence from the Lord, all the more carefully should he guard against those devilish vices, pride and envy. Let him remember that this very Gospel of John, which urges us so preeminently to the contemplation of truth, gives a no less remarkable prominence to the inculcation of the sweet grace of charity. Let him also consider that most true and wholesome precept which is couched in the words, “The greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all.” (Ecclesiasticus 3:18) For the evangelist who presents Christ to us in a far loftier strain of teaching than all the others, is also the one in whose narrative the Lord washes the disciples’ feet. (John 13:5)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “**Finally, He here commits His sheep to the care of Peter, who loves Him, and thrice confesses that love, and then He states that He wills this very John so to tarry until He comes. (John 21:23)**”

He refers in context to **John 21 (KJV):15** So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

The Lord did not commit His sheep to Peter, but to all who would be shepherds of the flock. The Lord asked Peter if he loved Him three times so that Peter would feel His forgiveness. Feeding the sheep is the responsibility of all who would be shepherds of the Lord’s

flock. The Lord is not creating a hierarchy of service here. That is the invention of man.

We continue to read in **John 21 (KJV):**18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. 19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. 20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? 22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. 23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?

Augustine continues, “In which utterance, again, He seems to me to have conveyed in a profound and mystical way the fact that this evangelical stewardship of John’s, in which he is borne aloft into the most liquid light of the Word, where it is possible to behold the equality and unchangeableness of the Trinity, and in which, above all, we see at what a distance from all others in respect of essential character that humanity stands by whose assumption it occurred that the Word was made flesh, cannot be clearly discerned and recognized until the Lord Himself comes. Consequently, it will tarry thus until He comes. At present it will tarry in the faith of believers, but hereafter it will be possible to contemplate it face to face, (1 Corinthians 13:12) when He, our Life, shall appear, and when we shall appear with Him in glory. (Colossians 3:4)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):**12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

And to **Colossians 3 (KJV):**4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Augustine continues, “But if any one supposes that with man, living, as he still does, in this mortal life, it may be possible for a person to dispel and clear off every obscurity induced by corporeal and carnal fancies, and to attain to the serenest light of changeless truth, and to cleave constantly and unswervingly to that with a mind thoroughly estranged from the course of this present life, that man understands neither what he asks, nor who he is that put such a supposition. Let such an individual rather accept the authority, at once lofty and free from all deceitfulness, which tells us that, as long as we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord, and that we walk by faith and not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:6-7)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):**6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

He continues, “And thus, with all perseverance keeping and guarding his faith and hope and charity, let him look forward to the sight which is promised, in accordance with that earnest which we have received of the Holy Ghost, who shall teach us all truth, (John 16:13) when God, who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead, shall also quicken our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us. (Romans 8:10-11)”

He refers to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):**13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with

that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

And to **John 16 (KJV):13** Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

And to **Romans 8 (KJV):10** And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Augustine continues, “But before this body, which is dead by reason of sin, is quickened, it is without doubt corruptible, and presseth down the soul. (Wisdom of Solomon 9:13)”

He refers to **Wisdom 9 (Septuagint):15** For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things.

Augustine continues, “And if, in the body, man is ever helped to reach beyond the cloud with which the whole earth is covered, (Ecclesiasticus 24:3) —that is to say, beyond this carnal darkness with which the whole life of earth is covered,—it is simply as if he were touched with a rapid coruscation, only to sink swiftly into his natural infirmity, the desire surviving by which he may again be excited (to what is evil), and the purity being insufficient to establish him (in what is good).”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 24 (KJV):3** I came out of the mouth of the most High, and covered the earth as a cloud.

The word “coruscation” means “: GLITTER, SPARKLE”. (Merriam Webster)

It is difficult to interpret verse 3 in Ecclesiasticus, which is another apocryphal book not included in the canon.

He continues, “The more, however, any one can do this, the greater is he; while the less he can do so, the less is he. And if the mind of a man has as yet had no such experience—in which mind nevertheless Christ dwells by faith—he ought to strive earnestly to diminish the lusts of this world, and to make an end of them by the exercise of moral virtue, walking, as it were, in the company of these three evangelists with Christ the Mediator. And, with the joy of large hope, let him in faith hold Him who is alway the Son of God, but who, for our sakes, became the Son of man, in order that His eternal power and Godhead might be united with our weakness and mortality, and, on the basis of what is ours, make a way for us in Himself and to Himself. That a man may be kept from sinning, he should be ruled by Christ the King. If he happens to sin, he may obtain remission from Christ, who is also priest.”

Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek as we read in **Hebrews 6 (KJV):17** Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

The veil represents heaven. Jesus has entered heaven for us as we read in **Hebrews 9**



**(KJV):24** For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: **25** Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; **26** For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. **27** And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: **28** So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Augustine continues, “And thus, nurtured in the exercise of a good conversation and life, and borne out of the atmosphere of earth on the wings of a twofold love, as on a pair of strong pinions, so may he be enlightened by the same Christ, who is also the Word, the Word who was in the beginning, the Word who was with God, and the Word who was God;”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** The same was in the beginning with God.

Augustine continues, “and although that will still be through a glass darkly, it will be a sublime kind of illumination far superior to every corporeal similitude.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):12** For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

He continues, “Wherefore, although it is the gifts of the active virtue that shine preeminent in the first three evangelists, while it is the gift of the contemplative virtue that discerns such subjects, nevertheless, this Gospel of John, in so far as it also is in part, will so tarry until that which is perfect comes. (1 Corinthians 13:9,10)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):9** For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. **10** But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

He continues, “And to one, indeed, is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:8)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):8** For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

He continues, “One man regardeth the day to the Lord; (Romans 14:6)”

He refers to **Romans 14 (KJV):6** He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

He continues, “another receives a clearer draught from the breast of the Lord; another is caught up even to the third heaven, and hears unspeakable words. (2 Corinthians 12:2-4)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 12 (KJV):2** I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. **3** And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) **4** How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

He continues, “But all, as long as they are in the body, are absent from the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:6)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):6** Therefore we are always confident, knowing that,

whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

He continues, “And for all believers living in the good hope, whose names are written in the book of life, there is still in reserve that which is referred to in the words, “And I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.” (John 14:21)”

He refers to **John 14 (KJV):21** He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

He continues, “Nevertheless, the greater the advance which a man may make in the apprehension and knowledge of this theme during the time of this absence from the Lord, all the more carefully should he guard against those devilish vices, pride and envy. Let him remember that this very Gospel of John, which urges us so preeminently to the contemplation of truth, gives a no less remarkable prominence to the inculcation of the sweet grace of charity. Let him also consider that most true and wholesome precept which is couched in the words, “The greater thou art, the more humble thyself in all.” (Ecclesiasticus 3:18)”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 3 (KJV):18** The greater thou art, the more humble thyself, and thou shalt find favour before the Lord.

He concludes, “For the evangelist who presents Christ to us in a far loftier strain of teaching than all the others, is also the one in whose narrative the Lord washes the disciples’ feet. (John 13:5)”

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):5** After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermon LXXXV. [CXXXV. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel, John ix. 4 and 31, “We must work the works of him that sent me,” etc. Against the Arians. And of that which the man who was born blind and received his sight said, “We know that God heareth not sinners.”, paragraph 3, page 518**

3. When our Lord then was speaking on this occasion, He said, that He is “the Shepherd,” He said also that He is “the Door.” You find them both in that place, both “I am the Door” and “I am the Shepherd.” (John 10:7, 11) In the Head He is the Door, the Shepherd in the Body. **For He saith to Peter, in whom singly He formeth the Church;** “Peter, lovest thou Me?” He answered, “Lord, I do love Thee.” “Feed My sheep.” And a third time, “Peter, lovest thou Me?” (John 21:15) “Peter was grieved because He asked him the third time;” as though He who saw the conscience of the denier, saw not the confessor’s faith. He had known him always, had known him even when Peter had not known himself. For he did not know himself at that time when he said, “I will be with Thee even unto death;” (Luke 22:33) and how infirm he was he knew not. Just as it constantly happens in fact to invalids, that the sick man knows not what is going on within him, but the physician knows; when yet the former is suffering from the very sickness, and the physician is not. The physician can better tell what is going on in another, than he who is sick what is going on in himself. Peter then was at that time the invalid, and the Lord the Physician. The former declared that he had strength, when he had not; but the Lord touching the pulse of his heart, declared that he should deny Him thrice. And so it came to pass, as the

Physician foretold, not as the sick presumed. Therefore, after His resurrection the Lord questioned him, not as being ignorant with what a heart he would confess the love of Christ, but that he might by a threefold confession of love, efface the threefold denial of fear.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “When our Lord then was speaking on this occasion, He said, that He is “the Shepherd,” He said also that He is “the Door.” You find them both in that place, both “I am the Door” and “I am the Shepherd.” (John 10:7, 11)”

He refers in context to **John 10 (KJV):7** Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. 10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

He continues, “In the Head He is the Door, the Shepherd in the Body. **For He saith to Peter, in whom singly He formeth the Church;** “Peter, lovest thou Me?” He answered, “Lord, I do love Thee.” “Feed My sheep.” And a third time, “Peter, lovest thou Me?” (John 21:15) “Peter was grieved because He asked him the third time;” as though He who saw the conscience of the denier, saw not the confessor’s faith.”

He refers in context to **John 21 (KJV):15** So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

He continues, “He had known him always, had known him even when Peter had not known himself. For he did not know himself at that time when he said, “I will be with Thee even unto death;” (Luke 22:33) and how infirm he was he knew not.”

He refers in context to **Luke 22 (KJV):31** And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. 33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. 34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

He continues, “Just as it constantly happens in fact to invalids, that the sick man knows not what is going on within him, but the physician knows; when yet the former is suffering from the very sickness, and the physician is not. The physician can better tell what is going on in another, than he who is sick what is going on in himself. Peter then was at that time the invalid, and the Lord the Physician. The former declared that he had strength, when he had not; but the Lord touching the pulse of his heart, declared that he should deny Him thrice. And so it came to pass, as the Physician foretold, not as the sick presumed. Therefore, after His resurrection the Lord questioned him, not as being ignorant with what a heart he would confess the love of Christ, but that he might by a threefold confession of love, efface the threefold denial of fear.”

Augustine rightly speaks of Peter here. But above when he says, **“For He saith to Peter, in**

whom singly He formeth the Church”, there is no support for this statement in the Scripture. It only further supported the Papal system that was developing in the Catholic Church.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermon XCVII. [CXLVII. Ben.] On the same words of the Gospel of John. 21:15, “Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these?” etc., paragraphs 1-3, page 544-545**

1. Ye remember that the Apostle Peter, the first of all the Apostles, was disturbed at the Lord’s Passion. Of his own self disturbed, but by Christ renewed. For he was first a bold presumer, and became afterwards a timid denier. He had promised that he would die for the Lord, when the Lord was first to die for him. When he said then, “I will be with Thee even unto death,” and “I will lay down my life for Thee;” the Lord answered him, “Wilt thou lay down thy life for Me? Verily I say unto thee, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice.” (Matthew 26:34, Luke 22:33, John 13:37-38) They came to the hour; and because that Christ was God, and Peter a man, the Scripture was fulfilled, “I said in my panic, Every man is a liar.” (Psalm 116:11) And the Apostle says, “For God is true, and every man a liar.” (Romans 3:4) Christ true, Peter a liar.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Ye remember that the Apostle Peter, the first of all the Apostles, was disturbed at the Lord’s Passion.”

But the Apostle Peter was not the first of all the Apostles. Paul acknowledged him with James and John as pillars as we read in **Galatians 2 (KJV):9** And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

He was a leader among the apostles, but there was no one who was first among the Apostles but Jesus Christ. Jesus is the captain of our salvation as we read in **Hebrews 2 (KJV):9** But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. 10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

Jesus is also the chief shepherd as Peter affirms in **1 Peter 5 (KJV):4** And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Augustine continues, speaking of Peter, “Of his own self disturbed, but by Christ renewed. For he was first a bold presumer, and became afterwards a timid denier. He had promised that he would die for the Lord, when the Lord was first to die for him. When he said then, “I will be with Thee even unto death,” and “I will lay down my life for Thee;” the Lord answered him, “Wilt thou lay down thy life for Me? Verily I say unto thee, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice.” (Matthew 26:34, Luke 22:33, John 13:37-38)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 26 (KJV):33** Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. 34 Jesus said unto him,

Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.  
35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

And in context to **Luke 22 (KJV):**31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. 33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. 34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

And in context to **John 13 (KJV):**36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. 37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. 38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

Augustine continues, “They came to the hour; and because that Christ was God, and Peter a man, the Scripture was fulfilled, “I said in my panic, Every man is a liar.” (Psalm 116:11)”

He refers to **Psalms 116 (KJV):**11 I said in my haste, All men are liars.

He concludes, “And the Apostle says, “For God is true, and every man a liar.” (Romans 3:4) Christ true, Peter a liar.””

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):**4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

2. But what now? The Lord asketh him as ye heard when the Gospel was being read, and saith to him, “Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?” He answered and said, “Yea Lord Thou knowest that I love Thee.” (John 21:15) And again the Lord asked this question, and a third time He asked it. And when he asserted in reply his love, He commended to him the flock. For each several time the Lord Jesus said to Peter, as he said, “I love thee;” “Feed My lambs,” feed My “little sheep.” In this one Peter was figured the unity of all pastors, of good pastors, that is, who know that they feed Christ’s sheep for Christ, not for themselves. Was Peter at this time a liar, or did he answer untruly that he loved the Lord? He made this answer truly; for he made answer of that which he saw in his own heart. Whereas when he said, “I will lay down my life for Thee,” he would presume on future strength. Now every man knows it may be what sort of man he is at the time when he is speaking; what he shall be on the morrow, who knows? So then Peter turned back his eyes to his own heart, when he was asked by the Lord, and in confidence made answer of what he saw there: “‘Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.’ What I tell Thee, Thou knowest; what I see here in my heart, Thou seest also.” Nevertheless, he did not venture to say what the Lord had asked. For the Lord had not simply said, “Lovest Thou me?” but had added, “Lovest thou Me more than these?” that is, “Lovest thou Me more than these here do?” He was speaking of the other disciples; Peter could not say ought but, “I love Thee;” he did not venture to say, “more than these.” He would not be a liar a second time. It were enough for him to bear testimony to his own heart; it was no duty of his to be judge of the heart of others.



**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “But what now? The Lord asketh him as ye heard when the Gospel was being read, and saith to him, “Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?” He answered and said, “Yea Lord Thou knowest that I love Thee.” (John 21:15)”

He refers in context to **John 21 (KJV):15** So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. 19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

He continues, “And again the Lord asked this question, and a third time He asked it. And when he asserted in reply his love, He commended to him the flock. For each several time the Lord Jesus said to Peter, as he said, “I love thee;” “Feed My lambs,” feed My “little sheep.” In this one Peter was figured the unity of all pastors, of good pastors, that is, who know that they feed Christ’s sheep for Christ, not for themselves. Was Peter at this time a liar, or did he answer untruly that he loved the Lord? He made this answer truly; for he made answer of that which he saw in his own heart. Whereas when he said, “I will lay down my life for Thee,” he would presume on future strength. Now every man knows it may be what sort of man he is at the time when he is speaking; what he shall be on the morrow, who knows? So then Peter turned back his eyes to his own heart, when he was asked by the Lord, and in confidence made answer of what he saw there: “‘Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.’ What I tell Thee, Thou knowest; what I see here in my heart, Thou seest also.” Nevertheless, he did not venture to say what the Lord had asked. For the Lord had not simply said, “Lovest Thou me?” but had added, “Lovest thou Me more than these?” that is, “Lovest thou Me more than these here do?” He was speaking of the other disciples; Peter could not say ought but, “I love Thee;” he did not venture to say, “more than these.” He would not be a liar a second time. It were enough for him to bear testimony to his own heart; it was no duty of his to be judge of the heart of others.”

Peter was to feed the flock just as the other apostles were to do. Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

3. Peter then was true; or rather was Christ true in Peter? Now when the Lord Jesus Christ would, He abandoned Peter, and Peter was found a man; but when it so pleased the Lord Jesus Christ, He filled Peter, and Peter was found true. The Rock (Petra) made Peter true, for the Rock was Christ. And what did He announce to him, when he answered a third time that he loved Christ, and a third time the Lord commended His little sheep to Peter? He announced to him beforehand his suffering. “When thou wast young,” saith He, “thou girdest thyself, and wentest whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thine hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.” (John 21:18) The

Evangelist hath explained to us Christ's meaning. "This spake He," saith he, "signifying by what death he should glorify God;" (John 21:19) that is that he was crucified for Christ; for this is, "Thou shalt stretch forth thine hands." Where now is that denier? Then after this the Lord Christ said, "Follow Me." Not in the same sense as before, when he called the disciples. For then too He said, "Follow Me;" but then to instruction, now to a crown. Was he not afraid to be put to death when he denied Christ? He was afraid to suffer that which Christ suffered. But now he must be afraid no more. For he saw Him now Alive in the Flesh, whom he had seen hanging on the Tree. By His Resurrection Christ took away the fear of death; and forasmuch as He had taken away the fear of death, with good reason did He enquire of Peter's love. Fear had thrice denied, love thrice confessed. The threefoldness of denial, the forsaking of the Truth; the threefoldness of confession, the testimony of love.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, "Peter then was true; or rather was Christ true in Peter? Now when the Lord Jesus Christ would, He abandoned Peter, and Peter was found a man; but when it so pleased the Lord Jesus Christ, He filled Peter, and Peter was found true. The Rock (Petra) made Peter true, for the Rock was Christ."

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):18** And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The word for "rock" in Greek is Petra, which is a mass of rock. The word for Peter in Greek is petros, a stone. Augustine testifies that Jesus Christ is the Rock, as we also read in **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):4** And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

He continues, "And what did He announce to him, when he answered a third time that he loved Christ, and a third time the Lord commended His little sheep to Peter? He announced to him beforehand his suffering. "When thou wast young," saith He, "thou girdedst thyself, and wentest whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thine hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." (John 21:18)"

He refers to **John 21 (KJV):18** Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

He continues, "The Evangelist hath explained to us Christ's meaning. "This spake He," saith he, "signifying by what death he should glorify God;" (John 21:19)"

He refers to **John 21 (KJV):19** This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

He continues, "that is that he was crucified for Christ; for this is, "Thou shalt stretch forth thine hands." Where now is that denier? Then after this the Lord Christ said, "Follow Me." Not in the same sense as before, when he called the disciples. For then too He said, "Follow Me;" but then to instruction, now to a crown. Was he not afraid to be put to death when he denied Christ? He was afraid to suffer that which Christ suffered. But now he must be afraid no more. For he saw Him now Alive in the Flesh, whom he had seen hanging on the Tree. By His Resurrection Christ took away the fear of death; and forasmuch as He had taken away the fear of death, with good reason did He enquire of Peter's love. Fear had thrice denied, love thrice confessed. The threefoldness of denial, the forsaking of the Truth; the threefoldness of confession, the testimony of love."

We can agree with Augustine here.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine  
Tractate VII. Chapter I. 34–51, paragraph 14, page 53**

14. “And he brought him to Jesus; and when Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon the son of Joannes: thou shall be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, Peter.” It is not a great thing that the Lord said whose son Peter was. What is great to the Lord? He knew all the names of His own saints, whom He predestinated before the foundation of the world; and dost thou wonder that He said to one man, Thou art the son of this man, and thou shall be called this or that? Is it a great matter that He changed his name, and converted it from Simon to Peter? Peter is from *petra*, a rock, but the *petra* [rock]; is the Church; in the name of Peter, then, was the Church figured. And who is safe, unless he who builds upon the rock? And what saith the Lord Himself? “He that heareth these my words, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man building his house upon a rock” (he doth not yield to temptation). “The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth my words, and doeth them not” (now let each one of us fear and beware), “I will liken him to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: the rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.” (Matthew 7:24-27) What profit is it to enter the Church for him who builds upon the sand? For, by hearing and not doing, he builds indeed, but on the sand. For if he hears nothing, he builds nothing; but if he hears, he builds. But we ask, Where? For if he hears and does, he builds upon the rock; if he hears and does not, he builds upon the sand. There are two kinds of builders, those building upon the rock, and those building upon the sand. What, then, are those who do not hear? Are they safe? Does He say that they are safe because they do not build? They are naked beneath the rains, before the winds, before the floods; when these come, they carry away those persons before they overthrow the houses. It is then the only security, both to build, and to build upon the rock. If thou wilt hear and do not, thou buildest; but thou buildest a ruin: and when temptation comes it overthrows the house, and carries away thee with the ruin. But if thou dost not hear, thou art naked; thou thyself art dragged away by those temptations. Hear, then, and do; it is the only remedy. How many, perchance, on this day, by hearing and not doing, are hurried away on the stream of this festival! For, through hearing and not doing, the flood cometh, this annual festival; the torrent is filled, it will pass away and become dry, but woe to him whom it shall carry away! Know this, then, beloved, that unless a man hears and does, he builds not upon the rock, and he does not belong to that great name which the Lord so commended. For He has called thy attention. For if Simon had been called Peter before, thou wouldest not have so clearly seen the mystery of the rock, and thou wouldest have thought that he was called so by chance, not by the providence of God; therefore God willed that he should be called first something else, that by the very change of name the reality of the sacrament might be commended to our notice.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““And he brought him to Jesus; and when Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon the son of Joannes: thou shall be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, Peter.””

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):42** And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

He continues, “It is not a great thing that the Lord said whose son Peter was. What is great to the Lord? He knew all the names of His own saints, whom He predestinated before the foundation of the world; and dost thou wonder that He said to one man, Thou art the son of this man, and thou shall be called this or that? Is it a great matter that He changed his name, and converted it from Simon to Peter? Peter is from *petra*, a rock, but the *petra* [rock]; is the Church; in the name of Peter, then, was the Church figured.”

He is referring to **Matthew 16 (KJV):18** And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The word for Peter in Greek is petros, and the word “rock” here in Matthew 16:18 is *petra*. Petros means stone in Greek, and *petra* means a massive rock in Greek. When Jesus said, “upon this rock I will build my church”, He pointed to Himself. He is the cornerstone of the Church, and He is the foundation of the Church, as Peter himself testified in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):4** To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

The rock, or *petra*, is not the Church. The rock is Christ as Paul reveals also in **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):4** And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

Augustine acknowledged this, as we read before at the beginning of this section under the heading:

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine, Sermons on New-Testament Lessons, Sermon XXVI, paragraphs 1-9, page 340-342**

In paragraph 1 he says, “...For seeing that Christ is the rock (*Petra*), Peter is the Christian people. For the rock (*Petra*) is the original name. Therefore Peter is so called from the rock; not the rock from Peter; as Christ is not called Christ from the Christian, but the Christian from Christ. “Therefore,” he saith, “Thou art Peter; and upon this Rock” which thou hast confessed, upon this Rock which thou hast acknowledged, saying, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, will I build My Church;” that is upon Myself, the Son of the living God, “will I build My Church.” I will build thee upon Myself, not Myself upon thee.”

Augustine continues, “And who is safe, unless he who builds upon the rock? And what saith the Lord Himself? “He that heareth these my words, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man building his house upon a rock” (he doth not yield to temptation). “The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth my words, and doeth them not” (now let each one of

us fear and beware), “I will liken him to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: the rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.” (Matthew 7:24-27)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 7 (KJV):**21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. 24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. 26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. 28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: 29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

The word “rock” in verses 24 and 25 above is *petra* in the Greek. Jesus is the *petra* upon which we must build.

Augustine then continues, “What profit is it to enter the Church for him who builds upon the sand? For, by hearing and not doing, he builds indeed, but on the sand. For if he hears nothing, he builds nothing; but if he hears, he builds. But we ask, Where? For if he hears and does, he builds upon the rock; if he hears and does not, he builds upon the sand. There are two kinds of builders, those building upon the rock, and those building upon the sand. What, then, are those who do not hear? Are they safe? Does He say that they are safe because they do not build? They are naked beneath the rains, before the winds, before the floods; when these come, they carry away those persons before they overthrow the houses. It is then the only security, both to build, and to build upon the rock. If thou wilt hear and do not, thou buildest; but thou buildest a ruin: and when temptation comes it overthrows the house, and carries away thee with the ruin. But if thou dost not hear, thou art naked; thou thyself art dragged away by those temptations. Hear, then, and do; it is the only remedy.”

And this agrees with James in **James 1 (KJV):**21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

He continues, “How many, perchance, on this day, by hearing and not doing, are hurried away on the stream of this festival! For, through hearing and not doing, the flood cometh, this annual festival; the torrent is filled, it will pass away and become dry, but woe to him whom it shall carry away! Know this, then, beloved, that unless a man hears and does, he builds not upon the rock, and he does not belong to that great name which the Lord so commended. For He has called thy attention. For if Simon had been called Peter before, thou wouldest not have



so clearly seen the mystery of the rock, and thou wouldest have thought that he was called so by chance, not by the providence of God; therefore God willed that he should be called first something else, that by the very change of name the reality of the sacrament might be commended to our notice.”

The Church is not the rock, but the Church is built on the rock, which is Christ, for other foundation can no man lay as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate L. Chapter XI. 55–57; XII, paragraphs 12–14, page 282–283**

12. But what follows? “For the poor ye have always with you, but me ye will not have always.” We can certainly understand, “the poor ye have always;” what He has thus said is true. When were the poor wanting in the Church? “But me ye will not have always;” what does He mean by this? How are we to understand, “Me ye will not have always”? Don’t be alarmed: it was addressed to Judas. Why, then, did He not say, thou wilt have, but, ye will have? Because Judas is not here a unit. One wicked man represents the whole body of the wicked; in the same way as Peter, the whole body of the good, yea, the body of the Church, but in respect to the good. For if in Peter’s case there were no sacramental symbol of the Church, the Lord would not have said to him, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.” (Matthew 16:19) If this was said only to Peter, it gives no ground of action to the Church. But if such is the case also in the Church, that what is bound on earth is bound in heaven, and what is loosed on earth is loosed in heaven,—for when the Church excommunicates, the excommunicated person is bound in heaven; when one is reconciled by the Church, the person so reconciled is loosed in heaven:—if such, then, is the case in the Church, Peter, in receiving the keys, represented the holy Church. **If, then, in the person of Peter were represented the good in the Church, and in Judas’ person were represented the bad in the Church, then to these latter was it said, “But me ye will not have always.” But what means the “not always;” and what, the “always”? If thou art good, if thou belongest to the body represented by Peter, thou hast Christ both now and hereafter: now by faith, by sign, by the sacrament of baptism, by the bread and wine of the altar.** Thou hast Christ now, but thou wilt have Him always; for when thou hast gone hence, thou wilt come to Him who said to the robber, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43) But if thou livest wickedly, thou mayest seem to have Christ now, because thou enterest the Church, signest thyself with the sign of Christ, art baptized with the baptism of Christ, minglest thyself with the members of Christ, and approachest His altar: now thou hast Christ, but by living wickedly thou wilt not have Him always.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But what follows? “For the poor ye have always with you, but me ye will not have always.””

He refers in context to **John 12 (KJV):3** Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. **4** Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot,

Simon's son, which should betray him, 5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. 7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. 8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

He continues, “We can certainly understand, “the poor ye have always;” what He has thus said is true. When were the poor wanting in the Church? “But me ye will not have always;” what does He mean by this? How are we to understand, “Me ye will not have always”? Don’t be alarmed: it was addressed to Judas. Why, then, did He not say, thou wilt have, but, ye will have? Because Judas is not here a unit. One wicked man represents the whole body of the wicked; in the same way as Peter, the whole body of the good, yea, the body of the Church, but in respect to the good.”

But Jesus prophesied of His imminent death, as He says in verse 8 above, “against the day of my burying hath she kept this”. He was speaking of His departure from earth to heaven.

Augustine continues, “For if in Peter’s case there were no sacramental symbol of the Church, the Lord would not have said to him, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.” (Matthew 16:19)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 16 (KJV):15** He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

The key to the kingdom of heaven is faith in Jesus Christ, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The power of binding and loosing was also given to the disciples, as we read in **Matthew 18 (KJV):1** At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

And in **Matthew 18 (KJV):17** And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. 18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

He continues, “If this was said only to Peter, it gives no ground of action to the Church. But if such is the case also in the Church, that what is bound on earth is bound in heaven, and what is loosed on earth is loosed in heaven,—for when the Church excommunicates, the excommunicated person is bound in heaven; when one is reconciled by the Church, the person so reconciled is loosed in heaven:—if such, then, is the case in the Church, Peter, in receiving the keys, represented the holy Church.”

But we saw in Matthew 18:18 above that the power of binding and loosing was also given to the Church, that is, the disciples who are the believers in the Church. The only one who

represents the Church is Jesus Christ, for we are His body. The keys of the kingdom of heaven represent the Gospel message that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. This was revealed to Peter, but also to all the other disciples as they were standing by.

Augustine continues, “If, then, in the person of Peter were represented the good in the Church, and in Judas’ person were represented the bad in the Church, then to these latter was it said, “But me ye will not have always.” But what means the “not always;” and what, the “always”? If thou art good, if thou belongest to the body represented by Peter, thou hast Christ both now and hereafter: now by faith, by sign, by the sacrament of baptism, by the bread and wine of the altar. Thou hast Christ now, but thou wilt have Him always; for when thou hast gone hence, thou wilt come to Him who said to the robber, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43)”

He refers in context to **Luke 23 (KJV):39** And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

But Augustine exceeds what is written in the Scriptures. There is no basis in the Scripture for believing Peter to be the representative of the good in the Church, and that “if thou belongest to the body represented by Peter, thou hast Christ both now and hereafter”. The body is represented by Jesus Christ, for it is His body. It is a spiritual body, and it is made up of all who are believers in Jesus Christ. Faith is the only necessity, and that is the gift of God as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Neither “sign”, nor “the sacrament of baptism”, or “the bread and wine of the altar” are necessary for salvation, for we read also in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Augustine continues, “But if thou livest wickedly, thou mayest seem to have Christ now, because thou enterest the Church, signest thyself with the sign of Christ, art baptized with the baptism of Christ, minglest thyself with the members of Christ, and approachest His altar: now thou hast Christ, but by living wickedly thou wilt not have Him always.”

Again, it is not of works or rituals lest anyone should boast, for Paul says in **Galatians 3 (KJV):26** For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Once we are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, we are treated as sons and daughters of God. If we sin, He will chasten us. If we continue in sin, this chastening could result in physical sickness, and even death. But we will not lose what we have attained by faith. If we continue in sin, we will still be saved, yet as by fire as it were, as we read in **1**

**Corinthians 3 (KJV):**15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Let us continue to read Augustine's thoughts in the next paragraph.

13. It may be also understood in this way: "The poor ye will have always with you, but me ye will not have always." The good may take it also as addressed to themselves, but not so as to be any source of anxiety; for He was speaking of His bodily presence. For in respect of His majesty, His providence, His ineffable and invisible grace, His own words are fulfilled, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20) But in respect of the flesh He assumed as the Word, in respect of that which He was as the son of the Virgin, of that wherein He was seized by the Jews, nailed to the tree, let down from the cross, enveloped in a shroud, laid in the sepulchre, and manifested in His resurrection, "ye will not have Him always." And why? Because in respect of His bodily presence He associated for forty days with His disciples, and then, having brought them forth for the purpose of beholding and not of following Him, He ascended into heaven, (Acts 1:3,9,10) and is no longer here. He is there, indeed, sitting at the right hand of the Father; and He is here also, having never withdrawn the presence of His glory. In other words, in respect of His divine presence we always have Christ; in respect of His presence in the flesh it was rightly said to the disciples, "Me ye will not have always." In this respect the Church enjoyed His presence only for a few days: now it possesses Him by faith, without seeing Him with the eyes. In whichever way, then, it was said, "But me ye will not have always," it can no longer, I suppose, after this twofold solution, remain as a subject of doubt.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he then says, "It may be also understood in this way: "The poor ye will have always with you, but me ye will not have always." The good may take it also as addressed to themselves, but not so as to be any source of anxiety; for He was speaking of His bodily presence. For in respect of His majesty, His providence, His ineffable and invisible grace, His own words are fulfilled, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20)"

He refers again to **John 12 (KJV):**8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

And to **Matthew 28 (KJV):**20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

The first way he explained in the previous paragraph, as he summarized, "If, then, in the person of Peter were represented the good in the Church, and in Judas' person were represented the bad in the Church, then to these latter was it said, "But me ye will not have always." But what means the "not always;" and what, the "always"? If thou art good, if thou belongest to the body represented by Peter, thou hast Christ both now and hereafter: now by faith, by sign, by the sacrament of baptism, by the bread and wine of the altar."

So therefore "not always" means you were "the bad in the Church" and do not have "me", that is, Jesus, and you are reprobates represented by "Judas", and you do not belong "to the body represented by Peter". This "way" exceeds what is written in the Scriptures.

He then explains a second way that John 12:8 may be interpreted, and that is that Jesus is simply speaking of His bodily presence, which is the correct way to interpret it.

He continues, “But in respect of the flesh He assumed as the Word, in respect of that which He was as the son of the Virgin, of that wherein He was seized by the Jews, nailed to the tree, let down from the cross, enveloped in a shroud, laid in the sepulchre, and manifested in His resurrection, “ye will not have Him always.” And why? Because in respect of His bodily presence He associated for forty days with His disciples, and then, having brought them forth for the purpose of beholding and not of following Him, He ascended into heaven, (Acts 1:3,9,10) and is no longer here.”

He refers to **Acts 1 (KJV):3** To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

And to **Acts 1 (KJV):9** And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

He continues, “He is there, indeed, sitting at the right hand of the Father; and He is here also, having never withdrawn the presence of His glory. In other words, in respect of His divine presence we always have Christ; in respect of His presence in the flesh it was rightly said to the disciples, “Me ye will not have always.” In this respect the Church enjoyed His presence only for a few days: now it possesses Him by faith, without seeing Him with the eyes. In whichever way, then, it was said, “But me ye will not have always,” it can no longer, I suppose, after this twofold solution, remain as a subject of doubt.”

We can agree with Augustine in this paragraph. But the other way in his twofold solution we cannot agree with. Jesus was simply saying that He would not be physically present with them in John 12:8.

14. Let us listen to the other few points that remain: “Much people of the Jews therefore knew that He was there: and they came not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.” They were drawn by curiosity, not by charity: they came and saw. Harken to the strange scheming of human vanity. Having seen Lazarus as one raised from the dead,—for the fame of such a miracle of the Lord’s had been accompanied everywhere with so much evidence of its genuineness, and it had been so openly performed, that they could neither conceal nor deny what had been done,—only think of the plan they hit upon. “But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.” O foolish consultation and blinded rage! Could not Christ the Lord, who was able to raise the dead, raise also the slain? When you were preparing a violent death for Lazarus, were you at the same time denuding the Lord of His power? If you think a dead man one thing, a murdered man another, look you only to this, that the Lord made both, and raised Lazarus to life when dead, and Himself when slain.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he then says, “Let us listen to the other few points that remain: “Much people of the Jews therefore knew that He was there: and they came not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.””

He refers to **John 12 (KJV):9** Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.



He continues, “They were drawn by curiosity, not by charity: they came and saw. Harken to the strange scheming of human vanity. Having seen Lazarus as one raised from the dead,—for the fame of such a miracle of the Lord’s had been accompanied everywhere with so much evidence of its genuineness, and it had been so openly performed, that they could neither conceal nor deny what had been done,—only think of the plan they hit upon. “But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.””

He refers to **John 12 (KJV):10** But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; 11 Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

He continues, “O foolish consultation and blinded rage! Could not Christ the Lord, who was able to raise the dead, raise also the slain? When you were preparing a violent death for Lazarus, were you at the same time denuding the Lord of His power? If you think a dead man one thing, a murdered man another, look you only to this, that the Lord made both, and raised Lazarus to life when dead, and Himself when slain.”

Augustine has concluded well here.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate LVI. Chapter XIII. 6–10, paragraphs 1–5, page 301–303**

1. When the Lord was washing the disciples’ feet, “He cometh to Simon Peter; and Peter saith unto Him, Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?” For who would not be filled with fear at having his feet washed by the Son of God? Although, therefore, it was a piece of the greatest audacity for the servant to contradict his Lord, the creature his God; yet Peter preferred doing this to the suffering of his feet to be washed by his Lord and God. Nor ought we to think that Peter was one amongst others who so expressed their fear and refusal, seeing that others before him had suffered it to be done to themselves with cheerfulness and equanimity. **For it is easier so to understand the words of the Gospel, because that, after saying, “He began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded,” it is then added, “Then cometh He to Simon Peter,” as if He had already washed the feet of some, and after them had now come to the first of them all. For who can fail to know that the most blessed Peter was the first of the apostles? But we are not so to understand it, that it was after some others that He came to him; but that He began with him.** When, therefore, He began to wash the disciples’ feet, He came to him with whom He began, namely, to Peter; and then Peter took fright at what any one of them might have been frightened, and said, “Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?” What is implied in this “Thou”? and what in “my”? These are subjects for thought rather than for speech; lest perchance any adequate conception the soul may have formed of such words may fail of explanation in the utterance.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “When the Lord was washing the disciples’ feet, “He cometh to Simon Peter; and Peter saith unto Him, Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?” For who would not be filled with fear at having his feet washed by the Son of God? Although, therefore, it was a piece of the greatest audacity for the servant to contradict his Lord, the creature his God; yet Peter preferred doing this to the suffering of his feet to be washed by his

Lord and God. Nor ought we to think that Peter was one amongst others who so expressed their fear and refusal, seeing that others before him had suffered it to be done to themselves with cheerfulness and equanimity.”

He refers to **John 13 (KJV)**:1 Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. 2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; 3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; 4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

He continues, “For it is easier so to understand the words of the Gospel, because that, after saying, “He began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded,” it is then added, “Then cometh He to Simon Peter,” as if He had already washed the feet of some, and after them had now come to the first of them all. For who can fail to know that the most blessed Peter was the first of the apostles?”

Jesus spoke of the one who desired to be first in **Mark 9 (KJV)**:33 And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? 34 But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. 35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

Jesus did not acknowledge Peter here, or anyone else for that matter, as first among the disciples.

But Augustine continues, as he then asserts, “But we are not so to understand it, that it was after some others that He came to him; but that He began with him. When, therefore, He began to wash the disciples’ feet, He came to him with whom He began, namely, to Peter; and then Peter took fright at what any one of them might have been frightened, and said, “Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?” What is implied in this “Thou”? and what in “my”? These are subjects for thought rather than for speech; lest perchance any adequate conception the soul may have formed of such words may fail of explanation in the utterance.”

But the Scripture makes no such assertion, as we read again in **John 13 (KJV)**:4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

The Scripture just says that He “began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded”, in verse 5, and that “Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?” The most common sense interpretation is that He made no difference concerning Peter. He began washing some of the disciples’ feet, and after this, He came to Peter and began to wash His feet.

Let us continue to read his next paragraph.

2. But “Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou

shalt know hereafter.” And not even yet, terrified as he was by the sublimity of the Lord’s action, does he allow it to be done, while ignorant of its purpose; but is unwilling to see, unable to endure, that Christ should thus humble Himself to his very feet. “Thou shalt never,” he says, “wash my feet.” What is this “never” [in æternum]? I will never endure, never suffer, never permit it: that is, a thing is not done “in æternum” which is never done. Then the Saviour, to terrify His reluctant patient with the danger of his own salvation, says, “If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me.” He speaks in this way, “If I wash thee not,” when He was referring only to his feet; just as it is customary to say, You are trampling on me, when it is only the foot that is trampled on. And now the other, in a perturbation of love and fear, and more frightened at the thought that Christ should be withheld from him, than even to see Him humbled at his feet, exclaims, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.” Since this, indeed, is Thy threat, that my bodily members must be washed by Thee, not only do I no longer withhold the lowest, but I lay the foremost also at Thy disposal. Deny me not having a part with Thee, and I deny Thee not any part of my body to be washed.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “But “Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.” And not even yet, terrified as he was by the sublimity of the Lord’s action, does he allow it to be done, while ignorant of its purpose; but is unwilling to see, unable to endure, that Christ should thus humble Himself to his very feet. “Thou shalt never,” he says, “wash my feet.” What is this “never” [in æternum]? I will never endure, never suffer, never permit it: that is, a thing is not done “in æternum” which is never done. Then the Saviour, to terrify His reluctant patient with the danger of his own salvation, says, “If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with me.””

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):7** Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. 8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

He continues, “He speaks in this way, “If I wash thee not,” when He was referring only to his feet; just as it is customary to say, You are trampling on me, when it is only the foot that is trampled on. And now the other, in a perturbation of love and fear, and more frightened at the thought that Christ should be withheld from him, than even to see Him humbled at his feet, exclaims, “Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.” Since this, indeed, is Thy threat, that my bodily members must be washed by Thee, not only do I no longer withhold the lowest, but I lay the foremost also at Thy disposal. Deny me not having a part with Thee, and I deny Thee not any part of my body to be washed.”

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):9** Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

Let us continue to read his next paragraph.

3. “Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.” Some one perhaps may be aroused at this, and say: Nay, but if he is every whit clean, what need has He even to wash his feet? But the Lord knew what He was saying, even though our weakness reach not into His secret purposes. Nevertheless, so far as He is pleased to instruct and teach us out of His law, up to the little measure of my apprehension, I would also, with His help, make some answer bearing on the depths of this question: and, first of all, I shall

have no difficulty in showing that there is no self-contradiction in the manner of expression. For who may not say, as here, with the greatest propriety, He is all clean, except his feet?—although he would speak with greater elegance were he to say, He is all clean, save his feet; which is equivalent in meaning. Thus, then, doth the Lord say, “He needeth not save to wash his feet, but is all clean.” All, that is, except, or save his feet, which he still needs to wash.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, ““Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.””

He refers in context to **John 13 (KJV):10** Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

He continues, “Some one perhaps may be aroused at this, and say: Nay, but if he is every whit clean, what need has He even to wash his feet? But the Lord knew what He was saying, even though our weakness reach not into His secret purposes. Nevertheless, so far as He is pleased to instruct and teach us out of His law, up to the little measure of my apprehension, I would also, with His help, make some answer bearing on the depths of this question: and, first of all, I shall have no difficulty in showing that there is no self-contradiction in the manner of expression. For who may not say, as here, with the greatest propriety, He is all clean, except his feet?—although he would speak with greater elegance were he to say, He is all clean, save his feet; which is equivalent in meaning. Thus, then, doth the Lord say, “He needeth not save to wash his feet, but is all clean.” All, that is, except, or save his feet, which he still needs to wash.”

It is interesting that Jesus said, “and ye are clean, but not all.” We know from verse 11 that He was referring to Judas, “who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean”. So the disciples were “clean”, as He says in verse 10, “and ye are clean”. And in their day, they did not have shoes as we have today. It was customary to wash someone’s feet if they were a guest. Jesus is using this as an analogy of the daily cleansing the believer must do to maintain fellowship with the Lord. Once one is clean, they only need to wash their feet. They don’t need to have a whole bath again.

Though Jesus did not explain completely His meaning, we understand from His later words through the apostle Paul that there is a bath or washing that happens when we are born again as we read in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

When we accept Christ, we are forgiven of all our sins, and God justifies us because of our faith. His righteousness is then put down to our account as we read on **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

So because God has justified the believer, His righteousness is put down to our account, and we then have a standing as righteous. That is, we are clean in our standing. It is understood that we are not perfect yet, for that will not come until the resurrection when we are glorified

like Him. But God has made provision for us to maintain our fellowship with Him by washing our feet, as it were. As we walk in the world, our feet will get dirty. Our standing as those who are “clean” is not affected. But our fellowship with Him is what we keep by washing our feet, that is, confessing our sins.

Let us continue to read his next paragraph.

4. But what is this? What does it mean? And what is there in it we need to examine? The Lord says, The Truth declares that even he who has been washed has need still to wash his feet. What, my brethren, what think you of it, save that in holy baptism a man has all of him washed, not all save his feet, but every whit; and yet, while thereafter living in this human state, he cannot fail to tread on the ground with his feet. And thus our human feelings themselves, which are inseparable from our mortal life on earth, are like feet wherewith we are brought into sensible contact with human affairs; and are so in such a way, that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8) And every day, therefore, is He who intercedeth for us, (Romans 8:34) washing our feet: and that we, too have daily need to be washing our feet, that is ordering aright the path of our spiritual footsteps, we acknowledge even in the Lord’s prayer, when we say, “Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12) For “if,” as it is written, “we confess our sins,” then verily is He, who washed His disciples’ feet, “faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,” (1 John 1:9) that is, even to our feet wherewith we walk on the earth.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “But what is this? What does it mean? And what is there in it we need to examine? The Lord says, The Truth declares that even he who has been washed has need still to wash his feet. What, my brethren, what think you of it, save that in holy baptism a man has all of him washed, not all save his feet, but every whit; and yet, while thereafter living in this human state, he cannot fail to tread on the ground with his feet. And thus our human feelings themselves, which are inseparable from our mortal life on earth, are like feet wherewith we are brought into sensible contact with human affairs; and are so in such a way, that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (1 John 1:8)”

He refers to **1 John 1 (KJV):8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

He continues, “And every day, therefore, is He who intercedeth for us, (Romans 8:34) washing our feet: and that we, too have daily need to be washing our feet, that is ordering aright the path of our spiritual footsteps, we acknowledge even in the Lord’s prayer, when we say, “Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):34** Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

And to **Matthew 6 (KJV):12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

He continues, “For “if,” as it is written, “we confess our sins,” then verily is He, who washed His disciples’ feet, “faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,” (1 John 1:9) that is, even to our feet wherewith we walk on the earth.”

He refers to **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.



Let us continue to read his next paragraph.

5. Accordingly the Church, which Christ cleanseth with the washing of water in the word, is without spot and wrinkle, (Ephesians 5:26-27) not only in the case of those who are taken away immediately after the washing of regeneration from the contagious influence of this life, and tread not the earth so as to make necessary the washing of their feet, but in those also who have experienced such mercy from the Lord as to be enabled to quit this present life even with feet that have been washed. But although the Church be also clean in respect of those who tarry on earth, because they live righteously; yet have they need to be washing their feet, because they assuredly are not without sin. For this cause is it said in the Song of Songs, "I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" (Song of Solomon 5:3) For one so speaks when he is constrained to come to Christ, and in coming has to bring his feet into contact with the ground. But again, there is another question that arises. Is not Christ above? Hath He not ascended into heaven, and sitteth He not at the Father's right hand? Does not the apostle expressly declare, "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, set your thoughts on those things which are above, where Christ is sitting on the right hand of God. Seek the things which are above, not things which are on earth?" (Colossians 3:1-3) How is it, then, that to get to Christ we are compelled to tread the earth, since rather our hearts ought to be turned upwards toward the Lord, that we may be enabled to dwell in His presence? You see, brethren, the shortness of the time today curtails our consideration of this question. And if you perhaps fail in some measure to do so, yet I for my part see how much clearing up it requires. And therefore I beg of you to suffer it rather to be adjourned, than to be treated now in too negligent and restricted a manner; and your expectations will not be defrauded, but only deferred. For the Lord who thus makes us your debtors, will be present to enable us also to pay our debts.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, "Accordingly the Church, which Christ cleanseth with the washing of water in the word, is without spot and wrinkle, (Ephesians 5:26-27) not only in the case of those who are taken away immediately after the washing of regeneration from the contagious influence of this life, and tread not the earth so as to make necessary the washing of their feet, but in those also who have experienced such mercy from the Lord as to be enabled to quit this present life even with feet that have been washed. But although the Church be also clean in respect of those who tarry on earth, because they live righteously; yet have they need to be washing their feet, because they assuredly are not without sin. For this cause is it said in the Song of Songs, "I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" (Song of Solomon 5:3)"

He refers to **Song of Solomon 5 (KJV):3** I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

He continues, "For one so speaks when he is constrained to come to Christ, and in coming has to bring his feet into contact with the ground. But again, there is another question that arises. Is not Christ above? Hath He not ascended into heaven, and sitteth He not at the Father's right hand? Does not the apostle expressly declare, "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, set your thoughts on those things which are above, where Christ is sitting on the right hand of God. Seek the things which are above, not things which are on earth?" (Colossians 3:1-3)"

He refers in context to **Colossians 3 (KJV):**1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

He continues, “How is it, then, that to get to Christ we are compelled to tread the earth, since rather our hearts ought to be turned upwards toward the Lord, that we may be enabled to dwell in His presence? You see, brethren, the shortness of the time today curtails our consideration of this question. And if you perhaps fail in some measure to do so, yet I for my part see how much clearing up it requires. And therefore I beg of you to suffer it rather to be adjourned, than to be treated now in too negligent and restricted a manner; and your expectations will not be defrauded, but only deferred. For the Lord who thus makes us your debtors, will be present to enable us also to pay our debts.”

It is evident that Augustine did not understand our standing of righteousness in Christ. And we not only have a standing of righteousness in Christ, but we are “dead”, and our “life is hid with Christ in God”. That is, we have been born again. Our spirit now has been made a partaker of the divine nature, and we have eternal life in our spirit, having been born of the Spirit of God. This life is “hid with Christ in God”.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate CXXIV. Chapter XXI. 19–25, paragraph 5, page 449-451**

5. I shall therefore, in the manifested mercy of Him whose justice is hidden, set about the discussion, in order to the solution of a question of such importance, in accordance with the strength which He may graciously bestow: for hitherto it has only been proposed, not expounded. Let this, then, be the commencement of its exposition, namely, that we bear in mind that in this corruptible body, which burdens the soul, (Wisdom 9:14-15) we live a miserable life. But we who are now redeemed by the Mediator, and have received the earnest of the Holy Spirit, have a blessed life in prospect, although we possess it not as yet in reality. But a hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. (Romans 8:24-25) And it is in the evils that every one suffers, not in the good things that he enjoys, that he has need of patience. The present life, therefore, whereof it is written, “Is not the life of man a term of trial upon earth?” (Job 7:1) in which we are daily crying to the Lord, “Deliver us from evil,” (Matthew 6:13) a man is compelled to endure, even when his sins are forgiven him, although it was the first sin that caused his falling into such misery. For the penalty is more protracted than the fault; lest the fault should be accounted small, were the penalty to end with itself. On this account it is also, either for the demonstration of our debt of misery, or for the amendment of our passing life, or for the exercise of the necessary patience, that man is kept through time in the penalty, even when he is no longer held by his sin as liable to everlasting damnation. This is the truly lamentable but unblameable condition of the present evil days we pass in this mortal state, even while in it we look with loving eyes to the days that are good. For it comes from the righteous anger of God, whereof the Scriptures say, “Man, that is born of woman, is of few days and full of anger:” (Job 14:1) for the anger of God is not like that of man, the disturbance of an excited man, but the calm fixing of righteous punishment. In this anger of His, God restraineth not, as it

is written, His tender mercies; (Psalm 77:9) but, besides other consolations to the miserable, which He ceaseth not to bestow on mankind, in the fullness of time, when He knew that such had to be done, He sent His only begotten Son, (Galatians 4:4) by whom He created all things, that He might become man while remaining God, and so be the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus: (1 Timothy 2:5) that those who believe in Him, being absolved by the laver of regeneration from the guilt of all their sins,—to wit, both of the original sin they have inherited by generation, and to meet which, in particular, regeneration was instituted, and of all others contracted by evil conduct,—might be delivered from perpetual condemnation, and live in faith and hope and love while sojourning in this world, and be walking onward to His visible presence amid its toilsome and perilous temptations on the one hand, but the consolations of God, both bodily and spiritual, on the other, ever keeping to the way which Christ has become to them. And because, even while walking in Him, they are not exempt from sins, which creep in through the infirmities of this life, He has given them the salutary remedies of alms whereby their prayers might be aided when He taught them to say, “Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12) **So does the Church act in blessed hope through this troublous life; and this Church symbolized in its generality, was personified in the Apostle Peter, on account of the primacy of his apostleship. For, as regards his proper personality, he was by nature one man, by grace one Christian, by still more abounding grace one, and yet also, the first apostle; but when it was said to him, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven,” he represented the universal Church, which in this world is shaken by divers temptations, that come upon it like torrents of rain, floods and tempests, and falleth not, because it is founded upon a rock (*petra*), from which Peter received his name. For *petra* (rock) is not derived from Peter, but Peter from *petra*; just as Christ is not called so from the Christian, but the Christian from Christ. For on this very account the Lord said, “On this rock will I build my Church,” because Peter had said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16-19) On this rock, therefore, He said, which thou hast confessed, I will build my Church. For the Rock (*Petra*) was Christ; (1 Corinthians 10:4) and on this foundation was Peter himself also built. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus, (1 Corinthians 3:11) The Church, therefore, which is founded in Christ received from Him the keys of the kingdom of heaven in the person of Peter, that is to say, the power of binding and loosing sins. For what the Church is essentially in Christ, such representatively is Peter in the rock (*petra*); and in this representation Christ is to be understood as the Rock, Peter as the Church. This Church, accordingly, which Peter represented, so long as it lives amidst evil, by loving and following Christ is delivered from evil. But its following is the closer in those who contend even unto death for the truth. But to the universality [of the Church] is it said, “Follow me,” even as it was for the same universality that Christ suffered: of whom this same Peter saith, “Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His footsteps.” (1 Peter 2:21) This, then, you see is why it was said to him, “Follow me.” But there is another, an immortal life, that is not in the midst of evil: there we shall see face to face what is seen here through a glass and in a riddle, (1 Corinthians 13:12) even when much progress is made in the beholding of the truth. There are two states of life, therefore, preached and commended to herself from heaven, that are known to the Church, whereof the one is in faith, the other in sight; one in the temporal sojourn in a foreign land, the**

other in the eternity of the [heavenly] abode; one in labor, the other in repose; one on the way, the other in the fatherland; one in active work, the other in the wages of contemplation; one declines from evil and makes for good, the other has no evil to decline from, and has great good to enjoy; the one fights with a foe, the other reigns without a foe; the one is brave in the midst of adversities, the other has no experience of adversity; the one is bridling its carnal lusts, the other has full scope for spiritual delights; the one is anxious with the care of conquering, the other secure in the peace of victory; the one is helped in temptations, the other, free from all temptations, rejoices in the Helper Himself; the one is occupied in relieving the indigent, the other is there, where no indigence is found; the one pardons the sins of others, that its own may be pardoned to itself, the other neither has anything to pardon nor does aught for which pardon has to be asked; the one is scourged with evils that it may not be elated with good things, the other is free from all evil by such a fullness of grace that, without any temptation to pride, it may cleave to that which is supremely good; the one discerneth both good and evil, the other has only that which is good presented to view: therefore the one is good, but miserable as yet; the other, better and blessed. This one was signified by the Apostle Peter, that other by John. The whole of the one is passed here to the end of this world, and there finds its termination, the other is deferred for its completion till after the end of this world, but has no end in the world to come. Hence it is said to the latter, "Follow me;" but of the former, "Thus I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." For what means this last? So far as my wisdom goes, so far as I comprehend, what is it but this, Follow thou me by imitating me in the endurance of temporal evils; let him remain till I come to restore everlasting good? And this may be expressed more clearly in this way: Let perfected action, informed by the example of my passion, follow me; but let contemplation only begun remain [so] till I come, to be perfected when I come. For the godly plenitude of patience, reaching forward even unto death, followeth Christ; but the fullness of knowledge tarrieth till Christ come, to be manifested then. For here the evils of this world are endured in the land of the dying, while there shall be seen the good things of the Lord in the land of the living. For in saying, "I wish him to tarry till I come," we are not to understand Him as meaning to remain on, or abide permanently, but to wait; seeing that what is signified by him shall certainly not be fulfilled now, but when Christ is come. But what is signified by him to whom it was said, "Follow thou me," unless it be done now, will never attain to the expected end. And in this life of activity, the more we love Christ the more easily are we delivered from evil. But He loveth us less as we now are, and therefore delivers from it, that we may not be always such as we are. There, however, He loveth us more; for we shall not have aught about us to displease Him, or aught that He will have to separate us from: nor is it for aught else that He loveth us here but that He may heal and translate us from everything He loveth not. Here, therefore, [He loveth us] less, where He would not have us remain; there in larger measure, whither He would have us to be passing, and out of that wherein He would not that we should perish. Let Peter therefore love Him, that we may obtain deliverance from our present mortality; let John be loved by Him, that we may be preserved in the immortality to come.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "I shall therefore, in the manifested mercy of Him whose justice is hidden, set about the discussion, in order to the solution of a question of such importance, in accordance with the strength which He may graciously bestow: for hitherto

it has only been proposed, not expounded. Let this, then, be the commencement of its exposition, namely, that we bear in mind that in this corruptible body, which burdens the soul, (Wisdom 9:15) we live a miserable life.”

He refers in context to **Wisdom 9 (Septuagint):14** For the thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and our devices are but uncertain. 15 For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things.

He continues, “But we who are now redeemed by the Mediator, and have received the earnest of the Holy Spirit, have a blessed life in prospect, although we possess it not as yet in reality. But a hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. (Romans 8:24-25)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):24** For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

He continues, “And it is in the evils that every one suffers, not in the good things that he enjoys, that he has need of patience. The present life, therefore, whereof it is written, “Is not the life of man a term of trial upon earth?” (Job 7:1) in which we are daily crying to the Lord, “Deliver us from evil,” (Matthew 6:13) a man is compelled to endure, even when his sins are forgiven him, although it was the first sin that caused his falling into such misery.”

He refers to **Job 7 (Septuagint):1** Is not the life of man upon earth a state of trial? And his existence as that of a hireling by the day?

Or to **Job 7 (KJV):1** Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? Are not his days also like the days of an hireling?

And to **Matthew 6 (KJV):13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

He continues, “For the penalty is more protracted than the fault; lest the fault should be accounted small, were the penalty to end with itself. On this account it is also, either for the demonstration of our debt of misery, or for the amendment of our passing life, or for the exercise of the necessary patience, that man is kept through time in the penalty, even when he is no longer held by his sin as liable to everlasting damnation. This is the truly lamentable but unblameable condition of the present evil days we pass in this mortal state, even while in it we look with loving eyes to the days that are good. For it comes from the righteous anger of God, whereof the Scriptures say, “Man, that is born of woman, is of few days and full of anger:” (Job 14:1) for the anger of God is not like that of man, the disturbance of an excited man, but the calm fixing of righteous punishment.”

He refers to **Job 14 (Septuagint):1** For a mortal born of a woman *is* short lived, and full of wrath.

Or to **Job 14 (KJV):1** Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.

He continues, “In this anger of His, God restraineth not, as it is written, His tender mercies; (Psalm 77:9)”

He refers to **Psalm 77 (KJV):9** Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.

He continues, “but, besides other consolations to the miserable, which He ceaseth not to bestow on mankind, in the fullness of time, when He knew that such had to be done, He sent His only begotten Son, (Galatians 4:4)”



He refers in context to **Galatians 4 (KJV):**4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

He continues, “by whom He created all things, that He might become man while remaining God, and so be the Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus: (1 Timothy 2:5)”

He refers to **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):**5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

He continues, “that those who believe in Him, being absolved by the laver of regeneration from the guilt of all their sins,—to wit, both of the original sin they have inherited by generation, and to meet which, in particular, regeneration was instituted, and of all others contracted by evil conduct,—might be delivered from perpetual condemnation, and live in faith and hope and love while sojourning in this world, and be walking onward to His visible presence amid its toilsome and perilous temptations on the one hand, but the consolations of God, both bodily and spiritual, on the other, ever keeping to the way which Christ has become to them. And because, even while walking in Him, they are not exempt from sins, which creep in through the infirmities of this life, He has given them the salutary remedies of alms whereby their prayers might be aided when He taught them to say, “Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):**12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

But nothing is mentioned about alms being a remedy for sin in the Scriptures.

He continues, “**So does the Church act in blessed hope through this troublous life; and this Church symbolized in its generality, was personified in the Apostle Peter, on account of the primacy of his apostleship. For, as regards his proper personality, he was by nature one man, by grace one Christian, by still more abounding grace one, and yet also, the first apostle; but when it was said to him, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven,” he represented the universal Church, which in this world is shaken by divers temptations, that come upon it like torrents of rain, floods and tempests, and falleth not, because it is founded upon a rock (*petra*), from which Peter received his name. For *petra* (rock) is not derived from Peter, but Peter from *petra*; just as Christ is not called so from the Christian, but the Christian from Christ. For on this very account the Lord said, “On this rock will I build my Church,” because Peter had said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16-19)”**

He refers in context to **Matthew 16 (KJV):**13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? 14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

The word Peter in the Greek is Πέτρος (pronounced pe'-tros), and means “apparently a primary word; a (piece of) rock (larger than G3037); as a name, Petrus, an apostle:—Peter, rock. Compare G2786. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4074.**

The word for “rock” in the Greek when Jesus said “upon this rock” in verse 18 above is πέτρα (pronounced pe'-trä), “feminine of the same as G4074; a (mass of) rock (literally or figuratively):—rock.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4073.**

He continues, “**On this rock, therefore, He said, which thou hast confessed, I will build my Church. For the Rock (Petra) was Christ; (1 Corinthians 10:4) and on this foundation was Peter himself also built.**”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):4** And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

The word for rock in this verse in each instance is πέτρα (pronounced pe'-trä). This proves that the Church is built upon Christ the Rock, and not Peter, the stone.

He continues, “**For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus, (1 Corinthians 3:11)**”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

He continues, “**The Church, therefore, which is founded in Christ received from Him the keys of the kingdom of heaven in the person of Peter, that is to say, the power of binding and loosing sins.**”

Jesus also spoke to all of the disciples as in **John 20 (KJV):23** And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

And the keys of the kingdom of heaven are what Peter confessed in **Matthew 16 (KJV):16** And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

It is faith in Christ, the Son of the living God, that saves us. And this was Peter’s testimony in **Acts 4 (KJV):8** Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, 9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; 10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. 11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

He continues, “**For what the Church is essentially in Christ, such representatively is Peter in the rock (petra); and in this representation Christ is to be understood as the Rock, Peter as the Church.**”

The name, Peter, refers to a stone, just as other believers are stones as he himself taught in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):4** To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same

is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Peter does not represent the Church. Jesus represents the Church, for we are the body of Christ.

But Augustine continues, “This Church, accordingly, which Peter represented, so long as it lives amidst evil, by loving and following Christ is delivered from evil. But its following is the closer in those who contend even unto death for the truth. But to the universality [of the Church] is it said, “Follow me,” even as it was for the same universality that Christ suffered: of whom this same Peter saith, “Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow His footsteps.” (1 Peter 2:21)”

He refers to **1 Peter 2 (KJV):21** For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

Peter also spoke as in **1 Peter 2 (KJV):24** Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. 25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

He continues, “This, then, you see is why it was said to him, “Follow me.””

He refers in context to **John 21 (KJV):15** So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. 19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. 20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? 21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? 22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.

The “disciple whom Jesus loved” refers to the apostle John.

We then read in **John 21 (KJV):23** Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? 24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

Augustine will now make an analogy of Peter and John, as he continues, “But there is another, an immortal life, that is not in the midst of evil: there we shall see face to face what is seen here through a glass and in a riddle, (1 Corinthians 13:12) even when much progress is made in the beholding of the truth.”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):12** For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

He continues now with his analogy, as he says, “There are two states of life, therefore, preached and commended to herself from heaven, that are known to the Church,

- whereof the one is in faith, the other in sight;
- one in the temporal sojourn in a foreign land, the other in the eternity of the [heavenly] abode;
- one in labor, the other in repose;
- one on the way, the other in the fatherland;
- one in active work, the other in the wages of contemplation;
- one declines from evil and makes for good, the other has no evil to decline from, and has great good to enjoy;
- the one fights with a foe, the other reigns without a foe;
- the one is brave in the midst of adversities, the other has no experience of adversity;
- the one is bridling its carnal lusts, the other has full scope for spiritual delights;
- the one is anxious with the care of conquering, the other secure in the peace of victory;
- the one is helped in temptations, the other, free from all temptations, rejoices in the Helper Himself;
- the one is occupied in relieving the indigent, the other is there, where no indigence is found;
- the one pardons the sins of others, that its own may be pardoned to itself, the other neither has anything to pardon nor does aught for which pardon has to be asked;
- the one is scourged with evils that it may not be elated with good things, the other is free from all evil by such a fullness of grace that, without any temptation to pride, it may cleave to that which is supremely good;
- the one discerneth both good and evil, the other has only that which is good presented to view;
- therefore the one is good, but miserable as yet; the other, better and blessed.”

He then explains his analogy, as he says,

- “This one was signified by the Apostle Peter, that other by John.
- The whole of the one is passed here to the end of this world, and there finds its termination, the other is deferred for its completion till after the end of this world, but has no end in the world to come.
- Hence it is said to the latter, “Follow me;” but of the former, “Thus I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.”

He continues, “For what means this last? So far as my wisdom goes, so far as I comprehend, what is it but this,

- Follow thou me by imitating me in the endurance of temporal evils; let him remain till I come to restore everlasting good?
- And this may be expressed more clearly in this way: Let perfected action, informed by the example of my passion, follow me; but let contemplation only begun remain [so] till I come, to be perfected when I come.

- For the godly plenitude of patience, reaching forward even unto death, followeth Christ; but the fullness of knowledge tarrieth till Christ come, to be manifested then.
- For here the evils of this world are endured in the land of the dying, while there shall be seen the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.”

He continues his analogy, as he explains, “For in saying, “I wish him to tarry till I come,” we are not to understand Him as meaning to remain on, or abide permanently, but to wait; seeing that what is signified by him shall certainly not be fulfilled now, but when Christ is come. But what is signified by him to whom it was said, “Follow thou me,” unless it be done now, will never attain to the expected end. And in this life of activity, the more we love Christ the more easily are we delivered from evil. But He loveth us less as we now are, and therefore delivers from it, that we may not be always such as we are. There, however, He loveth us more; for we shall not have aught about us to displease Him, or aught that He will have to separate us from: nor is it for aught else that He loveth us here but that He may heal and translate us from everything He loveth not. Here, therefore, [He loveth us] less, where He would not have us remain; there in larger measure, whither He would have us to be passing, and out of that wherein He would not that we should perish.”

But we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):** 1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

The Scripture never says He loves us less while we are here, for He calls us sons of God now while we are here in verse 2. But our fellowship will be greater when we are like Him.

He concludes his analogy, as he then says, “Let Peter therefore love Him, that we may obtain deliverance from our present mortality; let John be loved by Him, that we may be preserved in the immortality to come.”

In regards to this life, it is not so miserable when we walk with the Lord as we read in **Psalms 1 (KJV):** 1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate CXXIV. Chapter XXI. 19–25, paragraph 7, page 451-452**

7. Let no one, however, separate these distinguished apostles. In that which was signified by Peter, they were both alike; and in that which was signified by John, they will both be alike hereafter. In their representative character, the one was following, the other tarrying; but in their personal faith they were both of them enduring the present evils of the misery here, both of



them expecting the future good things of the blessedness to come. And such is the case, not with them alone, but with the holy universal Church, the spouse of Christ, who has still to be rescued from the present trials, and to be preserved in the future happiness. And these two states of life were symbolized by Peter and John, the one by the one, the other by the other; but in this life they both of them walked for a time by faith, and the other they shall both of them enjoy eternally by sight. For the whole body of the saints, therefore, inseparably belonging to the body of Christ, and for their safe pilotage through the present tempestuous life, did Peter, the first of the apostles, receive the keys of the kingdom of heaven for the binding and loosing of sins; and for the same congregation of saints, in reference to the perfect repose in the bosom of that mysterious life to come did the evangelist John recline on the breast of Christ. For it is not the former alone but the whole Church, that bindeth and looseth sins; nor did the latter alone drink at the fountain of the Lord's breast, to emit again in preaching, of the Word in the beginning, God with God, and those other sublime truths regarding the divinity of Christ, and the Trinity and Unity of the whole Godhead. which are to be yet beheld in that kingdom face to face, but meanwhile till the Lord's coming are only to be seen in a mirror and in a riddle; but the Lord has Himself diffused this very gospel through the whole world, that every one of His own may drink thereat according to his own individual capacity. There are some who have entertained the idea—and those, too, who are no contemptible handlers of sacred eloquence—that the Apostle John was more loved by Christ on the ground that he never married a wife, and lived in perfect chastity from early boyhood. There is, indeed, no distinct evidence of this in the canonical Scriptures: nevertheless it is an idea that contributes not a little to the suitableness of the opinion expressed above, namely, that that life was signified by him, where there will be no marriage.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Let no one, however, separate these distinguished apostles. In that which was signified by Peter, they were both alike; and in that which was signified by John, they will both be alike hereafter. In their representative character, the one was following, the other tarrying; but in their personal faith they were both of them enduring the present evils of the misery here, both of them expecting the future good things of the blessedness to come. And such is the case, not with them alone, but with the holy universal Church, the spouse of Christ, who has still to be rescued from the present trials, and to be preserved in the future happiness. And these two states of life were symbolized by Peter and John, the one by the one, the other by the other; but in this life they both of them walked for a time by faith, and the other they shall both of them enjoy eternally by sight.”

He refers in context to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):6** Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: **7** (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) **8** We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

He continues, “For the whole body of the saints, therefore, inseparably belonging to the body of Christ, and for their safe pilotage through the present tempestuous life, did Peter, the first of the apostles, receive the keys of the kingdom of heaven for the binding and loosing of sins; and for the same congregation of saints, in reference to the perfect repose in the bosom of that mysterious life to come did the evangelist John recline on the breast of Christ. For it is not the former alone but the whole Church, that bindeth and looseth sins; nor did the latter alone drink at the fountain of the Lord's breast, to emit again in preaching, of the Word in the

beginning, God with God, and those other sublime truths regarding the divinity of Christ, and the Trinity and Unity of the whole Godhead, which are to be yet beheld in that kingdom face to face, but meanwhile till the Lord's coming are only to be seen in a mirror and in a riddle;"

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):16** And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

And Jesus spoke to all of the disciples when he spoke in **John 20 (KJV):22** And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 3 Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

But Peter was not the first of the apostles. Peter was just one of the apostles.

He continues, "but the Lord has Himself diffused this very gospel through the whole world, that every one of His own may drink thereat according to his own individual capacity. There are some who have entertained the idea—and those, too, who are no contemptible handlers of sacred eloquence—that the Apostle John was more loved by Christ on the ground that he never married a wife, and lived in perfect chastity from early boyhood. There is, indeed, no distinct evidence of this in the canonical Scriptures: nevertheless it is an idea that contributes not a little to the suitableness of the opinion expressed above, namely, that that life was signified by him, where there will be no marriage."

Augustine is right when he says that there is "no distinct evidence of this in the canonical Scriptures", that is, of John remaining a virgin his entire life.

We must understand that the Church in Augustine's time had inherited the idea that the apostles had delivered up "their own place of government" to the overseers, or bishops, whom they had appointed in the churches. This was codified by Irenaeus who wrote, as in **Adversus Heresies (Against Heresies), Book 3: Chapter III. Paragraph 1**: "...For if the apostles had known hidden mysteries, which they were in the habit of imparting to "the perfect" apart and privily from the rest, they would have delivered them especially to those to whom they were also committing the Churches themselves. For they were desirous that these men should be very perfect and blameless in all things, whom also they were leaving behind as their successors, delivering up their own place of government to these men; which men, if they discharged their functions honestly, would be a great boon [to the Church], but if they should fall away, the direst calamity."

This thinking about the bishops began to elevate them to a place over other Churches, for Paul, as an apostle, had the care of all the churches as we read in **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):28** Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

If they were to succeed the apostles, and take their place of government in the Church, they would then have care over all the churches, and this is exactly what happened in the early Church. But it did not stop there. Once the bishops had a place of government over other

churches, there began to be one bishop who was the head over other bishops. This bishop began to be called Pope.

Apostolic succession also worked in this regard. A church was an “unauthorized meeting” if they could not show their bishop to be a successor of one who had been appointed by an apostle. Then the tradition of Rome as the preeminent authority in the Church was also codified by Irenaeus who states in **Adversus Heresies, Book 3: Chapter III, Paragraph 2:** “Since, however, it would be very tedious, in such a volume as this, to reckon up the successions of all the Churches, we do put to confusion all those who, in whatever manner, whether by an evil self-pleasing, by vainglory, or by blindness and perverse opinion, assemble in unauthorized meetings; [we do this, I say,] by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops. For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its preeminent authority that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere.” <http://www.theriskofchrist.com/mainbook/commentary.pdf>, page 390.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine  
On the Psalms, Psalm XLV, paragraphs 21-22, page 152**

21. “Out of thy ivory palaces, whereby kings’ daughters have made Thee glad.” Choose whichever you please, “ivory” palaces, or “magnificent,” or “royal” palaces, it is out of these that the kings’ daughters have made Christ glad. Would you understand the spiritual sense of “ivory palaces”? Understand by them the magnificent houses, and tabernacles of God, the hearts of the Saints; and by these selfsame “kings” those who rule their flesh; who bring into subjection to themselves the rebellious commonalty of human affections, who chastise the body, and reduce it to bondage: for it is from these that the daughters of kings have made Him glad. For all the souls that have been born through their preaching and evangelizing are “daughters of kings:” and the Churches, as the daughters of Apostles, are daughters of kings. For He is “King of kings;” they themselves kings, of whom it was said, “Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matthew 19:28) They preached the “Word of Truth;” and begat Churches not for themselves, but for Him....Therefore as “raising up seed to their brother,” to as many as they begat, they gave the name not of “Paulians” or “Petrians,” but of “Christians.” Observe whether that sense is not wakefully kept in these verses. For when he said, “out of the ivory palaces, he spake of mansions royal, ample, honourable, peaceful, like the heart of the Saints; he added, “Whereby the kings’ daughters have made Thee glad in Thine honour.” They are indeed daughters of kings, daughters of thine Apostles, but still “in Thine honour:” for they raised up seed to their brother. Hence Paul, when he saw those whom he had raised up unto his Brother, running after his own name, exclaimed, “Was Paul crucified for you?” (1 Corinthians 1:13)...No; for he says, “Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?”

“The daughters of kings have made Thee glad in Thine honour.” Keep, hold fast this “in Thine honour.” This is meant by having “a wedding garment;” seeking His honour, His glory. Understand moreover by “kings’ daughters” the cities, which were founded by kings, and have

received the faith: and out of the ivory palaces (palaces rich, the proud, the lifted up). “Kings’ daughters have made Thee glad in Thine honour;” in that they sought not the honour of their founders, but have sought Thine honour. **Show me at Rome a temple of Romulus held in so great honour as I can show you the Monument of Peter. (Memoriam Petri (The first basilica of St. Peter, on the Vatican, is attributed to Constantine))** In Peter, who is honoured but He who died for us? For we are followers of Christ, not followers of Peter. And even if we were born from the brother of Him that is dead, yet are we named after the name of Him who is dead. **(Deuteronomy 25:6)** We were begotten by the one, but begotten to the other. Behold, Rome, Carthage, and several other cities are the daughters of kings, and yet have they “made glad the King in His honour:” and all these make up one single Queen.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Out of thy ivory palaces, whereby kings’ daughters have made Thee glad.” Choose whichever you please, “ivory” palaces, or “magnificent,” or “royal” palaces, it is out of these that the kings’ daughters have made Christ glad.”

He is referring in context to **Psalms 45 (KJV):6** Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. 7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. 8 All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad. 9 Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

He continues, as he allegorizes, “Would you understand the spiritual sense of “ivory palaces”? Understand by them the magnificent houses, and tabernacles of God, the hearts of the Saints; and by these selfsame “kings” those who rule their flesh; who bring into subjection to themselves the rebellious commonalty of human affections, who chastise the body, and reduce it to bondage: for it is from these that the daughters of kings have made Him glad. For all the souls that have been born through their preaching and evangelizing are “daughters of kings:” and the Churches, as the daughters of Apostles, are daughters of kings. For He is “King of kings;” they themselves kings, of whom it was said, “Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matthew 19:28)”

He refers to **Matthew 19 (KJV):28** And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

We must keep in mind that there is a divine commentary on Psalm 45:6-7 in **Hebrews 1 (KJV):7** And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. 8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. 9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

These verses in Psalm 45:6-7 are a prophecy of Christ.

Augustine continues, “They preached the “Word of Truth;” and begat Churches not for themselves, but for Him....Therefore as “raising up seed to their brother,” to as many as they begat, they gave the name not of “Paulians” or “Petrians,” but of “Christians.” Observe whether that sense is not wakefully kept in these verses. For when he said, “out of the ivory palaces, he

spake of mansions royal, ample, honourable, peaceful, like the heart of the Saints; he added, “Whereby the kings’ daughters have made Thee glad in Thine honour.” They are indeed daughters of kings, daughters of thine Apostles, but still “in Thine honour.” for they raised up seed to their brother. Hence Paul, when he saw those whom he had raised up unto his Brother, running after his own name, exclaimed, “Was Paul crucified for you?” (1 Corinthians 1:13)...No; for he says, “Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):13** Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

And Jesus is our Brother as we read in **Hebrews 2 (KJV):16** For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. 17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Augustine continues, ““The daughters of kings have made Thee glad in Thine honour.” Keep, hold fast this “in Thine honour.” This is meant by having “a wedding garment,” seeking His honour, His glory. Understand moreover by “kings’ daughters” the cities, which were founded by kings, and have received the faith: and out of the ivory palaces (palaces rich, the proud, the lifted up). “Kings’ daughters have made Thee glad in Thine honour;” in that they sought not the honour of their founders, but have sought Thine honour.”

So “the Churches, as the daughters of Apostles, are daughters of kings”, as he said before, but so also he says, “Understand moreover by “kings’ daughters” the cities, which were founded by kings, and have received the faith”.

He continues, “**Show me at Rome a temple of Romulus held in so great honour as I can show you the Monument of Peter. (Memoriam Petri (The first basilica of St. Peter, on the Vatican, is attributed to Constantine)) In Peter, who is honoured but He who died for us? For we are followers of Christ, not followers of Peter. And even if we were born from the brother of Him that is dead, yet are we named after the name of Him who is dead. (Deuteronomy 25:6)**”

He refers to **Deuteronomy 25 (KJV):6** And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.

He continues, “We were begotten by the one, but begotten to the other. Behold, Rome, Carthage, and several other cities are the daughters of kings, and yet have they “made glad the King in His honour:” and all these make up one single Queen.”

By “Queen”, he refers to the Church. But he is right to call us Christians, for “**we are followers of Christ, not followers of Peter**”, for it was Christ who died for us.

Let us continue to read his next paragraph.

22. What a nuptial song! Behold in the midst of songs full of rejoicing, comes forth the Bride herself. For the Bridegroom was coming. It was He who was being described: it was on Him all our attention was fixed. “Upon Thy right hand did stand the Queen” (ver. 9). She which stands on the left is no Queen. For there will be one standing on “the left” also, to whom it will be said, “Go into everlasting fire.” (Matthew 25:41) But she shall stand on the right hand, to whom it will be said, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matthew 25:34) On Thy right hand did stand the Queen, “in



a vesture of gold, clothed about with divers colours.” What is the vesture of this Queen? It is one both precious, and also of divers colours: it is the mysteries of doctrine in all the various tongues: one African, one Syrian, one Greek, one Hebrew, one this, and one that; it is these languages that produce the divers colours of this vesture. But just as all the divers colours of the vesture blend together in the one vesture, so do all the languages in one and the same faith. In that vesture, let there be diversity, let there be no rent. See we have “understood” the divers colours of the diversity of tongues; and the vesture to refer to unity: but in that diversity itself, what is meant by the “gold”? Wisdom itself. Let there be any diversity of tongues you please, but there is but one “gold” that is preached of: not a different gold, but a different form of that gold. For it is the same Wisdom, the same doctrine and discipline that every language preaches. In the languages there is diversity; gold in the thoughts.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “What a nuptial song! Behold in the midst of songs full of rejoicing, comes forth the Bride herself. For the Bridegroom was coming. It was He who was being described: it was on Him all our attention was fixed. “Upon Thy right hand did stand the Queen” (ver. 9).”

He refers to **Psalm 45 (KJV):9** Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

He continues, “She which stands on the left is no Queen. For there will be one standing on “the left” also, to whom it will be said, “Go into everlasting fire.” (Matthew 25:41) But she shall stand on the right hand, to whom it will be said, “Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matthew 25:34)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 25 (KJV):31** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

But Augustine is taking this Scripture out of context. He believed this to be the final judgment, but this was only the judgment of the nations to determine which nations would go into the kingdom, and the thousand year reign of Christ. This judgment is on earth, and the Son of man has just come in His glory, and sits upon the throne of His glory. The judgment will be based on how a nation treated the Jews, Christ's brethren as we continue to read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):35** For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. 41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also

answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

This judgment has nothing to do with the Church, but is a judgment to determine which nations will go into the Kingdom in the thousand year reign of Christ based on their treatment of the Jews during the tribulation.

But Augustine continues, “On Thy right hand did stand the Queen, “in a vesture of gold, clothed about with divers colours.” What is the vesture of this Queen? It is one both precious, and also of divers colours: it is the mysteries of doctrine in all the various tongues: one African, one Syrian, one Greek, one Hebrew, one this, and one that; it is these languages that produce the divers colours of this vesture. But just as all the divers colours of the vesture blend together in the one vesture, so do all the languages in one and the same faith. In that vesture, let there be diversity, let there be no rent. See we have “understood” the divers colours of the diversity of tongues; and the vesture to refer to unity: but in that diversity itself, what is meant by the “gold”? Wisdom itself. Let there be any diversity of tongues you please, but there is but one “gold” that is preached of: not a different gold, but a different form of that gold. For it is the same Wisdom, the same doctrine and discipline that every language preaches. In the languages there is diversity; gold in the thoughts.”

Psalm 45 is a Psalm the points to the King of Kings as we read in **Psalm 45 (KJV):6** Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.

## **The Laity**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate LI. Chapter XII. 12–26, paragraph 13, page 286-287**

13. Accordingly, brethren, when you hear the Lord saying, “Where I am, there shall also my servant be,” do not think merely of good bishops and clergymen. But be yourselves also in your own way serving Christ, by good lives, by giving alms, by preaching His name and doctrine as you can; and every father of a family also, be acknowledging in this name the affection he owes as a parent to his family. For Christ’s sake, and for the sake of life eternal, let him be warning, and teaching, and exhorting, and correcting all his household; let him show kindness, and exercise discipline; and so in his own house he will be filling an ecclesiastical and kind of episcopal office, and serving Christ, that he may be with Him for ever. For even that noblest service of suffering has been rendered by many of your class; for many who were neither bishops nor clergy, but young men and virgins, those advanced in years with those who were not, many married persons both male and female, many fathers and mothers of families, have served Christ even to the laying down of their lives in martyrdom for His sake, and have been honored by the Father in receiving crowns of exceeding glory.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Accordingly, brethren, when you hear the Lord saying, “Where I am, there shall also my servant be,” do not think merely of good bishops

and clergymen.”

He refers to **John 12 (KJV):26** If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

He continues, “But be yourselves also in your own way serving Christ, by good lives, by giving alms, by preaching His name and doctrine as you can; and every father of a family also, be acknowledging in this name the affection he owes as a parent to his family. For Christ’s sake, and for the sake of life eternal, let him be warning, and teaching, and exhorting, and correcting all his household; let him show kindness, and exercise discipline; and so in his own house he will be filling an ecclesiastical and kind of episcopal office, and serving Christ, that he may be with Him for ever. For even that noblest service of suffering has been rendered by many of your class; for many who were neither bishops nor clergy, but young men and virgins, those advanced in years with those who were not, many married persons both male and female, many fathers and mothers of families, have served Christ even to the laying down of their lives in martyrdom for His sake, and have been honored by the Father in receiving crowns of exceeding glory.”

God has set the members, every one of them, in the body of Christ as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. 25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. 26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

Just as eyes, hands, head, and feet, have a definite function to perform in the body, so the members in Christ’s body all have a function to perform. Now there is a definite order of ministry in the body of Christ as we continue to read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):** 27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

Every member in the body of Christ has a ministry gift. In the Catholic Church in Augustine’s day, there was a clergy and a laity. But here we see that Augustine is encouraging even the laity to be servants of Christ.

## **Binding and Loosing**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine  
On the Psalms, Psalm CII, paragraph 20, page 500**

20. “Out of the heaven did the Lord look down upon the earth” (ver. 19): “that He might hear the mournings of such as are in fetters, and deliver the children of such as are put to death” (ver. 20). We have found it said in another Psalm, “O let the sorrowful sighs of the fettered come before Thee;” (Psalm 79:11) and in a passage where the voice of the martyrs was meant. Whence are the martyrs in fetters?...But God had bound them with these fetters, hard indeed and painful for a season, but endurable on account of His promises, unto whom it is said, “On account of the words of Thy lips, I have kept hard ways.” We must indeed groan in these fetters in order to gain the mercy of God. These fetters must not be shunned, in order to gain a destructive freedom and the temporal and brief pleasure of this life, to be followed by perpetual bitterness. Accordingly Scripture, (Ecclesiasticus 6:24-32) that we may not refuse the fetters of wisdom, thus addresseth us: “...Then shall her fetters be a strong defence for thee, and her chains a robe of glory.” Let the fettered therefore cry out, as long as they are in the chains of the discipline of God, in which the martyrs have been tried: the fetters shall be loosed, and they shall fly away, and these very fetters shall afterwards be turned into an ornament. This hath happened with the martyrs. For what have the persecutors effected by killing them, except that their fetters were thereby loosed, and turned into crowns?...The remission of sins, is the loosing. For what would it have profited Lazarus, that he came forth from the tomb, unless it were said to him, “loose him, and let him go”? (John 11:44) Himself indeed with His voice aroused him from the tomb, Himself restored his life by crying unto him, Himself overcame the mass of earth that was heaped upon the tomb, and he came forth bound hand and foot: not therefore with his own feet, but by the power of Him who drew him forth. **This taketh place in the heart of the penitent: when thou hearest a man is sorry for his sins, he hath already come again to life; when thou hearest him by confessing lay bare his conscience, he is already drawn forth from the tomb, but he is not as yet loosed. When is he loosed, and by whom is he loosed? “Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth,” He saith, “shall be loosed in Heaven.” (Matthew 16:19) Forgiveness of sins may justly be granted by the Church: but the dead man himself cannot be aroused except by the Lord crying within him; for God doth this within him. We speak to your ears: how do we know what may be going on in your hearts? But what is going on within, is not our doing, but His.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Out of the heaven did the Lord look down upon the earth” (ver. 19): “that He might hear the mournings of such as are in fetters, and deliver the children of such as are put to death” (ver. 20).”

He refers **Psalm 101 (Douay Rheims):20** Because he hath looked forth from his high sanctuary: from heaven the Lord hath looked upon the earth. 21 That he might hear the groans of them that are in fetters: that he might release the children of the slain:

And to **Psalm 102 (KJV):19** For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; 20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death;

He continues, “We have found it said in another Psalm, “O let the sorrowful sighs of the fettered come before Thee;” (Psalm 79:11) and in a passage where the voice of the martyrs was meant.”

He refers to **Psalm 78 (Douay Rheims):11** Let the sighing of the prisoners come in

before thee. According to the greatness of thy arm, take possession of the children of them that have been put to death.

And to **Psalm 79 (Septuagint):11** Let the groaning of the prisoners come in before thee; according to the greatness of thine arm preserve the sons of the slain ones.

And to **Psalm 79 (KJV):11** Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die;

He continues, “Whence are the martyrs in fetters?...But God had bound them with these fetters, hard indeed and painful for a season, but endurable on account of His promises, unto whom it is said, “On account of the words of Thy lips, I have kept hard ways.” We must indeed groan in these fetters in order to gain the mercy of God. These fetters must not be shunned, in order to gain a destructive freedom and the temporal and brief pleasure of this life, to be followed by perpetual bitterness. Accordingly Scripture, (Ecclesiasticus 6:24-32) that we may not refuse the fetters of wisdom, thus addresseth us: “...Then shall her fetters be a strong defence for thee, and her chains a robe of glory.””

He is referring in context to **Ecclesiasticus 6 (KJV):22** For wisdom is according to her name, and she is not manifest unto many. 23 Give ear, my son, receive my advice, and refuse not my counsel, 24 And put thy feet into her fetters, and thy neck into her chain. 25 Bow down thy shoulder, and bear her, and be not grieved with her bonds. 26 Come unto her with thy whole heart, and keep her ways with all thy power. 27 Search, and seek, and she shall be made known unto thee: and when thou hast got hold of her, let her not go. 28 For at the last thou shalt find her rest, and that shall be turned to thy joy. 29 Then shall her fetters be a strong defence for thee, and her chains a robe of glory. 30 For there is a golden ornament upon her, and her bands are purple lace. 31 Thou shalt put her on as a robe of honour, and shalt put her about thee as a crown of joy. 32 My son, if thou wilt, thou shalt be taught: and if thou wilt apply thy mind, thou shalt be prudent.

In verse 29, the fetters Augustine refers to are wisdom. He continues, “Let the fettered therefore cry out, as long as they are in the chains of the discipline of God, in which the martyrs have been tried: the fetters shall be loosed, and they shall fly away, and these very fetters shall afterwards be turned into an ornament. This hath happened with the martyrs. For what have the persecutors effected by killing them, except that their fetters were thereby loosed, and turned into crowns?...The remission of sins, is the loosing. For what would it have profited Lazarus, that he came forth from the tomb, unless it were said to him, “loose him, and let him go”? (John 11:44)”

He refers to **John 11 (KJV):44** And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

He continues, “Himself indeed with His voice aroused him from the tomb, Himself restored his life by crying unto him, Himself overcame the mass of earth that was heaped upon the tomb, and he came forth bound hand and foot: not therefore with his own feet, but by the power of Him who drew him forth. **This taketh place in the heart of the penitent: when thou hearest a man is sorry for his sins, he hath already come again to life; when thou hearest him by confessing lay bare his conscience, he is already drawn forth from the tomb, but he is not as yet loosed.**”

If one “**hath already come again to life**”, then they have been born again.



He continues, as he then asks, “When is he loosed, and by whom is he loosed? “Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth,” He saith, “shall be loosed in Heaven.” (Matthew 16:19)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 16 (KJV):18** And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

In Augustine’s thinking, Peter represented the Church, so Jesus was giving this authority of binding and loosing to the Church. But Jesus was not giving this authority to any Church. He is giving it to believers. When we preach the Gospel, we have authority to tell those who believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord that they are loosed from their sins.

However, he continues, “Forgiveness of sins may justly be granted by the Church: but the dead man himself cannot be aroused except by the Lord crying within him; for God doth this within him. We speak to your ears: how do we know what may be going on in your hearts? But what is going on within, is not our doing, but His.”

Augustine understood that it is a working of God in the heart that brings about the new birth. He acknowledged the authority of the Church to forgive sins, but he affirmed that it is God who is working in the hearts of those who will be born again by the Spirit of God.

The Church has no authority to forgive sins. It is God who forgives sins when we confess them in Jesus’ name.

## Summary

Augustine saw the Church as a fulfillment of the Scriptures in the Old Testament referring to Israel. The Church in his thinking had replaced Israel because Israel did not keep the covenant, and had become carnal. He says, “And thus the spiritual Israel is made up, not of one nation, but of all the nations which were promised to the fathers in their seed, that is, in Christ.” The Church is spiritual Israel, as distinguished from the carnal Israel, that is Israel after the flesh, or so he thought. Augustine does not understand that although he is speaking of carnal Israel in his time, the prophet Ezekiel is prophesying of a time when carnal Israel will again be spiritual in the future as a nation of believers. And so Augustine says, speaking of Ezekiel 36:24, “And therefore we ought to take this saying, “And I will bring you into your own land,” and what he says shortly afterwards, as if repeating himself, “And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers,” not literally, as if they referred to Israel after the flesh, but spiritually, as referring to the spiritual Israel.”

That this is speaking of literal Israel, we have only to read in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):35** Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. 37 Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord.

Now, by these terms, such as Pope, Apostolic See, and “rescripts” which “were duly issued from the council of the African bishops”, we see the government of the Church in the time of Augustine. He speaks of Sixtus who was a Co-Presbyter, and whom he addresses as “your Grace” and “your Holiness”, and he refers to the “holy brother the presbyter Firmus”. The Roman clergy was the priesthood, and everyone else was the “laity”. And he refers to “layman, or monk, or clerk, or Bishop” in his time. We see a great emphasis on the recognition of a hierarchy in the Church in the time of Augustine.

Augustine also acknowledged that he himself was a priest as he says, “Of a truth, Brethren, for that God hath so willed, I am His priest.”

He did acknowledge Jesus as the “Head of His Church”, which is His Body, and the foundation as spoken of by Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:11.

Now Augustine did acknowledge any right hearted man in regards to the interpretation of the Scriptures, as he says, “But the grace and mercy of the Lord is present, and allows them not to do so; for He hath hedged round all His declarations with His truth, and in such wise balanced them; that if any one would wish to cut off anything from them, or to introduce anything by a bad reading or interpretation, any right hearted man may join to the Scripture what has been cut off from the Scripture, and read what went above or below, and he will find the sense which the other wished to interpret wrongly.” And if there was a “wicked cleric”, he told his flock to “do as they say, not as they do”.

However, he did not believe that sins could be forgiven outside of the Church, that is, the Catholic Church in his time, as he says, “And thus sins, because they are not forgiven out of the Church, must be forgiven by that Spirit, by whom the Church is gathered together into one.” Augustine treated everyone who separates from the Catholic Church as a limb “amputated from the body”.

In regards to Peter, Augustine said, “For if the lineal succession of bishops is to be taken into account, with how much more certainty and benefit to the Church do we reckon back till we reach Peter himself, to whom, as bearing in a figure the whole Church, the Lord said: “Upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!” (Matthew 16:18)”

But Augustine also said, “Now this name of Peter was given him by the Lord, and that in a figure, that he should signify the Church. For seeing that Christ is the rock (Petra), Peter is the Christian people. For the rock (Petra) is the original name. Therefore Peter is so called from the rock; not the rock from Peter; as Christ is not called Christ from the Christian, but the Christian from Christ. “Therefore,” he saith, “Thou art Peter; and upon this Rock” which thou hast confessed, upon this Rock which thou hast acknowledged, saying, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, will I build My Church;” that is upon Myself, the Son of the living God, “will I build My Church.” I will build thee upon Myself, not Myself upon thee.”

Augustine also acknowledged that, “This same Peter therefore who had been by the Rock pronounced “blessed,” bearing the figure of the Church, holding the chief place in the Apostleship, a very little while after that he had heard that he was “blessed,” a very little while after that he had heard that he was “Peter,” a very little while after that he had heard that he was to be “built upon the Rock,” displeased the Lord when He had heard of His future Passion, for He had foretold His disciples that it was soon to be.”

Augustine understood that Peter was not the rock upon which the Church would be built. Rather he thought that Peter signified the Christian people. In his mind, Peter was first in the ranking of the Apostles, “bearing the figure of the Church, holding the chief place in the Apostleship”. And he based his thinking on Jesus’ words to Peter, as he says, “For if in Peter’s case there were no sacramental symbol of the Church, the Lord would not have said to him, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.” (Matthew 16:19) If this was said only to Peter, it gives no ground of action to the Church. But if such is the case also in the Church, that what is bound on earth is bound in heaven, and what is loosed on earth is loosed in heaven,—for when the Church excommunicates, the excommunicated person is bound in heaven; when one is reconciled by the Church, the person so reconciled is loosed in heaven:—if such, then, is the case in the Church, Peter, in receiving the keys, represented the holy Church.”

Augustine’s thinking is clearly revealed, when he summarizes, and says, “So does the Church act in blessed hope through this troublous life; and this Church symbolized in its generality, was personified in the Apostle Peter, on account of the primacy of his apostleship. For, as regards his proper personality, he was by nature one man, by grace one Christian, by still more abounding grace one, and yet also, the first apostle; but when it was said to him, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven,” he represented the universal Church, which in this world is shaken by divers temptations, that come upon it like torrents of rain, floods and tempests, and falleth not, because it is founded upon a rock (*petra*), from which Peter received his name. For *petra* (rock) is not derived from Peter, but Peter from *petra*; just as Christ is not called so from the Christian, but the Christian from Christ. For on this very account the Lord said, “On this rock will I build my Church,” because Peter had said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16-19) On this rock, therefore, He said, which thou hast confessed, I will build my Church. For the Rock (*Petra*) was Christ; (1 Corinthians 10:4) and on this foundation was Peter himself also built. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus, (1 Corinthians 3:11) The Church, therefore, which is founded in Christ received from Him the keys of the kingdom of heaven in the person of Peter, that is to say, the power of binding and loosing sins. For what the Church is essentially in Christ, such representatively is Peter in the rock (*petra*); and in this representation Christ is to be understood as the Rock, Peter as the Church. This Church, accordingly, which Peter represented, so long as it lives amidst evil, by loving and following Christ is delivered from evil.”

But Augustine concludes, “In Peter, who is honoured but He who died for us? For we are followers of Christ, not followers of Peter. And even if we were born from the brother of Him that is dead, yet are we named after the name of Him who is dead.”

But we are not “born from the brother of Him that is dead”, that is, Peter who represents the Church, but we are born of God.

Concerning the Laity, Augustine says, “Accordingly, brethren, when you hear the Lord saying, “Where I am, there shall also my servant be,” do not think merely of good bishops and clergymen. But be yourselves also in your own way serving Christ, by good lives, by giving

alms, by preaching His name and doctrine as you can; and every father of a family also, be acknowledging in this name the affection he owes as a parent to his family.”

Concerning binding and loosing, Augustine said, “**This taketh place in the heart of the penitent: when thou hearest a man is sorry for his sins, he hath already come again to life; when thou hearest him by confessing lay bare his conscience, he is already drawn forth from the tomb, but he is not as yet loosed. When is he loosed, and by whom is he loosed? “Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth,” He saith, “shall be loosed in Heaven.” (Matthew 16:19) Forgiveness of sins may justly be granted by the Church: but the dead man himself cannot be aroused except by the Lord crying within him; for God doth this within him. We speak to your ears: how do we know what may be going on in your hearts? But what is going on within, is not our doing, but His.**”

But forgiveness of sins is not granted by the Church. Forgiveness of sins is granted by the Lord when we confess our sins. The Church, that is any believer, may tell the one who has confessed Jesus as Lord, and believed in His resurrection, that their sins have been remitted. We are only vessels of good news. But God is the one who forgives.

There is a hierarchy in the Church as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Not all are apostles. But we all have a ministry in His body. It depends on how He has gifted us as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Let us do our part, and fulfill our ministry. For in our measure, we will make increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

## The Law

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermon LXXV. [CXXV. Ben.] Again in John v. 2, etc., on the five porches, where lay a great multitude of impotent folk, and of the pool of Siloa., Paragraph 2, page 475-476**

2. The five porches in which the infirm folk lay signify the Law, which was first given to the Jews and to the people of Israel by Moses the servant of God. For this Moses the minister of the Law wrote five books. In relation therefore to the number of the books which he wrote, the five porches figured the Law. But because the Law was not given to heal the infirm, but to discover and to manifest them; for so saith the Apostle, "For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law; But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe; (Galatians 3:21-22) therefore in those porches the sick folk lay, but were not cured. For what saith he? "If there had been a law given which could have given life." Therefore those porches which figured the Law could not cure the sick. Some one will say to me, "Why then was it given?" The Apostle Paul hath himself explained: "Scripture," saith he, "hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." For these folk who were sick, thought themselves to be whole. They received the Law, which they were not able to fulfil; they learnt in what disease they were, and they implored the Physician's aid; they wished to be cured because they came to know they were in distress, which they would not have known if they had not been unable to fulfil the Law which had been given. For man thought himself innocent, and from this very pride of false innocence became more mad. To tame this pride then and to lay it bare, the Law was given; not to deliver the sick, but to convince the proud. Attend then, Beloved; to this end was the Law given, to discover diseases, not to take them away. And so then those sick folk who might have been sick in their own houses with greater privacy, if those five porches had not existed, were in those porches set forth to the eyes of all men, but were not by the porches cured. The Law therefore was useful to discover sins, because that man being made more abundantly guilty by the transgression of the Law, might, having tamed his pride, implore the help of Him That pitieth. Attend to the Apostle; "The Law entered that sin might abound; but where sin abounded, grace hath much more abounded." (Romans 5:20) What is, "The Law entered that sin might abound"? As in another place he saith, "For where there is no law, there is no transgression." (Romans 4:15) Man may be called a sinner before the Law, a transgressor he cannot. But when he hath sinned, after that he hath received the Law, he is found not only a sinner, but a transgressor. Forasmuch then as to sin is added transgression, therefore "hath sin abounded." And when sin abounds, human pride learns at length to submit itself, and to confess to God, and to say "I am weak." To say to those words of the Psalm which none but the humbled soul saith, "I said, Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee." (Psalm 41:4) Let the weak soul then say this that is at least convinced by transgression, and not cured, but manifested by the Law. Hear too Paul himself showing thee, both that the Law is good, and yet that nothing but the grace of Christ delivereth from sin. For the Law can prohibit and command; apply the



medicine, that that which doth not allow a man to fulfil the Law, may be cured, it cannot, but grace only doeth that. For the Apostle saith, “For I delight in the Law of God after the inner man.” (Romans 7:22) That is, I see now that what the Law blames is evil, and what the Law commands is good. “For I delight in the Law of God after the inner man. I see another law in my members resisting the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity in the law of sin.” This derived from the punishment of sin, from the propagation of death, from the condemnation of Adam, “resists the law of the mind, and brings it into captivity in the law of sin which is in the members.” He was convinced; he received the Law, that he might be convinced: see now what profit it was to him that he was convinced. Hear the following words, “Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Roman 7:24-25)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “The five porches in which the infirm folk lay signify the Law, which was first given to the Jews and to the people of Israel by Moses the servant of God.”

He refers in context to **John 5 (KJV):1** After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. 3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. 4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. 5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? 7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. 8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. 9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

He continues, “For this Moses the minister of the Law wrote five books. In relation therefore to the number of the books which he wrote, the five porches figured the Law. But because the Law was not given to heal the infirm, but to discover and to manifest them; for so saith the Apostle, “For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law; But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe; (Galatians 3:21-22)”

He refers to **Galatians 3 (KJV):21** Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

He continues, “therefore in those porches the sick folk lay, but were not cured. For what saith he? “If there had been a law given which could have given life.” Therefore those porches which figured the Law could not cure the sick. Some one will say to me, “Why then was it given?” The Apostle Paul hath himself explained: “Scripture,” saith he, “hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” For these folk who were sick, thought themselves to be whole. They received the Law, which they were not able to fulfil; they learnt in what disease they were, and they implored the Physician’s

aid; they wished to be cured because they came to know they were in distress, which they would not have known if they had not been unable to fulfil the Law which had been given. For man thought himself innocent, and from this very pride of false innocence became more mad. To tame this pride then and to lay it bare, the Law was given; not to deliver the sick, but to convince the proud. Attend then, Beloved; to this end was the Law given, to discover diseases, not to take them away. And so then those sick folk who might have been sick in their own houses with greater privacy, if those five porches had not existed, were in those porches set forth to the eyes of all men, but were not by the porches cured. The Law therefore was useful to discover sins, because that man being made more abundantly guilty by the transgression of the Law, might, having tamed his pride, implore the help of Him That pitieth. Attend to the Apostle; "The Law entered that sin might abound; but where sin abounded, grace hath much more abounded." (Romans 5:20)"

He refers in context to **Romans 5 (KJV):20** Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

And to **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

He continues, "What is, "The Law entered that sin might abound"? As in another place he saith, "For where there is no law, there is no transgression." (Romans 4:15)"

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):15** Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

He continues, "Man may be called a sinner before the Law, a transgressor he cannot. But when he hath sinned, after that he hath received the Law, he is found not only a sinner, but a transgressor. Forasmuch then as to sin is added transgression, therefore "hath sin abounded." And when sin abounds, human pride learns at length to submit itself, and to confess to God, and to say "I am weak." To say to those words of the Psalm which none but the humbled soul saith, "I said, Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee." (Psalm 41:4)"

He refers to **Psalm 41 (KJV):4** I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.

He continues, "Let the weak soul then say this that is at least convinced by transgression, and not cured, but manifested by the Law. Hear too Paul himself showing thee, both that the Law is good, and yet that nothing but the grace of Christ delivereth from sin. For the Law can prohibit and command; apply the medicine, that that which doth not allow a man to fulfil the Law, may be cured, it cannot, but grace only doeth that. For the Apostle saith, "For I delight in the Law of God after the inner man." (Romans 7:22) That is, I see now that what the Law blames is evil, and what the Law commands is good. "For I delight in the Law of God after the inner man. I see another law in my members resisting the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity in the law of sin.""

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

He continues, "This derived from the punishment of sin, from the propagation of death, from the condemnation of Adam, "resists the law of the mind, and brings it into captivity in the

law of sin which is in the members.” He was convinced; he received the Law, that he might be convinced: see now what profit it was to him that he was convinced. Hear the following words, “Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Roman 7:24-25)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (Douay Rheims):**24 Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 The grace of God, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, I myself, with the mind serve the law of God: but with the flesh, the law of sin.

And to **Romans 7 (KJV):**24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Augustine has explained the purpose of the law very well. We can agree with Augustine here.

## Summary

Augustine has explained the purpose of the law according to the Scriptures. The law cannot give us life, and he refers to **Galatians 3 (KJV):**21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

His analogy of the five porches and the law in John 5:1-9 is of some value. The five porches could not heal, or deliver from bondage. But in a sense, they directed the sick one to the sheep market which was a pool where healing could occur.

The law only makes us aware of our need. The law shows us that we have sin, and that we are without a remedy of ourselves before God. Augustine is clear that His grace reigns through righteousness, as he refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):**20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

We have only to receive righteousness by faith of Jesus Christ, by believing in Him.

# Grace

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Forgiveness of Sins, and Baptism, Book 1, Chapter 43, page 31-32

Chapter 43.—From the Epistle to the Romans.

Let me now request your attention to the testimony of the Apostle Paul on this subject. And quotations from him may of course be made more abundantly, because he wrote more epistles, and because it fell to him to recommend the grace of God with especial earnestness, in opposition to those who gloried in their works, and who, ignorant of God's righteousness, and wishing to establish their own, submitted not to the righteousness of God. (Romans 10:3) In his Epistle to the Romans he writes: "The righteousness of God is upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; since all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness; that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Romans 3:22-26) Then in another passage he says: "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin. (Romans 4:4-8) And then after no long interval he observes: "Now, it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Romans 4:23-25) Then a little after he writes: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Romans 5:6) In another passage he says: "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I know not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 7:14-25) **Let them, who can, say that men are not born in the body of this death, that so they may be able to affirm that they have no need of God's grace through Jesus Christ in order to be delivered from the body of this death. Therefore he adds, a few verses afterwards: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." (Romans 8:3) Let**

them say, who dare, that Christ must have been born in the likeness of sinful flesh, if we were not born in sinful flesh.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Let me now request your attention to the testimony of the Apostle Paul on this subject. And quotations from him may of course be made more abundantly, because he wrote more epistles, and because it fell to him to recommend the grace of God with especial earnestness, in opposition to those who gloried in their works, and who, ignorant of God’s righteousness, and wishing to establish their own, submitted not to the righteousness of God. (Romans 10:3)”

He refers to **Romans 10 (KJV):3** For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

He continues, “In his Epistle to the Romans he writes: “The righteousness of God is upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; since all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness; that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Romans 3:22-26)”

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):22** Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

He continues, “Then in another passage he says: “To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin. (Romans 4:4-8)”

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):4** Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

He continues, “And then after no long interval he observes: “Now, it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” (Romans 4:23-25) Then a little after he writes: “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” (Romans 5:6)”



He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):23** Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

And to **Romans 5 (KJV):6** For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Augustine then continues, “In another passage he says: “We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I know not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 7:14-25)”

And he refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):14** For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Augustine then concludes, “Let them, who can, say that men are not born in the body of this death, that so they may be able to affirm that they have no need of God’s grace through Jesus Christ in order to be delivered from the body of this death. Therefore he adds, a few verses afterwards: “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” (Romans 8:3) Let them say, who dare, that Christ must have been born in the likeness of sinful flesh, if we were not born in sinful flesh.”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):3** For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Augustine rightly divides the Scriptures here.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On Nature and Grace, Chapter 4, page 122**

Chapter 4 [IV.]—Free Grace.

This grace, however, of Christ, without which neither infants nor adults can be saved, is not rendered for any merits, but is given *gratis*, on account of which it is also called grace. “Being justified,” says the apostle, “freely through His blood.” (Romans 3:24) Whence they, who are not liberated through grace, either because they are not yet able to hear, or because they are unwilling to obey; or again because they did not receive, at the time when they were unable on account of youth to hear, that **bath of regeneration**, which they might have received and through which they might have been saved, are indeed justly condemned; because they are not without sin, either that which they have derived from their birth, or that which they have added from their own misconduct. **“For all have sinned”—whether in Adam or in themselves—“and come short of the glory of God.”** (Romans 3:23)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “This grace, however, of Christ, without which neither infants nor adults can be saved, is not rendered for any merits, but is given *gratis*, on account of which it is also called grace. “Being justified,” says the apostle, “freely through His blood.” (Romans 3:24)”

He refers in context to **Romans 3 (KJV):24** Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

He continues, “Whence they, who are not liberated through grace, either because they are not yet able to hear, or because they are unwilling to obey; or again because they did not receive, at the time when they were unable on account of youth to hear, **that bath of regeneration**, which they might have received and through which they might have been saved, are indeed justly condemned; because they are not without sin, either that which they have derived from their birth, or that which they have added from their own misconduct. **“For all have sinned”—whether in Adam or in themselves—“and come short of the glory of God.”** (Romans 3:23)”

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

When Augustine refers to **“that bath of regeneration”**, he refers to his belief, and the belief of the Church in his time, that one was regenerated, or born again, when they were baptized. We have already dealt with this extensively so we will not revisit this. But when we believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord, we are born again, and “washed” of our sins, and we are saved by His grace. Baptism is only a token to show the world that we have believed. We are baptized because we believe in Jesus Christ.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On the Proceedings of Pelagius, Chapter 21 (VIII- IX), page 192**

## Chapter 21 [VIII.]—The Same Continued.

It is not nature, therefore, which, sold as it is under sin and wounded by the offence, longs for a Redeemer and Saviour; nor is it the knowledge of the law—through which comes the discovery, not the expulsion, of sin—which delivers us from the body of this death; **but it is the Lord's good grace through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 7:25)**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “It is not nature, therefore, which, sold as it is under sin and wounded by the offence, longs for a Redeemer and Saviour; nor is it the knowledge of the law—through which comes the discovery, not the expulsion, of sin—which delivers us from the body of this death; **but it is the Lord's good grace through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 7:25)**”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? **25** I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

And to **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Augustine is correct. The “knowledge of the law—through which comes the discovery, not the expulsion, of sin” cannot save us. The law cannot give us life as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):21** Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. **22** But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

## Chapter 21 [IX.]—The Same Continued.

This grace is not dying nature, nor the slaying letter, but the vivifying spirit; for already did he possess nature with freedom of will, because he said: “To will is present with me.” (Romans 7:18) Nature, however, in a healthy condition and without a flaw, he did not possess, for he said: “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth nothing good.” (Romans 7:18) Already had he the knowledge of God's holy law, for he said: “I had not known sin but through the law;” (Romans 7:12) yet for all that, he did not possess strength and power to practice and fulfill righteousness, for he complained: “What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.” (Romans 7:15) And again, “How to accomplish that which is good I find not.” (Romans 7:18) **Therefore it is not from the liberty of the human will, nor from the precepts of the law, that there comes deliverance from the body of this death; for both of these he had already,—the one in his nature, the other in his learning; but all he wanted was the help of the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “This grace is not dying nature, nor the slaying letter, but the vivifying spirit; for already did he possess nature with freedom of will, because he said: “To will is present with me.” (Romans 7:18) Nature, however, in a healthy condition and

without a flaw, he did not possess, for he said: “I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth nothing good.” (Romans 7:18)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

However, Paul is speaking of his own experience as one who was saved by grace, and yet still found that there was a battle within him because of the sin nature of his flesh. So his will was set free when he was born again, but in the unsaved, there is only the appearance of freedom of will when, in reality, we were slaves to our flesh and could not please God. Augustine acknowledges this in part as he says, “Nature, however, in a healthy condition and without a flaw, he did not possess...”

Augustine continues, “Already had he the knowledge of God’s holy law, for he said: “I had not known sin but through the law;” (Romans 7:7,12) yet for all that, he did not possess strength and power to practice and fulfill righteousness, for he complained: “What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.” (Romans 7:15) And again, “How to accomplish that which is good I find not.” (Romans 7:18)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):7** What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

And to **Romans 7 (KJV):12** Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

And to **Romans 7 (KJV):15** For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

And again to **Romans 7 (KJV):18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Augustine thought that Paul was speaking of the time when he was a Jew under the law, before he was saved. But Paul was saved when he wrote Romans, and he says in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

The only way Paul could “delight in the law of God after the inward man” is if he was born again.

He concludes, “Therefore it is not from the liberty of the human will, nor from the precepts of the law, that there comes deliverance from the body of this death; for both of these he had already,—the one in his nature, the other in his learning; but all he wanted was the help of the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Paul’s will was indeed free when he accepted Christ as his savior. But the sin nature of his flesh still warred against his mind by which he then wanted to do the will of God. It was his realization that he had the life of the Spirit of God in his spirit, and a new divine nature as a result of this life of the Spirit in him, that set him free from having to perform the works of the flesh, as he reveals in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

The grace of God is how we received the life of the Spirit of God by whom we were born again. This new birth gives us a new nature in our spirit, and eternal life. Paul was not saying that he had now arrived to a sinless state, but that he now had the freedom to walk in the Spirit

because “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” had made him “free from the law of sin and death”.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On the Proceedings of Pelagius, Chapters 22-23, page 192-193**

Chapter 22 [X.]—The Same Continued. The Synod Supposed that the Grace Acknowledged by Pelagius Was that Which Was So Thoroughly Known to the Church.

This grace, then, which was most completely known in the Catholic Church (as the bishops were well aware), they supposed Pelagius made confession of, when they heard him say that “a man, when converted from his sins, is able by his own exertion and the grace of God to be without sin.” For my own part, however, I remembered the treatise which had been given to me, that I might refute it, by those servants of God, who had been Pelagius’ followers. (Timasius and Jacobus, at whose instance Augustin wrote, and to whom he addressed his book *De Naturâ et Gratiâ*.) They, notwithstanding their great affection for him, plainly acknowledged that the passage was his; when, on this question being proposed, because he had already given offence to very many persons from advancing views against the grace of God, **he most expressly admitted that “what he meant by God’s grace was that, when our nature was created, it received the capacity of not sinning, because it was created with free will.”** On account, therefore, of this treatise, I cannot help feeling still anxious, whilst many of the brethren who are well acquainted with his discussions, share in my anxiety, lest under the ambiguity which notoriously characterizes his words there lies some latent reserve, and lest he should afterwards tell his followers that it was without prejudice to his own doctrine that he made any admissions,—discoursing thus: **“I no doubt asserted that a man was able by his own exertion and the grace of God to live without sin; but you know very well what I mean by grace; and you may recollect reading that grace is that in which we are created by God with a free will.”** Accordingly, while the bishops understood him to mean the grace by which we have by adoption been made new creatures, not that by which we were created (for most plainly does Holy Scripture instruct us in the former sense of grace as the true one), ignorant of his being a heretic, they acquitted him as a Catholic. I must say that my suspicion is excited also by this, that in the work which I answered, he most openly said that “righteous Abel never sinned at all.” Now, however, he thus expresses himself: **“But we did not say that any man could be found who at no time whatever, from infancy to old age, has committed sin; but that, if any man were converted from his sins, he could by his own labour and God’s grace be without sin.”** When speaking of righteous Abel, he did not say that after being converted from his sins he became sinless in a new life, but that he never committed sin at all. If, then, that book be his, it must of course be corrected and amended from his answer. For I should be sorry to say that he was insincere in his more recent statement; lest perhaps he should say that he had forgotten what he had previously written in the book we have quoted. Let us therefore direct our view to what afterwards occurred. Now, from the sequel of these ecclesiastical proceedings, we can by God’s help show that, although Pelagius, as some suppose, cleared himself in his examination, and was at all events acquitted by his judges (who were, however, but human beings after all), that this great heresy, which we should be most unwilling to see making further progress or



becoming aggravated in guilt, was undoubtedly itself condemned.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “This grace, then, which was most completely known in the Catholic Church (as the bishops were well aware), they supposed Pelagius made confession of, when they heard him say that “a man, when converted from his sins, is able by his own exertion and the grace of God to be without sin.”

He continues, “For my own part, however, I remembered the treatise which had been given to me, that I might refute it, by those servants of God, who had been Pelagius’ followers. (Timasius and Jacobus, at whose instance Augustin wrote, and to whom he addressed his book *De Naturâ et Gratiâ*.) They, notwithstanding their great affection for him, plainly acknowledged that the passage was his; when, on this question being proposed, because he had already given offence to very many persons from advancing views against the grace of God, most expressly admitted that “what he meant by God’s grace was that, when our nature was created, it received the capacity of not sinning, because it was created with free will.””

Augustine continues, quoting Pelagius, ““I no doubt asserted that a man was able by his own exertion and the grace of God to live without sin; but you know very well what I mean by grace; and you may recollect reading that grace is that in which we are created by God with a free will.””

Augustine continues, “Accordingly, while the bishops understood him to mean the grace by which we have by adoption been made new creatures, not that by which we were created (for most plainly does Holy Scripture instruct us in the former sense of grace as the true one), ignorant of his being a heretic, they acquitted him as a Catholic. I must say that my suspicion is excited also by this, that in the work which I answered, he most openly said that “righteous Abel never sinned at all.””

Because of Adam’s sin, we are born with a nature to sin, which is the law of sin that is in my members as in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

This law of sin in our members prevents us from doing what we would otherwise do. Before Christ, we are totally controlled by this law of sin, being just in the flesh as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):8** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Augustine continues, quoting Pelagius again, “Now, however, he thus expresses himself: ““But we did not say that any man could be found who at no time whatever, from infancy to old age, has committed sin; but that, if any man were converted from his sins, he could by his own labour and God’s grace be without sin.””

It is clear that Pelagius still means that by God’s grace, “when our nature was created, it received the capacity of not sinning, because it was created with free will”.

Augustine then continues, “When speaking of righteous Abel, he did not say that after being converted from his sins he became sinless in a new life, but that he never committed sin at all. If, then, that book be his, it must of course be corrected and amended from his answer. For I should be sorry to say that he was insincere in his more recent statement; lest perhaps he should say that he had forgotten what he had previously written in the book we have quoted. Let us therefore direct our view to what afterwards occurred. Now, from the sequel of these ecclesiastical proceedings, we can by God’s help show that, although Pelagius, as some suppose, cleared himself in his examination, and was at all events acquitted by his judges (who

were, however, but human beings after all), that this great heresy, which we should be most unwilling to see making further progress or becoming aggravated in guilt, was undoubtedly itself condemned.”

This helps us understand Augustine’s thinking about grace.

## Chapter 23 [XI.]—The Seventh Item of the Accusation: the Breviates of Cœlestius Objected to Pelagius.

Then follow sundry statements charged against Pelagius, which are said to be found among the opinions of his disciple Cœlestius: how that “Adam was created mortal, and would have died whether he had sinned or not sinned; that Adam’s sin injured only himself and not the human race; that the law no less than the gospel leads us to the kingdom; that there were sinless men previous to the coming of Christ; that newborn infants are in the same condition as Adam was before the fall; that the whole human race does not, on the one hand, die through Adam’s death or transgression, nor, on the other hand, does the whole human race rise again through the resurrection of Christ.” These have been so objected to, that they are even said to have been, after a full hearing, condemned at Carthage by your holiness and other bishops associated with you. I was not present on that occasion, as you will recollect; but afterwards, on my arrival at Carthage, I read over the Acts of the synod, some of which I perfectly well remember, but I do not know whether all the tenets now mentioned occur among them. But what matters it if some of them were possibly not mentioned, and so not included in the condemnation of the synod when it is quite clear that they deserve condemnation? Sundry other points of error were next alleged against him, connected with the mention of my own name. They had been transmitted to me from Sicily, some of our Catholic brethren there being perplexed by questions of this kind; and I drew up a reply to them in a little work addressed to Hilary, who had consulted me respecting them in a letter. My answer, in my opinion, was a sufficient one. **These are the errors referred to: “That a man is able to be without sin if he wishes. That infants, even if they die unbaptized, have eternal life. That rich men, even if they are baptized, unless they renounce all, have, whatever good they may seem to have done, nothing of it reckoned to them; neither can they possess the kingdom of God.”**

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Then follow sundry statements charged against Pelagius, which are said to be found among the opinions of his disciple Cœlestius: how that”

He then notes again, the errors of Pelagius:

1. “Adam was created mortal, and would have died whether he had sinned or not sinned;
2. that Adam’s sin injured only himself and not the human race;
3. that the law no less than the gospel leads us to the kingdom;
4. that there were sinless men previous to the coming of Christ;
5. that newborn infants are in the same condition as Adam was before the fall;
6. that the whole human race does not, on the one hand, die through Adam’s death or transgression, nor, on the other hand, does the whole human race rise again through the resurrection of Christ.”

He continues, as he says, “These have been so objected to, that they are even said to have been, after a full hearing, condemned at Carthage by your holiness and other bishops associated with you. I was not present on that occasion, as you will recollect; but afterwards, on my arrival at Carthage, I read over the Acts of the synod, some of which I perfectly well remember, but I do not know whether all the tenets now mentioned occur among them. But what matters it if some of them were possibly not mentioned, and so not included in the condemnation of the synod when it is quite clear that they deserve condemnation? Sundry other points of error were next alleged against him, connected with the mention of my own name. They had been transmitted to me from Sicily, some of our Catholic brethren there being perplexed by questions of this kind; and I drew up a reply to them in a little work addressed to Hilary, who had consulted me respecting them in a letter. My answer, in my opinion, was a sufficient one.”

He then notes, “**These are the errors referred to.**”

1. “**That a man is able to be without sin if he wishes.**
2. **That infants, even if they die unbaptized, have eternal life.**
3. **That rich men, even if they are baptized, unless they renounce all, have, whatever good they may seem to have done, nothing of it reckoned to them; neither can they possess the kingdom of God.”**

Again, this helps us understand Augustine’s thinking about grace.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Proceedings of Pelagius, Chapters 32-36, page 197-199**

#### **Chapter 32.—The Eleventh Item of the Accusation.**

But what comes afterwards again fills me with anxiety. On its being objected to him, from the fifth chapter of Cœlestius’ book, that “they say that every individual has the ability to possess all powers and graces, thus taking away that ‘diversity of graces,’ which the apostle teaches,” Pelagius replied: “We have certainly said so much; but yet they have laid against us a malignant and blundering charge. We do not take away the diversity of graces; but we declare that God gives to the person, who has proved himself worthy to receive them, all graces, even as He conferred them on the Apostle Paul.” Hereupon the Synod said: “You accordingly do yourself hold the doctrine of the Church touching the gift of the graces, which are collectively possessed by the apostle.” Here some one may say, “Why then is he anxious? Do you on your side deny that all the powers and graces were combined in the apostle?” For my own part, indeed, if all those are to be understood which the apostle has himself mentioned together in one passage,—as, I suppose, the bishops understood Pelagius to mean when they approved of his answer, and pronounced it to be in keeping with the sense of the Church,—then I do not doubt that the apostle had them all; for he says: “And God hath set some in the Church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” (1 Corinthians 12:28) What then? shall we say that the Apostle Paul did not possess all these gifts himself? Who would be bold enough to assert

this? The very fact that he was an apostle showed, of course, that he possessed the grace of the apostolate. He possessed also that of prophecy; for was not that a prophecy of his in which he says: “In the last times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils?” (1 Timothy 4:1) He was, moreover, “the teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.” (1 Timothy 2:7) He performed miracles also and cures; for he shook off from his hand, unhurt, the biting viper; (Acts 28:5) and the cripple stood upright on his feet at the apostle’s word, and his strength was at once restored. (Acts 14:9) It is not clear what he means by helps, for the term is of very wide application; but who can say that he was wanting even in this grace, when through his labours such helps were manifestly afforded towards the salvation of mankind? Then as to his possessing the grace of “government,” what could be more excellent than his administration, when the Lord at that time governed so many churches by his personal agency, and governs them still in our day through his epistles? And in respect of the “diversities of tongues,” what tongues could have been wanting to him, when he says himself: “I thank my God that I speak with tongues more than you all?” (1 Corinthians 14:18) It being thus inevitable to suppose that not one of these was wanting to the Apostle Paul, the judges approved of Pelagius’ answer, wherein he said “that all graces were conferred upon him.” But there are other graces in addition to these which are not mentioned here. For it is not to be supposed, however greatly the Apostle Paul excelled others as a member of Christ’s body, that the very Head itself of the entire body did not receive more and ampler graces still, whether in His flesh or His soul as man; for such a created nature did the Word of God assume as His own into the unity of His Person, that He might be our Head, and we His body. **And in very deed, if all gifts could be in each member, it would be evident that the similitude, which is used to illustrate this subject, of the several members of our body is inapplicable; for some things are common to the members in general, such as life and health, whilst other things are peculiar to the separate members, since the ear has no perception of colours, nor the eye of voices. Hence it is written: “If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? (1 Corinthians 12:17) Now this of course is not said as if it were impossible for God to impart to the ear the sense of seeing, or to the eye the function of hearing. However, what He does in Christ’s body, which is the Church, and what the apostle meant by diversity of graces as if through the different members, there might be gifts proper even to every one separately, is clearly known.** Why, too, and on what ground they who raised the objection were so unwilling to have taken away all difference in graces, why, moreover, the bishops of the synod were able to approve of the answer given by Pelagius in deference to the Apostle Paul, in whom we admit the combination of all those graces which he mentioned in the one particular passage, is by this time clear also.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, speaking of Pelagius, as he says, “But what comes afterwards again fills me with anxiety. On its being objected to him, from the fifth chapter of Cœlestius’ book, that “they say that every individual has the ability to possess all powers and graces, thus taking away that ‘diversity of graces,’ which the apostle teaches,” Pelagius replied: “We have certainly said so much; but yet they have laid against us a malignant and blundering charge. We do not take away the diversity of graces; but we declare that God gives to the person, who has proved himself worthy to receive them, all graces, even as He conferred them on the Apostle Paul.””

The Scripture speaks of grace in **1 Peter 4 (KJV):10** As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

The word “manifold” in the Greek is **ποικίλος** (pronounced poi-kē'-los), of uncertain derivation; motley, i.e. various in character:—divers, manifold.

This word is translated 8 times in the **King James Version** as divers, and twice as manifold.

An example of another instance of “divers” is found in **Matthew 4 (KJV):24** And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

And another in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):9** Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

The other instance of “manifold” is found in **1 Peter 1 (KJV):6** Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

So we could translate “manifold temptations” as “divers temptations”, and as in 1 Peter 4:10 “...good stewards of the divers grace of God”.

Augustine continues, “Hereupon the Synod said: “You accordingly do yourself hold the doctrine of the Church touching the gift of the graces, which are collectively possessed by the apostle.” Here some one may say, “Why then is he anxious? Do you on your side deny that all the powers and graces were combined in the apostle?” For my own part, indeed, if all those are to be understood which the apostle has himself mentioned together in one passage,—as, I suppose, the bishops understood Pelagius to mean when they approved of his answer, and pronounced it to be in keeping with the sense of the Church,—then I do not doubt that the apostle had them all; for he says: “And God hath set some in the Church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.” (1 Corinthians 12:28)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):28** And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

Augustine then argues, “What then? Shall we say that the Apostle Paul did not possess all these gifts himself? Who would be bold enough to assert this? The very fact that he was an apostle showed, of course, that he possessed the grace of the apostolate. He possessed also that of prophecy; for was not that a prophecy of his in which he says: “In the last times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils?” (1 Timothy 4:1)”

He refers to **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):1** Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

He continues, “He was, moreover, “the teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.” (1 Timothy 2:7)”

He refers to **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):7** Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

He continues, “He performed miracles also and cures; for he shook off from his hand, unhurt, the biting viper; (Acts 28:5) and the cripple stood upright on his feet at the apostle’s word, and his strength was at once restored. (Acts 14:8-9)”



He refers in context to **Acts 28 (KJV):3** And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. 4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. 5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

And to **Acts 14 (KJV):8** And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked: 9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, 10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

Augustine continues, "It is not clear what he means by helps, for the term is of very wide application; but who can say that he was wanting even in this grace, when through his labours such helps were manifestly afforded towards the salvation of mankind? Then as to his possessing the grace of "government," what could be more excellent than his administration, when the Lord at that time governed so many churches by his personal agency, and governs them still in our day through his epistles?"

And Paul did care for all the churches as we read in **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):28** Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

He continues, "And in respect of the "diversities of tongues," what tongues could have been wanting to him, when he says himself: "I thank my God that I speak with tongues more than you all?" (1 Corinthians 14:18)"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):18** I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:

He continues, "It being thus inevitable to suppose that not one of these was wanting to the Apostle Paul, the judges approved of Pelagius' answer, wherein he said "that all graces were conferred upon him." But there are other graces in addition to these which are not mentioned here. For it is not to be supposed, however greatly the Apostle Paul excelled others as a member of Christ's body, that the very Head itself of the entire body did not receive more and ampler graces still, whether in His flesh or His soul as man; for such a created nature did the Word of God assume as His own into the unity of His Person, that He might be our Head, and we His body."

And we also read in **Romans 12 (KJV):3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

We all have "gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us", as in verse 6 above. This would include Paul. It is God who "hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" in verse 3. And Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):2** And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

And yet his confession was as in **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):9** For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

Paul's testimony was that he only knew in part. He had a measure of faith just like everyone else in the body of Christ.

Augustine continues, "And in very deed, if all gifts could be in each member, it would be evident that the similitude, which is used to illustrate this subject, of the several members of our body is inapplicable; for some things are common to the members in general, such as life and health, whilst other things are peculiar to the separate members, since the ear has no perception of colours, nor the eye of voices. Hence it is written: "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?" (1 Corinthians 12:17)"

He refers well in context to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):14** For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body. 21 And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. 22 Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. 25 That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

God has "tempered the body together... That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another." It is not about us, but about Him.

He continues, "Now this of course is not said as if it were impossible for God to impart to the ear the sense of seeing, or to the eye the function of hearing. However, what He does in Christ's body, which is the Church, and what the apostle meant by diversity of graces as if through the different members, there might be gifts proper even to every one separately, is clearly known."

And this is what the Scripture teaches, as we read in Romans 12:6 above, that members have "gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us". We are "members in particular" as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):27** Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

The **New American Standard Bible** reads as in **1 Corinthians 12 (NASB):27** Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it.

God has gifted each member according to their individuality.

Augustine concludes, "Why, too, and on what ground they who raised the objection were so unwilling to have taken away all difference in graces, why, moreover, the bishops of the synod were able to approve of the answer given by Pelagius in deference to the Apostle Paul, in whom we admit the combination of all those graces which he mentioned in the one particular passage, is by this time clear also."

## Chapter 33.—Discussion of the Eleventh Item Continued.

What, then, is the reason why, as I said just now, I felt anxious on the subject of this head of his doctrine? It is occasioned by what Pelagius says in these words: “That God gives to the man who has proved himself worthy to receive them, all graces, even as He conferred them on the Apostle Paul.” Now, I should not have felt any anxiety about this answer of Pelagius, if it were not closely connected with the cause which we are bound to guard with the utmost care—even that God’s grace may never be attacked, while we are silent or dissembling in respect of so great an evil. **As, therefore, he does not say, that God gives to whom He will, but that “God gives to the man who has proved himself worthy to receive them, all these graces,”** I could not help being suspicious, when I read such words. For the very name of grace, and the thing that is meant by it, is taken away, if it is not bestowed gratuitously, but he only receives it who is worthy of it. Will anybody say that I do the apostle wrong, because I do not admit him to have been worthy of grace? Nay, I should indeed rather do him wrong, and bring on myself a punishment, if I refused to believe what he himself says. Well, now, has he not pointedly so defined grace as to show that it is so called because it is bestowed gratuitously? These are his own very words: “And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace.” (Romans 11:6) In accordance with this, he says again: “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.” (Romans 4:4) Whosoever, therefore, is worthy, to him it is due; and if it is thus due to him, it ceases to be grace; for grace is given, but a debt is paid. Grace, therefore, is given to those who are unworthy, that a debt may be paid to them when they become worthy. He, however, who has bestowed on the unworthy the gifts which they possessed not before, does Himself take care that they shall have whatever things He means to recompense to them when they become worthy.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he explains, “What, then, is the reason why, as I said just now, I felt anxious on the subject of this head of his doctrine? It is occasioned by what Pelagius says in these words: “That God gives to the man who has proved himself worthy to receive them, all graces, even as He conferred them on the Apostle Paul.” Now, I should not have felt any anxiety about this answer of Pelagius, if it were not closely connected with the cause which we are bound to guard with the utmost care—even that God’s grace may never be attacked, while we are silent or dissembling in respect of so great an evil.”

Augustine wants to “guard with the utmost care” that “God’s grace may never be attacked”. He continues, **“As, therefore, he does not say, that God gives to whom He will, but that “God gives to the man who has proved himself worthy to receive them, all these graces,”** I could not help being suspicious, when I read such words. For the very name of grace, and the thing that is meant by it, is taken away, if it is not bestowed gratuitously, but he only receives it who is worthy of it.”

Indeed, he records Pelagius to have said in the previous paragraph 32, “That God gives to the man who has proved himself worthy to receive them, all graces, even as He conferred them on the Apostle Paul.” Augustine is right to be cautious here.

The grace of God is not given to us on the basis of our works as we read in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

And by the “washing of regeneration”, we understand that we are washed of our sins when we believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord. And we should understand that the grace of God is given out of God’s good pleasure, that is, gratuitously, as Augustine intimates.

Augustine then continues, “Will anybody say that I do the apostle wrong, because I do not admit him to have been worthy of grace? Nay, I should indeed rather do him wrong, and bring on myself a punishment, if I refused to believe what he himself says. Well, now, has he not pointedly so defined grace as to show that it is so called because it is bestowed gratuitously? These are his own very words: “And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace.” (Romans 11:6)”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):6** And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

He continues, “In accordance with this, he says again: “Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.” (Romans 4:4)”

And he refers here to **Romans 4 (KJV):4** Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

He then concludes, “Whosoever, therefore, is worthy, to him it is due; and if it is thus due to him, it ceases to be grace; for grace is given, but a debt is paid. Grace, therefore, is given to those who are unworthy, that a debt may be paid to them when they become worthy. He, however, who has bestowed on the unworthy the gifts which they possessed not before, does Himself take care that they shall have whatever things He means to recompense to them when they become worthy.

Augustine upholds the Scripture, and sound doctrine here.

Chapter 34.—The Same Continued. On the Works of Unbelievers; Faith is the Initial Principle from Which Good Works Have Their Beginning; Faith is the Gift of God’s Grace.

He will perhaps say to this: “It was not because of his works, but in consequence of his faith, that I said the apostle was worthy of having all those great graces bestowed upon him. His faith deserved this distinction, but not his works, which were not previously good.” Well, then, are we to suppose that faith does not work? Surely faith does work in a very real way, for it “worketh by love.” (Galatians 5:6) Preach up, however, as much as you like, the works of unbelieving men, we still know how true and invincible is the statement of this same apostle: “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” (Romans 14:23) The very reason, indeed, why he so often declares that righteousness is imputed to us, not out of our works, but our faith, whereas faith rather works through love, is that no man should think that he arrives at faith itself through the merit of his works; for it is faith which is the beginning whence good works first proceed; since (as has already been stated) whatsoever comes not from faith is sin. Accordingly, it is said to the Church, in the Song of Songs: “Thou shalt come and pass by from the beginning of faith.” (Canticles 4:8) Although, therefore, faith procures the grace of producing good works, we certainly do not deserve by any faith that we should have faith itself; but, in its bestowal upon

us, in order that we may follow the Lord by its help, “His mercy has prevented us.” (Psalm 59:10) Was it we ourselves that gave it to us? Did we ourselves make ourselves faithful? I must by all means say here, emphatically: “It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.” (Psalm 100:3) **And indeed nothing else than this is pressed upon us in the apostle’s teaching, when he says: “For I declare, through the grace that is given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” (Romans 12:3) Whence, too, arises the well known challenge: “What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” (1 Corinthians 4:7) in as much as we have received even that which is the spring from which everything we have of good in our actions takes its beginning.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he argues, “He will perhaps say to this: “It was not because of his works, but in consequence of his faith, that I said the apostle was worthy of having all those great graces bestowed upon him. His faith deserved this distinction, but not his works, which were not previously good.” Well, then, are we to suppose that faith does not work? Surely faith does work in a very real way, for it “worketh by love.” (Galatians 5:6)”

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):6** For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

He continues, “Preach up, however, as much as you like, the works of unbelieving men, we still know how true and invincible is the statement of this same apostle: “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” (Romans 14:23)”

He refers to **Romans 14 (KJV):23** And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Augustine continues, **“The very reason, indeed, why he so often declares that righteousness is imputed to us, not out of our works, but our faith, whereas faith rather works through love, is that no man should think that he arrives at faith itself through the merit of his works; for it is faith which is the beginning whence good works first proceed; since (as has already been stated) whatsoever comes not from faith is sin.”**

And that **“faith which is the beginning whence good works first proceed”** is the gift of God is stated in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Augustine continues, “Accordingly, it is said to the Church, in the Song of Songs: “Thou shalt come and pass by from the beginning of faith.” (Song of Solomon 4:8, Septuagint)”

He refers to **Song of Songs 4 (Septuagint):8** Come from Libanus, my bride, come from Libanus: thou shalt come and pass from the top of Faith, from the top of Sanir and Hermon, from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

And **Song of Solomon 4 (KJV):8** Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions’ dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

He continues, “Although, therefore, faith procures the grace of producing good works, we certainly do not deserve by any faith that we should have faith itself; but, in its bestowal upon us, in order that we may follow the Lord by its help, “His mercy has prevented us.” (Psalm



59:10)”

He refers to **Psalm 59 (KJV):10** The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.

The word “prevent” in Hebrew is **מִנֵּן** (pronounce qâdam, kaw-dam'); a primitive root; to project (one self), i.e. precede; hence, to anticipate, hasten, meet (usually for help):—come (go, (flee)) before, disappoint, meet, prevent. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H6923.**

So we read also as in **Psalm 59 (NASB):10** My God in His lovingkindness will meet me; God will let me look triumphantly upon my foes.

Augustine continues, “Was it we ourselves that gave it to us? Did we ourselves make ourselves faithful? I must by all means say here, emphatically: “It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.” (Psalm 100:3)”

He refers to **Psalm 100 (KJV):3** Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

He continues, “**And indeed nothing else than this is pressed upon us in the apostle’s teaching, when he says: “For I declare, through the grace that is given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” (Romans 12:3)”**

He refers to **Romans 12 (KJV):3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

And what does “dealt” mean but “given”? Faith is a gift to us from God.

Augustine concludes, “**Whence, too, arises the well known challenge: “What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” (1 Corinthians 4:7) in as much as we have received even that which is the spring from which everything we have of good in our actions takes its beginning.”**

He refers to **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):7** For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

## Chapter 35.—The Same Continued.

What, then, is the meaning of that which the same apostle says: ‘I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day;’ (2 Timothy 4:7-8) if these are not recompenses paid to the worthy, but gifts, bestowed on the unworthy?” He who says this, does not consider that the crown could not have been given to the man who is worthy of it, unless grace had been first bestowed on him whilst unworthy of it. He says indeed: “I have fought a good fight;” (1 Corinthians 15:57) but then he also says: “Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 9:16) He says too: “I have finished my course;” but he says again: “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.” (2 Timothy 1:12) He says, moreover: “I have kept the faith;” but then it is he too who says again: “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep my deposit against that day” (2 Timothy 1:12)—that is, “my commendation;” for some copies have not the word *depositum*, but *commendatum*, which yields a plainer sense.

Now, what do we commend to God's keeping, except the things which we pray Him to preserve for us, and amongst these our very faith? For what else did the Lord procure for the Apostle Peter by His prayer for him, of which He said, "I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not," (Luke 22:32) than that God would preserve his faith, that it should not fail by giving way to temptation? Therefore, blessed Paul, thou great preacher of grace, I will say it without fear of any man (for who will be less angry with me for so saying than thyself, who hast told us what to say, and taught us what to teach?)—I will, I repeat, say it, and fear no man for the assertion:

**Their own crown is recompensed to their merits; but thy merits are the gifts of God!**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he continues, "What, then, is the meaning of that which the same apostle says: 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day;' (2 Timothy 4:7-8) if these are not recompenses paid to the worthy, but gifts, bestowed on the unworthy?"

He refers to **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):7** I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

He continues, "He who says this, does not consider that the crown could not have been given to the man who is worthy of it, unless grace had been first bestowed on him whilst unworthy of it. He says indeed: "I have fought a good fight;" but then he also says: "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:57)"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):57** But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

He continues, "He says too: "I have finished my course;" but he says again: "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." (Romans 9:16)"

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):16** So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

He continues, "He says, moreover: "I have kept the faith;" but then it is he too who says again: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep my deposit against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12)—that is, "my commendation;" for some copies have not the word *depositum*, but *commendatum*, which yields a plainer sense."

He refers to **2 Timothy 1 (KJV):12** For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

He continues, "Now, what do we commend to God's keeping, except the things which we pray Him to preserve for us, and amongst these our very faith? For what else did the Lord procure for the Apostle Peter by His prayer for him, of which He said, "I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not," (Luke 22:32) than that God would preserve his faith, that it should not fail by giving way to temptation?"

He refers to **Luke 22 (KJV):32** But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

He concludes, "Therefore, blessed Paul, thou great preacher of grace, I will say it without fear of any man (for who will be less angry with me for so saying than thyself, who hast told us

what to say, and taught us what to teach?)—I will, I repeat, say it, and fear no man for the assertion: **Their own crown is recompensed to their merits; but thy merits are the gifts of God!**”

Again we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

We walk in the good works which God hath before ordained, and then He rewards us for them!

Chapter 36.—The Same Continued. The Monk Pelagius. Grace is Conferred on the Unworthy.

His due reward, therefore, is recompensed to the apostle as worthy of it; but still it was grace which bestowed on him the apostleship itself, which was not his due, and of which he was not worthy. Shall I be sorry for having said this? God forbid! For under his own testimony shall I find a ready protection from such reproach; nor will any man charge me with audacity, unless he be himself audacious enough to charge the apostle with mendacity. He frankly says, nay he protests, that he commends the gifts of God within himself, so that he glories not in himself at all, but in the Lord; (1 Corinthians 1:31) he not only declares that he possessed no good deserts in himself why he should be made an apostle, but he even mentions his own demerits, in order to manifest and preach the grace of God. “I am not meet,” says he, “to be called an apostle;” (1 Corinthians 15:9) and what else does this mean than “I am not worthy”—as indeed several Latin copies read the phrase. Now this, to be sure, is the very gist of our question; for undoubtedly in this grace of apostleship all those graces are contained. For it was neither convenient nor right that an apostle should not possess the gift of prophecy, nor be a teacher, nor be illustrious for miracles and the gifts of healings, nor furnish needful helps, nor provide governments over the churches, nor excel in diversities of tongues. All these functions the one name of apostleship embraces. Let us, therefore, consult the man himself, nay listen wholly to him. Let us say to him: “Holy Apostle Paul, the monk Pelagius declares that thou wast worthy to receive all the graces of thine apostleship. What dost thou say thyself?” He answers: “I am not worthy to be called an apostle.” Shall I then, under pretense of honouring Paul, in a matter concerning Paul, dare to believe Pelagius in preference to Paul? I will not do so; for if I did, I should only prove to be more onerous to myself than honouring to him. Let us hear also why he is not worthy to be called an apostle: “Because,” says he, “I persecuted the Church of God.” (1 Corinthians 15:9) Now, were we to follow up the idea here expressed, who would not judge that he rather deserved from Christ condemnation, instead of an apostolic call? Who could so love the preacher as not to loathe the persecutor? Well, therefore, and truly does he say of himself: “I am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.” As thou wroughtest then such evil, how camest thou to earn such good? Let all men hear his answer: **“But by the grace of God, I am what I am.” Is there, then, no other way in which grace is commended, than because it is conferred on an unworthy recipient? “And His grace,” he adds, “which was bestowed on me was not in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:10) He says this as a lesson to others also, to show the freedom of the will, when he says: “We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.” (2 Corinthians 6:1) Whence however does he derive his proof, that “His grace bestowed on himself was not in**

vain,” except from the fact which he goes on to mention: “But I laboured more abundantly than they all?” (1 Corinthians 15:10) So it seems he did not labour in order to receive grace, but he received grace in order that he might labour. And thus, when unworthy, he gratuitously received grace, whereby he might become worthy to receive the due reward. Not that he ventured to claim even his labour for himself; for, after saying: “I laboured more abundantly than they all,” he at once subjoined: “Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” (1 Corinthians 15:10) O mighty teacher, confessor, and preacher of grace! What meaneth this: “I laboured more, yet not I?” Where the will exalted itself ever so little, there piety was instantly on the watch, and humility trembled, because weakness recognized itself.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he says, “His due reward, therefore, is recompensed to the apostle as worthy of it; but still it was grace which bestowed on him the apostleship itself, which was not his due, and of which he was not worthy. Shall I be sorry for having said this? God forbid! For under his own testimony shall I find a ready protection from such reproach; nor will any man charge me with audacity, unless he be himself audacious enough to charge the apostle with mendacity. He frankly says, nay he protests, that he commends the gifts of God within himself, so that he glories not in himself at all, but in the Lord; (1 Corinthians 1:31)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):31** But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

He continues, “he not only declares that he possessed no good deserts in himself why he should be made an apostle, but he even mentions his own demerits, in order to manifest and preach the grace of God. “I am not meet,” says he, “to be called an apostle;” (1 Corinthians 15:9)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):9** For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

The word “meet” in the Greek is **ἱκανός** (pronounced hikanós, hik-an-os’); from **ἵκω** híkō (ἱκάνω hikánō or ἱκνέομαι hiknéomai, akin to G2240) (to arrive); competent (as if coming in season), i.e. ample (in amount) or fit (in character):—able, + content, enough, good, great, large, long (while), many, meet, much, security, sore, sufficient, worthy. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2425.**

He then argues, “and what else does this mean than “I am not worthy”—as indeed several Latin copies read the phrase. Now this, to be sure, is the very gist of our question; for undoubtedly in this grace of apostleship all those graces are contained. For it was neither convenient nor right that an apostle should not possess the gift of prophecy, nor be a teacher, nor be illustrious for miracles and the gifts of healings, nor furnish needful helps, nor provide governments over the churches, nor excel in diversities of tongues. All these functions the one name of apostleship embraces. Let us, therefore, consult the man himself, nay listen wholly to him. Let us say to him: “Holy Apostle Paul, the monk Pelagius declares that thou wast worthy to receive all the graces of thine apostleship. What dost thou say thyself?” He answers: “I am



not worthy to be called an apostle.” Shall I then, under pretense of honouring Paul, in a matter concerning Paul, dare to believe Pelagius in preference to Paul? I will not do so; for if I did, I should only prove to be more onerous to myself than honouring to him. Let us hear also why he is not worthy to be called an apostle: “Because,” says he, “I persecuted the Church of God.” (1 Corinthians 15:9) Now, were we to follow up the idea here expressed, who would not judge that he rather deserved from Christ condemnation, instead of an apostolic call? Who could so love the preacher as not to loathe the persecutor? Well, therefore, and truly does he say of himself: “I am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.” As thou wroughtest then such evil, how camest thou to earn such good? Let all men hear his answer: “But by the grace of God, I am what I am.” Is there, then, no other way in which grace is commended, than because it is conferred on an unworthy recipient? “And His grace,” he adds, “which was bestowed on me was not in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:10)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):9** For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

He continues, “He says this as a lesson to others also, to show the freedom of the will, when he says: “We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.” (2 Corinthians 6:1)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 6 (KJV):1** We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

He then explains, “Whence however does he derive his proof, that “His grace bestowed on himself was not in vain,” except from the fact which he goes on to mention: “But I laboured more abundantly than they all?” (1 Corinthians 15:10) So it seems he did not labour in order to receive grace, but he received grace in order that he might labour. And thus, when unworthy, he gratuitously received grace, whereby he might become worthy to receive the due reward. Not that he ventured to claim even his labour for himself; for, after saying: “I laboured more abundantly than they all,” he at once subjoined: “Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” (1 Corinthians 15:10) O mighty teacher, confessor, and preacher of grace! What meaneth this: “I laboured more, yet not I?” Where the will exalted itself ever so little, there piety was instantly on the watch, and humility trembled, because weakness recognized itself.”

And we can say “Amen”, in agreement with Augustine here.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Proceedings of Pelagius, Chapter 65, page 211-212**

### **Chapter 65.—Recapitulation of What Pelagius Condemned.**

Let us now, by a like recapitulation, bestow a little more attention on those subjects which the bishops said he rejected and condemned as “contrary;” for herein especially lies the whole of that heresy. We will entirely pass over the strange terms of adulation which he is reported to have put into writing in praise of a certain widow; these he denied having ever inserted in any of his writings, or ever given utterance to, and he anathematized all who held the opinions in question not indeed as heretics, but as fools. **The following are the wild thickets of**



this heresy, which we are sorry to see shooting out buds, nay growing into trees, day by day:—“That Adam was made mortal, and would have died whether he had sinned or not; that Adam’s sin injured only himself, and not the human race; that the law no less than the gospel leads to the kingdom; that newborn infants are in the same condition that Adam was before the transgression; that the whole human race does not, on the one hand, die in consequence of Adam’s death and transgression, nor, on the other hand, does the whole human race rise again through the resurrection of Christ; that infants, even if they die unbaptized, have eternal life; that rich men, even if baptized, unless they renounce and surrender everything, have, whatever good they may seem to have done, nothing of it reckoned to them, neither can they possess the kingdom of God; that God’s grace and assistance are not given for single actions, but reside in free will, and in the law and teaching; that the grace of God is bestowed according to our merits, so that grace really lies in the will of man, as he makes himself worthy or unworthy of it; that men cannot be called children of God, unless they have become entirely free from sin; that forgetfulness and ignorance do not come under sin, as they do not happen through the will, but of necessity; that there is no free will, if it needs the help of God, inasmuch as every one has his proper will either to do something, or to abstain from doing it; that our victory comes not from God’s help, but from free will; that from what Peter says, that ‘we are partakers of the divine nature,’ (2 Peter 1:4) it must follow that the soul has the power of being without sin, just in the way that God Himself has.” For this have I read in the eleventh chapter of the book, which bears no title of its author, but is commonly reported to be the work of Cœlestius,—expressed in these words: “Now how can anybody,” asks the author, “become a partaker of the thing from the condition and power of which he is distinctly declared to be a stranger?” Accordingly, the brethren who prepared these objections understood him to have said that man’s soul and God are of the same nature, and to have asserted that the soul is part of God; for thus they understood that he meant that the soul partakes of the same condition and power as God. Moreover in the last of the objections laid to his charge there occurs this position: “That pardon is not given to penitents according to the grace and mercy of God, but according to their own merits and effort, since through repentance they have been worthy of mercy.” Now all these dogmas, and the arguments which were advanced in support of them, were repudiated and anathematized by Pelagius, and his conduct herein was approved of by the judges, who accordingly pronounced that he had, by his rejection and anathema, condemned the opinions in question as contrary to the faith. Let us therefore rejoice—whatever may be the circumstances of the case, whether Cœlestius laid down these theses or not, or whether Pelagius believed them or not—that the injurious principles of this new heresy were condemned before that ecclesiastical tribunal; and let us thank God for such a result, and proclaim His praises.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Let us now, by a like recapitulation, bestow a little more attention on those subjects which the bishops said he rejected and condemned as “contrary;” for herein especially lies the whole of that heresy. We will entirely pass over the strange terms of adulation which he is reported to have put into writing in praise of a certain widow; these he denied having ever inserted in any of his writings, or ever given utterance to, and he anathematized all who held the opinions in question not indeed as heretics, but as fools. The following are the wild thickets of this heresy, which we are sorry to see shooting out buds, nay growing into trees, day by day:—”

He then enumerates these thickets of heresy:

- 1.) “That Adam was made mortal, and would have died whether he had sinned or not;
- 2.) that Adam’s sin injured only himself, and not the human race;
- 3.) that the law no less than the gospel leads to the kingdom;
- 4.) that newborn infants are in the same condition that Adam was before the transgression;
- 5.) that the whole human race does not, on the one hand, die in consequence of Adam’s death and transgression, nor, on the other hand, does the whole human race rise again through the resurrection of Christ;
- 6.) that infants, even if they die unbaptized, have eternal life;
- 7.) that rich men, even if baptized, unless they renounce and surrender everything, have, whatever good they may seem to have done, nothing of it reckoned to them, neither can they possess the kingdom of God;
- 8.) that God’s grace and assistance are not given for single actions, but reside in free will, and in the law and teaching;
- 9.) that the grace of God is bestowed according to our merits, so that grace really lies in the will of man, as he makes himself worthy or unworthy of it;
- 10.) that men cannot be called children of God, unless they have become entirely free from sin;
- 11.) that forgetfulness and ignorance do not come under sin, as they do not happen through the will, but of necessity;
- 12.) that there is no free will, if it needs the help of God, inasmuch as every one has his proper will either to do something, or to abstain from doing it;
- 13.) that our victory comes not from God’s help, but from free will;
- 14.) that from what Peter says, that ‘we are partakers of the divine nature,’ (2 Peter 1:4) it must follow that the soul has the power of being without sin, just in the way that God Himself has.”

He continues, “For this have I read in the eleventh chapter of the book, which bears no title of its author, but is commonly reported to be the work of Cœlestius,—expressed in these words: “Now how can anybody,” asks the author, “become a partaker of the thing from the condition and power of which he is distinctly declared to be a stranger?” Accordingly, the brethren who prepared these objections understood him to have said that man’s soul and God are of the same nature, and to have asserted that the soul is part of God; for thus they understood that he meant that the soul partakes of the same condition and power as God. Moreover in the last of the objections laid to his charge there occurs this position:”

He lists one more thicket of heresy:

- 15.) “That pardon is not given to penitents according to the grace and mercy of God, but according to their own merits and effort, since through repentance they have been worthy of mercy.”

He concludes, “Now all these dogmas, and the arguments which were advanced in support of them, were repudiated and anathematized by Pelagius, and his conduct herein was

approved of by the judges, who accordingly pronounced that he had, by his rejection and anathema, condemned the opinions in question as contrary to the faith. Let us therefore rejoice—whatever may be the circumstances of the case, whether Cœlestius laid down these theses or not, or whether Pelagius believed them or not—that the injurious principles of this new heresy were condemned before that ecclesiastical tribunal; and let us thank God for such a result, and proclaim His praises.”

We can agree with Augustine here. All of the listed items are heresy.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Grace of Christ, Chapter 34, page 229-230**

Chapter 34.—Pelagius Says that Grace is Given According to Men’s Merits. The Beginning, However, of Merit is Faith; And This is a Gratuitous Gift, Not a Recompense for Our Merits.

Then, again, whatever it is which he means by “grace,” he says is given even to Christians according to their merits, although (as I have already mentioned above), when he was in Palestine, in his very remarkable vindication of himself, he condemned those who hold this opinion. Now these are his words: “In the one,” says he, “the good of their created condition is naked and defenseless;” meaning in those who are not Christians. Then adding the rest: “In these, however, who belong to Christ, there is defense afforded by Christ’s help.” You see it is still uncertain what the help is, according to the remark we have already made on the same subject. He goes on, however, to say of those who are not Christians: “Those deserve judgment and condemnation, because, although they possess free will whereby they could come to have faith and deserve God’s grace, they make a bad use of the freedom which has been granted to them. But these deserve to be rewarded, who by the right use of free will merit the Lord’s grace, and keep His commandments.” Now it is clear that he says grace is bestowed according to merit, whatever and of what kind soever the grace is which he means, but which he does not plainly declare. For when he speaks of those persons as deserving reward who make a good use of their free will, and as therefore meriting the Lord’s grace, he asserts in fact that a debt is paid to them. What, then, becomes of the apostle’s saying, “Being justified freely by His grace”? (Romans 3:24) And what of his other statement too, “By grace are ye saved”? (Ephesians 2:8)—where, that he might prevent men’s supposing that it is by works, he expressly added, “by faith.” (Ephesians 2:8) And yet further, lest it should be imagined that faith itself is to be attributed to men independently of the grace of God, the apostle says: “And that not of yourselves; for it is the gift of God.” (Ephesians 2:8) It follows, therefore, that we receive, without any merit of our own, that from which everything which, according to them, we obtain because of our merit, has its beginning—that is, faith itself. If, however, they insist on denying that this is freely given to us, what is the meaning of the apostle’s words: “According as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith”? (Romans 12:3) But if it is contended that faith is so bestowed as to be a recompense for merit, not a free gift, what then becomes of another saying of the apostle: “Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake”? (Philippians 1:29) Each is by the apostle’s testimony made a gift,—both that he believes in Christ, and that each suffers for His sake. These men however, attribute faith to free will in such a way as to make it appear that grace is rendered to faith not as

a gratuitous gift, but as a debt—thus ceasing to be grace any longer, because that is not grace which is not gratuitous.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Then, again, whatever it is which he means by “grace,” he says is given even to Christians according to their merits, although (as I have already mentioned above), when he was in Palestine, in his very remarkable vindication of himself, he condemned those who hold this opinion.”

The Synod of Bishops met in Palestine with Pelagius. Augustine continues, “Now these are his words: “In the one,” says he, “the good of their created condition is naked and defenseless;” meaning in those who are not Christians. Then adding the rest: “In these, however, who belong to Christ, there is defense afforded by Christ’s help.” You see it is still uncertain what the help is, according to the remark we have already made on the same subject. He goes on, however, to say of those who are not Christians: “Those deserve judgment and condemnation, because, although they possess free will whereby they could come to have faith and deserve God’s grace, they make a bad use of the freedom which has been granted to them. But these deserve to be rewarded, who by the right use of free will merit the Lord’s grace, and keep His commandments.” Now it is clear that he says grace is bestowed according to merit, whatever and of what kind soever the grace is which he means, but which he does not plainly declare.”

So Pelagius says that, those “who by the right use of free will merit the Lord’s grace, and keep His commandments”, are those who “deserve to be rewarded”.

Augustine then explains, “For when he speaks of those persons as deserving reward who make a good use of their free will, and as therefore meriting the Lord’s grace, he asserts in fact that a debt is paid to them. What, then, becomes of the apostle’s saying, “Being justified freely by His grace”? (Romans 3:24) And what of his other statement too, “By grace are ye saved”? (Ephesians 2:8)—where, that he might prevent men’s supposing that it is by works, he expressly added, “by faith.” (Ephesians 2:8) And yet further, lest it should be imagined that faith itself is to be attributed to men independently of the grace of God, the apostle says: “And that not of yourselves; for it is the gift of God.” (Ephesians 2:8) It follows, therefore, that we receive, without any merit of our own, that from which everything which, according to them, we obtain because of our merit, has its beginning—that is, faith itself.”

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):24** Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

And to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

He continues, “If, however, they insist on denying that this is freely given to us, what is the meaning of the apostle’s words: “According as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith”? (Romans 12:3)”

He refers to **Romans 12 (KJV):3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

He continues, “But if it is contended that faith is so bestowed as to be a recompense for merit, not a free gift, what then becomes of another saying of the apostle: “Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake”? (Philippians

1:29)”

He refers to **Philippians 1 (KJV):29** For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

He concludes, “Each is by the apostle’s testimony made a gift,—both that he believes in Christ, and that each suffers for His sake. These men however, attribute faith to free will in such a way as to make it appear that grace is rendered to faith not as a gratuitous gift, but as a debt—thus ceasing to be grace any longer, because that is not grace which is not gratuitous.”

And we can agree with Augustine that faith is a gift, and it is given to us by the grace of God, for this is according to Scripture, as we read in **Romans 11 (KJV):5** Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Original Sin, Chapters 29-31, page 247-248**

Chapter 29.—The Righteous Men Who Lived in the Time of the Law Were for All that Not Under the Law, But Under Grace. The Grace of the New Testament Hidden Under the Old.

Death indeed reigned from Adam until Moses, (Romans 5:14) because it was not possible even for the law given through Moses to overcome it: it was not given, in fact, as something able to give life; (Galatians 3:21) but as something that ought to show those that were dead and for whom grace was needed to give them life, that they were not only prostrated under the propagation and domination of sin, but also convicted by the additional guilt of breaking the law itself: not in order that anyone might perish who in the mercy of God understood this even in that early age; but that, destined though he was to punishment, owing to the dominion of death, and manifested, too, as guilty through his own violation of the law, he might seek God’s help, and so where sin abounded, grace might much more abound, (Romans 5:20) even the grace which alone delivers from the body of this death. (Romans 7:24-25) [XXV.] Yet, notwithstanding this, although not even the law which Moses gave was able to liberate any man from the dominion of death, there were even then, too, at the time of the law, men of God who were not living under the terror and conviction and punishment of the law, but under the delight and healing and liberation of grace. Some there were who said, “I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;” (Psalm 51:5) and, “There is no rest in my bones, by reason of my sins;” (Psalm 38:3) and, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit in my inward parts;” (Psalm 51:10) and, “Stablish me with Thy directing Spirit;” (Psalm 51:12) and, “Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.” (Psalm 51:11) There were some, again, who said: “I believed, therefore have I spoken.” (Psalm 116:10) **For they too were cleansed with the selfsame faith with which we ourselves are. Whence the apostle also says: “We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believe, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.” (2 Corinthians 4:13) Out of very faith was it said, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel,” (Isaiah 7:14) “which is, being interpreted, God with us.” (Matthew 1:23) Out of very faith too was it said concerning Him: “As a bridegroom He cometh out of His chamber; as a giant did He exult to run His**



course. His going forth is from the extremity of heaven, and His circuit runs to the other end of heaven; and no one is hidden from His heat.” (Psalm 19:5-6) Out of very faith, again, was it said to Him: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.” (Psalm 14:6-7) **By the self-same Spirit of faith were all these things foreseen by them as to happen, whereby they are believed by us as having happened.** They, indeed, who were able in faithful love to foretell these things to us were not themselves partakers of them. The Apostle Peter says, “Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.” (Acts 15:10-11) **Now on what principle does he make this statement, if it be not because even they were saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not the law of Moses, from which comes not the cure, but only the knowledge of sin? (Romans 3:20) Now, however, the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. (Romans 3:21) If, therefore, it is now manifested, it even then existed, but it was hidden. This concealment was symbolized by the veil of the temple. When Christ was dying, this veil was rent asunder, (Matthew 27:51) to signify the full revelation of Him. Even of old, therefore there existed amongst the people of God this grace of the one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; but like the rain in the fleece which God sets apart for His inheritance, (Psalm 68:9) not of debt, but of His own will, it was latently present, but is now patently visible amongst all nations as its “floor,” the fleece being dry,—in other words, the Jewish people having become reprobate. (Judges 6:36-40)**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he explains, “Death indeed reigned from Adam until Moses, (Romans 5:14) because it was not possible even for the law given through Moses to overcome it: it was not given, in fact, as something able to give life; (Galatians 3:21)”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):14** Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

And to **Galatians 3 (KJV):21** Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

He continues, “but as something that ought to show those that were dead and for whom grace was needed to give them life, that they were not only prostrated under the propagation and domination of sin, but also convicted by the additional guilt of breaking the law itself: not in order that anyone might perish who in the mercy of God understood this even in that early age; but that, destined though he was to punishment, owing to the dominion of death, and manifested, too, as guilty through his own violation of the law, he might seek God's help, and so where sin abounded, grace might much more abound, (Romans 5:20) even the grace which alone delivers from the body of this death. (Romans 7:24-25) [XXV.]”

He refers in context to **Romans 5 (KJV):20** Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

And to **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Augustine argues well from the Scriptures, and this is his strength. Pelagius does not refer to the Scriptures in his writing, or if he does, he takes them out of context.

Augustine continues, “Yet, notwithstanding this, although not even the law which Moses gave was able to liberate any man from the dominion of death, there were even then, too, at the time of the law, men of God who were not living under the terror and conviction and punishment of the law, but under the delight and healing and liberation of grace. Some there were who said, “I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;” (Psalm 51:5) and, “There is no rest in my bones, by reason of my sins;” (Psalm 38:3) and, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit in my inward parts;” (Psalm 51:10) and, “Stablish me with Thy directing Spirit;” (Psalm 51:12) and, “Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.” (Psalm 51:11) There were some, again, who said: “I believed, therefore have I spoken.” (Psalm 116:10)”

He refers to **Psalm 51 (KJV):5** Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

And to **Psalm 38 (KJV):3** There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.

And to **Psalm 51 (Septuagint):10** Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit in my inward parts. 11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and remove not thy holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of thy salvation: establish me with thy directing Spirit.

And to **Psalm 51 (KJV):10** Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.

And to **Psalm 116 (KJV):10** I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:

He continues, “**For they too were cleansed with the selfsame faith with which we ourselves are. Whence the apostle also says: “We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believe, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.” (2 Corinthians 4:13)”**

He refers to **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):13** We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

**He then explains, “Out of very faith was it said, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel,” (Isaiah 7:14) “which is, being interpreted, God with us.” (Matthew 1:23)** Out of very faith too was it said concerning Him: “As a bridegroom He cometh out of His chamber; as a giant did He exult to run His course. His going forth is from the extremity of heaven, and His circuit runs to the other end of heaven; and no one is hidden from His heat.” (Psalm 19:5-6) Out of very faith, again, was it said to Him: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.” (Psalm 45:6-7)”

He refers to **Isaiah 7 (KJV):14** Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

And to **Matthew 1 (KJV):23** Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth

a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

And to **Psalm 19 (KJV):5** Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. 6 His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

And to **Psalm 44 (KJV):6** Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. 7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

And he continues, “**By the self-same Spirit of faith were all these things foreseen by them as to happen, whereby they are believed by us as having happened.** They, indeed, who were able in faithful love to foretell these things to us were not themselves partakers of them.”

And we read in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):13** These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

And in **Hebrews 11 (KJV):24** By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

Augustine continues, “The Apostle Peter says, “Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.” (Acts 15:10-11)”

He refers to **Acts 15 (KJV):10** Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

He continues, “**Now on what principle does he make this statement, if it be not because even they were saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not the law of Moses, from which comes not the cure, but only the knowledge of sin? (Romans 3:20) Now, however, the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. (Romans 3:21)”**

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

He continues, “**If, therefore, it is now manifested, it even then existed, but it was hidden. This concealment was symbolized by the veil of the temple. When Christ was dying, this veil was rent asunder, (Matthew 27:51) to signify the full revelation of Him.”**

He refers to **Matthew 27 (KJV):51** And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

And we could add **Ephesians 3 (KJV):5** Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

He concludes, “**Even of old, therefore there existed amongst the people of God this grace of the one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; but like the rain in the fleece which God sets apart for His inheritance, (Psalm 67:9) not of debt, but of His own will, it was**

latently present, but is now patently visible amongst all nations as its “floor,” the fleece being dry,—in other words, the Jewish people having become reprobate. (Judges 6:36-40)”

He refers to **Psalm 68 (KJV):9** Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.

And to **Judges 6 (KJV):36** And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, 37 Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. 38 And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water. 39 And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. 40 And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

And we read in **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):4** Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. 7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. 9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. 10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. 12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Now as Augustine says, “the Jewish people having become reprobate”, he implies that God is done with Israel. But we need to remember Paul’s warnings above, and believe the Scripture in **Luke 21 (KJV):22** For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. 24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Wrath is upon the Jewish people “until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled”. But after that God will again deal with Israel, and all Israel shall be saved as we read in **Romans 11 (KJV):26** And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

Chapter 30 [XXVI]—Pelagius and Cœlestius Deny that the Ancient Saints Were Saved by Christ.

We must not therefore divide the times, as Pelagius and his disciples do, who say that men first lived righteously by nature, then under the law, thirdly under grace,—by nature



meaning all the long time from Adam before the giving of the law. “For then,” say they, “the Creator was known by the guidance of reason; and the rule of living rightly was carried written in the hearts of men, not in the law of the letter, but of nature. But men’s manners became corrupt; and then,” they say, “when nature now tarnished began to be insufficient, the law was added to it whereby as by a moon the original lustre was restored to nature after its blush was impaired. But after the habit of sinning had too much prevailed among men, and the law was unequal to the task of curing it, Christ came; and the Physician Himself, through His own self, and not through His disciples, brought relief to the malady at its most desperate development.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he argues, “We must not therefore divide the times, as Pelagius and his disciples do, who say that men first lived righteously by nature, then under the law, thirdly under grace,—by nature meaning all the long time from Adam before the giving of the law. “For then,” say they, “the Creator was known by the guidance of reason; and the rule of living rightly was carried written in the hearts of men, not in the law of the letter, but of nature.”

Pelagius did not understand that all men died in Adam, as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):23** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Before we accepted Christ, we were by nature children of wrath, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Augustine continues, “But men’s manners became corrupt; and then,” they say, “when nature now tarnished began to be insufficient, the law was added to it whereby as by a moon the original lustre was restored to nature after its blush was impaired. But after the habit of sinning had too much prevailed among men, and the law was unequal to the task of curing it, Christ came; and the Physician Himself, through His own self, and not through His disciples, brought relief to the malady at its most desperate development.”

Pelagius did not understand that death reigned because of the sin of Adam as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):17** For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

Let us continue to read Augustine’s thoughts in the next chapter.

Chapter 31.—Christ’s Incarnation Was of Avail to the Fathers, Even Though It Had Not Yet Happened.

By disputation of this sort, they attempt to exclude the ancient saints from the grace of the Mediator, as if the man Christ Jesus were not the Mediator between God and those men; on the ground that, not having yet taken flesh of the Virgin’s womb, He was not yet man at the time when those righteous men lived. If this, however, were true, in vain would the apostle say: “By man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52) For inasmuch as those ancient saints, according to the vain conceits of these men, found their nature self-sufficient,



and required not the man Christ to be their Mediator to reconcile them to God, so neither shall they be made alive in Him, to whose body they are shown not to belong as members, according to the statement that it was on man's account that He became man. If, however, as the Truth says through His apostles, even as all die in Adam, even so shall all be made alive in Christ; forasmuch as the resurrection of the dead comes through the one man, even as death comes through the other man; what Christian man can be bold enough to doubt that even those righteous men who pleased God in the more remote periods of the human race are destined to attain to the resurrection of eternal life, and not eternal death, because they shall be made alive in Christ? That they are made alive in Christ, because they belong to the body of Christ? That they belong to the body of Christ, because Christ is the head even to them? (1 Corinthians 11:3) And that Christ is the head even to them, because there is but one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus? But this He could not have been to them, unless through His grace they had believed in His resurrection. And how could they have done this, if they had been ignorant that He was to come in the flesh, and if they had not by this faith lived justly and piously? Now, if the incarnation of Christ could be of no concern to them, on the ground that it had not yet come about, it must follow that Christ's judgment can be of no concern to us, because it has not yet taken place. But if we shall stand at the right hand of Christ through our faith in His judgment, which has not yet transpired, but is to come to pass, it follows that those ancient saints are members of Christ through their faith in His resurrection, which had not in their day happened, but which was one day to come to pass.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he notes, “By disputation of this sort, they attempt to exclude the ancient saints from the grace of the Mediator, as if the man Christ Jesus were not the Mediator between God and those men; on the ground that, not having yet taken flesh of the Virgin's womb, He was not yet man at the time when those righteous men lived.” If this, however, were true, in vain would the apostle say: “By man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):21** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. **22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

He continues, “For inasmuch as those ancient saints, according to the vain conceits of these men, found their nature self-sufficient, and required not the man Christ to be their Mediator to reconcile them to God, so neither shall they be made alive in Him, to whose body they are shown not to belong as members, according to the statement that it was on man's account that He became man.”

There is one purpose for the Church, and there is one purpose for Israel. But there is a purpose for all the righteous before Israel as well. It is the righteousness of faith that makes us heirs of the world as we read in **Romans 4 (KJV):8** Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. **9** Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. **10** How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. **11** And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness

of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: 12 And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. 13 For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Abraham is the “father of all them that believe”, of those “who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham”. It is faith that saves us, and all who came before us. But there is only one mediator as in **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

The Old Testament saints prophesied, and believed in Him who was to come. We believe in the one who has come. We are all saved by grace through faith.

Augustine continues, “If, however, as the Truth says through His apostles, even as all die in Adam, even so shall all be made alive in Christ; forasmuch as the resurrection of the dead comes through the one man, even as death comes through the other man; what Christian man can be bold enough to doubt that even those righteous men who pleased God in the more remote periods of the human race are destined to attain to the resurrection of eternal life, and not eternal death, because they shall be made alive in Christ? That they are made alive in Christ, because they belong to the body of Christ? That they belong to the body of Christ, because Christ is the head even to them? (1 Corinthians 11:3)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):3** But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

The body of Christ is the Church as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):20** Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

And in **Colossians 1 (KJV):24** Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

The Old Testament saints are not part of the Church, but are still saved by faith in the one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, as Augustine continues, “And that Christ is the head even to them, because there is but one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus?”

He refers again to **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

He continues, “But this He could not have been to them, unless through His grace they had believed in His resurrection. And how could they have done this, if they had been ignorant that He was to come in the flesh, and if they had not by this faith lived justly and piously? Now, if the incarnation of Christ could be of no concern to them, on the ground that it had not yet come about, it must follow that Christ’s judgment can be of no concern to us, because it has not yet taken place. But if we shall stand at the right hand of Christ through our faith in His judgment, which has not yet transpired, but is to come to pass, it follows that those ancient

saints are members of Christ through their faith in His resurrection, which had not in their day happened, but which was one day to come to pass.”

The Old Testament saints did not have all the knowledge of the New Testament which we now possess, as we read again in **Ephesians 3 (KJV):5** Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

Nevertheless, through their faith, they are children of Abraham. And we read of Job’s testimony in **Job 19 (KJV):25** For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: 27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, Book I, Chapters 6-7, page 379**

Chapter 6 [III.]—Grace is Not Given According to Merits.

But lest perchance they say that they are aided to this,—that they may “have power to become the sons of God,” but that they may deserve to receive this power they have first “received Him” by free will with no assistance of grace (because this is the purpose of their endeavour to destroy grace, that they may contend that it is given according to our deservings); lest perchance, then, they so divide that evangelical statement as to refer merit to that portion of it wherein it is said, “But as many as received Him,” and then say that in that which follows, “He gave them power to become the sons of God,” grace is not given freely, but is repaid to this merit; if it is asked of them what is the meaning of “received Him,” will they say anything else than “believed on Him”? **And in order, therefore, that they may know that this also pertains to grace, let them read what the apostle says: “And that ye be in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which indeed is to them a cause of perdition, but of your salvation, and that of God; for unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” (Philippians 1:28-29) Certainly he said that both were given. Let them read what he said also: “Peace be to the brethren, and love, with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 6:23) Let them also read what the Lord Himself says: “No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me shall draw him.” (John 6:44) Where, lest any one should suppose that anything else is said in the words “come to me” than “believe in me,” a little after, when He was speaking of His body and blood, and many were offended at His discourse, He says, “The words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and life; but there are some of you which believe not.” (John 6:63-64) Then the Evangelist added, “For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed, and who should betray Him. And He said, Therefore I said unto you that no man can come unto me except it were given him of my Father.” (John 6:64 ff.) He repeated, to wit, the saying in which He had said, “No man can come unto me, except the Father who hath sent me shall draw him.” And He declared that He said this for the sake of believers and unbelievers, explaining what He had said, “except the Father who hath sent me shall draw him,” by repeating the very same thing in other words in**

that which He said, “except it were given him of my Father.” Because he is drawn to Christ to whom it is given to believe on Christ. Therefore the power is given that they who believe on Him should become the sons of God, since this very thing is given, that they believe on Him. And unless this power be given from God, out of free will there can be none; because it will not be free for good if the deliverer have not made it free; but in evil he has a free will in whom a deceiver, either secret or manifest, has grafted the love of wickedness, or he himself has persuaded himself of it.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he notes, “But lest perchance they say that they are aided to this,—that they may “have power to become the sons of God,” but that they may deserve to receive this power they have first “received Him” by free will with no assistance of grace (because this is the purpose of their endeavour to destroy grace, that they may contend that it is given according to our deservings); lest perchance, then, they so divide that evangelical statement as to refer merit to that portion of it wherein it is said, “But as many as received Him,” and then say that in that which follows, “He gave them power to become the sons of God,” grace is not given freely, but is repaid to this merit; if it is asked of them what is the meaning of “received Him,” will they say anything else than “believed on Him”?”

He is referring here in context to **John 1 (KJV):11** He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The ones who receive him “were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”. So it is not of man’s free will that we are born again.

Augustine continues, “**And in order, therefore, that they may know that this also pertains to grace, let them read what the apostle says: “And that ye be in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which indeed is to them a cause of perdition, but of your salvation, and that of God; for unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” (Philippians 1:28-29)**”

He refers to **Philippians 1 (KJV):28** And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. 29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

And Augustine is correct, as the Scripture says, “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake”. It is given to us to believe on him.

He continues, “**Certainly he said that both were given. Let them read what he said also: “Peace be to the brethren, and love, with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ephesians 6:23) Let them also read what the Lord Himself says: “No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me shall draw him.” (John 6:44)**”

He refers to **Ephesians 6 (KJV):23** Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

And to **John 6 (KJV):44** No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

He continues, “**Where, lest any one should suppose that anything else is said in the words “come to me” than “believe in me,” a little after, when He was speaking of His body and blood,**

and many were offended at His discourse, He says, “The words which I have spoken unto you are spirit and life; but there are some of you which believe not.” (John 6:63-64) Then the Evangelist added, “For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed, and who should betray Him. And He said, Therefore I said unto you that no man can come unto me except it were given him of my Father.” (John 6:64-65)”

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):63** It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. 64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

He continues, “He repeated, to wit, the saying in which He had said, “No man can come unto me, except the Father who hath sent me shall draw him.” And He declared that He said this for the sake of believers and unbelievers, explaining what He had said, “except the Father who hath sent me shall draw him,” by repeating the very same thing in other words in that which He said, “except it were given him of my Father.” Because he is drawn to Christ to whom it is given to believe on Christ. **Therefore the power is given that they who believe on Him should become the sons of God, since this very thing is given, that they believe on Him. And unless this power be given from God, out of free will there can be none; because it will not be free for good if the deliverer have not made it free; but in evil he has a free will in whom a deceiver, either secret or manifest, has grafted the love of wickedness, or he himself has persuaded himself of it.**”

Free will in the unsaved is a misunderstanding of the helpless condition of man. We read in **Romans 3 (KJV):9** What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

And in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):17** This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

And in **Romans 5 (KJV):6** For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

For what is the meaning of “without strength” but “to be helpless” as it is translated in **Romans 5 (NASB):6** For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Augustine understood this.



## Chapter 7.—He Concludes that He Does Not Deprive the Wicked of Free Will.

It is not, therefore, true, as some affirm that we say, and as that correspondent of yours ventures moreover to write, that “all are forced into sin,” as if they were unwilling, “by the necessity of their flesh;” but if they are already of the age to use the choice of their own mind, they are both retained in sin by their own will, and by their own will are hurried along from sin to sin. For even he who persuades and deceives does not act in them, except that they may commit sin by their will, either by ignorance of the truth or by delight in iniquity, or by both evils,—as well of blindness as of weakness. **But this will, which is free in evil things because it takes pleasure in evil, is not free in good things, for the reason that it has not been made free. Nor can a man will any good thing unless he is aided by Him who cannot will evil,—that is, by the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. For “everything which is not of faith is sin.”” (Romans 14:23) And thus the good will which withdraws itself from sin is faithful, because the just lives by faith. (Habakkuk 2:4) And it pertains to faith to believe on Christ. And no man can believe on Christ—that is, come to Him—unless it be given to him. (Romans 1:17) No man, therefore, can have a righteous will, unless, with no foregoing merits, he has received the true, that is, the gratuitous grace from above.**

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “It is not, therefore, true, as some affirm that we say, and as that correspondent of yours ventures moreover to write, that “all are forced into sin,” as if they were unwilling, “by the necessity of their flesh;” but if they are already of the age to use the choice of their own mind, they are both retained in sin by their own will, and by their own will are hurried along from sin to sin. For even he who persuades and deceives does not act in them, except that they may commit sin by their will, either by ignorance of the truth or by delight in iniquity, or by both evils,—as well of blindness as of weakness.”

And he agrees with the Scripture as we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):1** And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

What kind of free will does one have who is dead in trespasses and sins? Augustine continues, **“But this will, which is free in evil things because it takes pleasure in evil, is not free in good things, for the reason that it has not been made free. Nor can a man will any good thing unless he is aided by Him who cannot will evil,—that is, by the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. For “everything which is not of faith is sin.”” (Romans 14:23)”**

He refers to **Romans 14 (KJV):23** And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

He continues, **“And thus the good will which withdraws itself from sin is faithful, because the just lives by faith. (Habakkuk 2:4)”**

He refers to **Habakkuk 2 (KJV):4** Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

He continues, **“And it pertains to faith to believe on Christ. And no man can believe on Christ—that is, come to Him—unless it be given to him. (Romans 1:17)”**

He refers to **Romans 1 (KJV):17** For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

And to **Philippians 1 (KJV): 29** For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

Augustine concludes, “No man, therefore, can have a righteous will, unless, with no foregoing merits, he has received the true, that is, the gratuitous grace from above.”

Augustine rightly divides the Scripture here.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, Book I, Chapters 36-40, page 388-390**

Chapter 36 [XVIII.]—Julian’s Fourth Objection, that Man is God’s Work, and is Not Constrained to Evil or Good by His Power.

“We maintain,” says he, “that men are the work of God, and that no one is forced unwillingly by His power either into evil or good, but that man does either good or ill of his own will; but that in a good work he is always assisted by God’s grace, while in evil he is incited by the suggestions of the devil.” To this I answer, that men, in so far as they are men, are the work of God; but in so far as they are sinners, they are under the devil, unless they are plucked from thence by Him who became the Mediator between God and man, for no other reason than because He could not be a sinner from men. And that no one is forced by God’s power unwillingly either into evil or good, but that when God forsakes a man, he deservedly goes to evil, and that when God assists, without deserving he is converted to good. For a man is not good if he is unwilling, but by the grace of God he is even assisted to the point of being willing; because it is not vainly written, “For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do for His good pleasure,” (Philippians 2:13) and, “The will is prepared by God.” (Proverbs 8:35)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he records Julian’s Fourth Objection, ““We maintain,” says he, “that men are the work of God, and that no one is forced unwillingly by His power either into evil or good, but that man does either good or ill of his own will; but that in a good work he is always assisted by God’s grace, while in evil he is incited by the suggestions of the devil.””

Augustine then responds, “To this I answer, that men, in so far as they are men, are the work of God; but in so far as they are sinners, they are under the devil, unless they are plucked from thence by Him who became the Mediator between God and man, for no other reason than because He could not be a sinner from men. And that no one is forced by God’s power unwillingly either into evil or good, but that when God forsakes a man, he deservedly goes to evil, and that when God assists, without deserving he is converted to good. For a man is not good if he is unwilling, but by the grace of God he is even assisted to the point of being willing; because it is not vainly written, “For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do for His good pleasure,” (Philippians 2:13) and, “The will is prepared by God.” (Proverbs 8:35)”

He refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):13** For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

And to **Proverbs 8 (KJV):35** For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.

And we could add **Psalms 110 (KJV):3** Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

Chapter 37 [XIX.]—The Beginning of a Good Will is the Gift of Grace.

But you think that a man is so aided by the grace of God in a good work, that in stirring up his will to that very good work you believe that grace does nothing; for this your own words sufficiently declare. For why have you not said that a man is incited by God's grace to a good work, as you have said that he is incited to evil by the suggestions of the devil, but have said that in a good work he is always aided by God's grace?—as if by his own will, and without any grace of God, he undertook a good work, and were then divinely assisted in the work itself, for the sake, that is to say, of the merits of his good will; so that grace is rendered as due,—not given as not due,—and thus grace is made no more grace. (Romans 11:6) But this is what, in the Palestinian judgment, Pelagius with a deceitful heart condemned,—that the grace of God, namely, is given according to our merits. Tell me, I beseech you, what good, Paul, while he was as yet Saul, willed, and not rather great evils, when breathing out slaughter he went, in horrible darkness of mind and madness, to lay waste the Christians? (Acts 9:1) For what merits of a good will did God convert him by a marvelous and sudden calling from those evils to good things? What shall I say, when he himself cries, "Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us"? (Titus 3:5) What is that which I have already mentioned as having been said by the Lord, "No one can come to me,"—which is understood as "believe on me,"—unless it were given him of my Father"? (John 6:64-65) Whether is this given to him who is already willing to believe, for the sake of the merits of a good will? Or rather is the will itself, as in the case of Saul, stirred up from above, that he may believe, even although he is so averse from the faith as even to persecute the believers? For how has the Lord commanded us to pray for those who persecute us? Do we pray thus that the grace of God may be recompensed them for the sake of their good will, and not rather that the evil will itself may be changed into a good one? Just as we believe that at that time the saints whom he was persecuting did not pray for Saul in vain, that his will might be converted to the faith which he was destroying. And indeed that his conversion was effected from above, appeared even by a manifest miracle. But how many enemies of Christ are at the present day suddenly drawn by God's secret grace to Christ! And if I had not set down this word from the gospel, what things would that man have said in this behalf concerning me, since even now he is stirring, not against me, but against Him who cries, "No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him"! (John 6:44) For He does not say, "except He lead him," so that we can thus in any way understand that his will precedes. **For who is "drawn," if he was already willing? And yet no man comes unless he is willing. Therefore he is drawn in wondrous ways to will, by Him who knows how to work within the very hearts of men. Not that men who are unwilling should believe, which cannot be, but that they should be made willing from being unwilling.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he argues, "But you think that a man is so aided by the

grace of God in a good work, that in stirring up his will to that very good work you believe that grace does nothing; for this your own words sufficiently declare. For why have you not said that a man is incited by God's grace to a good work, as you have said that he is incited to evil by the suggestions of the devil, but have said that in a good work he is always aided by God's grace?—as if by his own will, and without any grace of God, he undertook a good work, and were then divinely assisted in the work itself, for the sake, that is to say, of the merits of his good will; so that grace is rendered as due,—not given as not due,—and thus grace is made no more grace. (Romans 11:6)”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):6** And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

He continues, “But this is what, in the Palestinian judgment, Pelagius with a deceitful heart condemned,—that the grace of God, namely, is given according to our merits. Tell me, I beseech you, what good, Paul, while he was as yet Saul, willed, and not rather great evils, when breathing out slaughter he went, in horrible darkness of mind and madness, to lay waste the Christians? (Acts 9:1)”

He refers to **Acts 9 (KJV):1** And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

He continues, “For what merits of a good will did God convert him by a marvelous and sudden calling from those evils to good things? What shall I say, when he himself cries, “Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us”? (Titus 3:5)”

Here he refers to **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

He continues, “What is that which I have already mentioned as having been said by the Lord, “No one can come to me,”—which is understood as “believe on me,”—unless it were given him of my Father”? (John 6:64-65)”

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):64** But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

He then argues, “Whether is this given to him who is already willing to believe, for the sake of the merits of a good will? Or rather is the will itself, as in the case of Saul, stirred up from above, that he may believe, even although he is so averse from the faith as even to persecute the believers? For how has the Lord commanded us to pray for those who persecute us? Do we pray thus that the grace of God may be recompensed them for the sake of their good will, and not rather that the evil will itself may be changed into a good one? Just as we believe that at that time the saints whom he was persecuting did not pray for Saul in vain, that his will might be converted to the faith which he was destroying. And indeed that his conversion was effected from above, appeared even by a manifest miracle.”

He refers to **Acts 9 (KJV):3** And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly

there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. 10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. 13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. 19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. 20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

Augustine continues, “But how many enemies of Christ are at the present day suddenly drawn by God’s secret grace to Christ! And if I had not set down this word from the gospel, what things would that man have said in this behalf concerning me, since even now he is stirring, not against me, but against Him who cries, “No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him”! (John 6:44)”

He refers again to **John 6 (KJV):44** No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

He continues, “For He does not say, “except He lead him,” so that we can thus in any way understand that his will precedes. **For who is “drawn,” if he was already willing? And yet no man comes unless he is willing. Therefore he is drawn in wondrous ways to will, by Him who knows how to work within the very hearts of men. Not that men who are unwilling should believe, which cannot be, but that they should be made willing from being unwilling.**

The Lord even opens hearts to believe as we read in **Acts 16 (KJV):14** And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

Chapter 38 [XX.]—The Power of God’s Grace is Proved.



That this is true we do not surmise by human conjecture, but we discern by the most evident authority of the divine Scriptures. It is read in the books of the Chronicles: “Also in Judah, the hand of God was made to give them one heart, to do the commandment of the king and of the princes in the word of the Lord.” (2 Chronicles 30:12) Also by Ezekiel the prophet the Lord says, “I will give them another heart, and a new spirit will I give them; and I will take away their stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them an heart of flesh, that they may walk in my commandments and observe my judgments and do them.” (Ezekiel 36:26-27) And what is that which Esther the queen prays when she says, “Give me eloquent speech in my mouth, and enlighten my words in the sight of the lion, and turn his heart to hatred of him that fighteth against us”? (Esther 14:13) How does she say such things as these in her prayer to God, if God does not work His will in men’s hearts? But perchance the woman was foolish in praying thus. Let us see, then, whether the desire of the petitioner was vainly sent on in advance, and whether the result did not follow as of one who heard. Lo, she goes in to the king. We need not say much. And because she did not approach him in her own order, under the compulsion of her great necessity, “he looked upon her,” as it is written, “like a bull in the impulse of his indignation. And the queen feared, and her colour was changed through faintness, and she bowed herself upon the head of her maid, who went before her. And God changed him, and converted his indignation into mildness.” (Esther 15:5 ff.) Now what need is there to relate what follows, where the divine Scripture testifies that God fulfilled what she had asked for by working in the heart of the king nothing other than the will by which he commanded, and it was done as the queen had asked of him? And now God had heard her that it should be done, who changed the heart of the king by a most secret and efficacious power before he had heard the address of the woman beseeching him, and moulded it from indignation to mildness,—that is, from the will to hurt, to the will to favour,—according to that word of the apostle, “God worketh in you to will also.” **Did the men of God who wrote these things—nay, did the Spirit of God Himself, under whose guidance such things were written by them—assail the free will of man? Away with the notion! But He has commended both the most righteous judgment and the most merciful aid of the Omnipotent in all cases. For it is enough for man to know that there is no unrighteousness with God. But how He dispenses those benefits, making some deservedly vessels of wrath, others graciously vessels of mercy,—who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor? If, then, we attain to the honour of grace, let us not be ungrateful by attributing to ourselves what we have received. “For what have we which we have not received?” (1 Corinthians 4:7)**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he then continues, “That this is true we do not surmise by human conjecture, but we discern by the most evident authority of the divine Scriptures. It is read in the books of the Chronicles: “Also in Judah, the hand of God was made to give them one heart, to do the commandment of the king and of the princes in the word of the Lord.” (2 Chronicles 30:12) Also by Ezekiel the prophet the Lord says, “I will give them another heart, and a new spirit will I give them; and I will take away their stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them an heart of flesh, that they may walk in my commandments and observe my judgments and do them.” (Ezekiel 36:26-27) And what is that which Esther the queen prays when she says, “Give me eloquent speech in my mouth, and enlighten my words in the sight of the lion, and turn his heart to hatred of him that fighteth against us”? (Esther 14:13)”

Note that Esther 10:3 in the canonical book of Esther is the last verse in the Hebrew book of Esther. “The Greek Additions to the Hebrew Bible’s Book of Esther were probably written over several centuries and contradict several of the details from the Hebrew text. This version is explicitly religious and contains several verses that do not appear in the Hebrew account. Generally, the Additions are more dramatic and ultimately portray Esther as stereotypically weak and helpless, even though parts of her weakness and femininity ultimately help save her people.”

<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/esther-apocrypha>

He refers to **2 Chronicles 30 (KJV):12** Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the Lord.

And to **Ezekiel 36 (KJV):26** A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

And to **Esther 14 (Douay Rheims):13** Give me a well ordered speech in my mouth in the presence of the lion, and turn his heart to the hatred of our enemy, that both he himself may perish, and the rest that consent to him.

Augustine continues, “How does she say such things as these in her prayer to God, if God does not work His will in men’s hearts? But perchance the woman was foolish in praying thus. Let us see, then, whether the desire of the petitioner was vainly sent on in advance, and whether the result did not follow as of one who heard. Lo, she goes in to the king. We need not say much. And because she did not approach him in her own order, under the compulsion of her great necessity, “he looked upon her,” as it is written, “like a bull in the impulse of his indignation. And the queen feared, and her colour was changed through faintness, and she bowed herself upon the head of her maid, who went before her. And God changed him, and converted his indignation into mildness.” (Esther 15:5 ff.)”

He refers to **Esther 15 (Douay Rheims):5** And glittering in royal robes, after she had called upon God the ruler and Saviour of all, she took two maids with her, 6 And upon one of them she leaned, as if for delicateness and overmuch tenderness she were not able to bear up her own body. 7 And the other maid followed her lady, bearing up her train flowing on the ground. 8 But she with a rosy colour in her face, and with gracious and bright eyes hid a mind full of anguish, and exceeding great fear. 9 So going in she passed through all doors in order, and stood before the king, where he sat upon his royal throne, clothed with his royal robes, and glittering with gold, and precious stones, and he was terrible to behold. 10 And when he had lifted up his countenance, and with burning eyes had shewn the wrath of his heart, the queen sunk down, and her colour turned pale, and she rested her weary head upon her handmaid. 11 And God changed the king's spirit into mildness, and all in haste and in fear he leaped from his throne, and holding her up in his arms, till she came to herself, caressed her with these words: 12 What is the matter, Esther? I am thy brother, fear not. 13 Thou shalt not die: for this law is not made for thee, but for all others. 14 Come near then, and touch the sceptre. 15 And as she held her peace, he took the golden sceptre, and laid it upon her neck, and kissed her, and said: Why dost thou not speak to me?

Augustine continues, “Now what need is there to relate what follows, where the divine Scripture testifies that God fulfilled what she had asked for by working in the heart of the king

nothing other than the will by which he commanded, and it was done as the queen had asked of him? And now God had heard her that it should be done, who changed the heart of the king by a most secret and efficacious power before he had heard the address of the woman beseeching him, and moulded it from indignation to mildness,—that is, from the will to hurt, to the will to favour,—according to that word of the apostle, “God worketh in you to will also.” **Did the men of God who wrote these things—nay, did the Spirit of God Himself, under whose guidance such things were written by them—assail the free will of man? Away with the notion! But He has commended both the most righteous judgment and the most merciful aid of the Omnipotent in all cases. For it is enough for man to know that there is no unrighteousness with God. But how He dispenses those benefits, making some deservedly vessels of wrath, others graciously vessels of mercy,—who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor? If, then, we attain to the honour of grace, let us not be ungrateful by attributing to ourselves what we have received. “For what have we which we have not received?” (1 Corinthians 4:7)**

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):22** What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

And to **Romans 11 (KJV):34** For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counselor?

And to **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):7** For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

Augustine has rightly divided the word of God here.

Chapter 39 [XXI.]—Julian’s Fifth Objection Concerning the Saints of the Old Testament.

“We say,” says he, “that the saints of the Old Testament, their righteousness being perfected here, passed to eternal life,—that is, that by the love of virtue they departed from all sins; because those whom we read of as having committed any sin, we nevertheless know to have amended themselves.” **Of whatever virtue you may declare that the ancient righteous men were possessed, nothing saved them but the belief in the Mediator who shed His blood for the remission of their sins. For their own word is, “I believed, and therefore I spoke.” (Psalm 116:10) Whence the Apostle Paul also says, “And we having the same Spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.” (2 Corinthians 4:13)** What is “the same Spirit,” but that Spirit whom these righteous men also had who said such things? The Apostle Peter also says, “Why do ye wish to put a yoke upon the heathen, which neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? But, by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we believe that we shall be saved, even as they.” (Acts 15:10-11) You who are enemies to this grace do not wish this, that the ancients should be believed to have been saved by the same grace of Jesus Christ; but you distribute the times according to Pelagius, in whose books this is read, and you say that before the law men were saved by nature, then by the law, lastly by Christ, as if to men of the two former times, that is to say, before the law and under the law, the blood of Christ had not been necessary; making void what is said: “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 2:5)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, ““We say,” says he, “that the saints of the Old Testament, their righteousness being perfected here, passed to eternal life,—that is, that by the love of virtue they departed from all sins; because those whom we read of as having committed any sin, we nevertheless know to have amended themselves.” **Of whatever virtue you may declare that the ancient righteous men were possessed, nothing saved them but the belief in the Mediator who shed His blood for the remission of their sins. For their own word is, “I believed, and therefore I spoke.” (Psalm 116:10)”**

He refers to **Psalm 116 (KJV):10** I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:

He continues, “**Whence the Apostle Paul also says, “And we having the same Spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.” (2 Corinthians 4:13)”**

He refers to **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):13** We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

He continues, “What is “the same Spirit,” but that Spirit whom these righteous men also had who said such things? The Apostle Peter also says, “Why do ye wish to put a yoke upon the heathen, which neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? But, by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we believe that we shall be saved, even as they.” (Acts 15:10-11)”

He refers to **Acts 15 (KJV):10** Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? **11** But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

He continues, “You who are enemies to this grace do not wish this, that the ancients should be believed to have been saved by the same grace of Jesus Christ; but you distribute the times according to Pelagius, in whose books this is read, and you say that before the law men were saved by nature, then by the law, lastly by Christ, as if to men of the two former times, that is to say, before the law and under the law, the blood of Christ had not been necessary; making void what is said: “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” (1 Timothy 2:5)”

He refers to **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

And we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

And in **Romans 3 (KJV):25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

All of the Old Testament sacrifices were types of the blood of Christ who was sacrificed on the cross. The righteous had to wait in Abraham’s bosom until Christ died on the cross, and entered heaven for us, as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):14** For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

And so we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):8** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. **9** (Now that he ascended, what is it but

that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Augustine has defended the faith against the heresy of the Pelagians.

#### Chapter 40 [XXII.]—The Sixth Objection, Concerning the Necessity of Grace for All, and Concerning the Baptism of Infants.

They say, “We confess that the grace of Christ is necessary to all, both to grownup people and to infants; and we anathematize those who say that a child born of two baptized people ought not to be baptized.” I know in what sense you say such things as these—not according to the Apostle Paul, but according to the heretic Pelagius;—to wit, that baptism is necessary for infants, not for the sake of the remission of sins, but only for the sake of the kingdom of heaven; for you give them outside the kingdom of heaven a place of salvation and life eternal, even if they have not been baptized. Nor do you regard what is written, “Whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he who believeth not shall be condemned. (Mark 16:16) For which reason, in the Church of the Saviour, infants believe by means of other people, even as they have derived those sins which are remitted them in baptism from other people. Nor do you think thus, that they cannot have life who have been without the body and blood of Christ, although He said Himself, “Unless ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye shall have no life in you.” (John 6:53) Or if you are forced by the words of the gospel to confess that infants departing from the body cannot have either life or salvation unless they have been baptized, ask why those who are not baptized are compelled to undergo the judgment of the second death, by the judgment of Him who condemns nobody undeservingly, and you will find what you do not want,—original sin!

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, “They say, “We confess that the grace of Christ is necessary to all, both to grownup people and to infants; and we anathematize those who say that a child born of two baptized people ought not to be baptized.” I know in what sense you say such things as these—not according to the Apostle Paul, but according to the heretic Pelagius;—to wit, that baptism is necessary for infants, not for the sake of the remission of sins, but only for the sake of the kingdom of heaven; for you give them outside the kingdom of heaven a place of salvation and life eternal, even if they have not been baptized. Nor do you regard what is written, “Whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he who believeth not shall be condemned. (Mark 16:16)”

He refers to **Mark 16 (KJV):16** He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

But we also read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

And in **John 6 (KJV):47** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

We are baptized because we believe. Baptism does not save us, just as circumcision did not save Abraham and the other Old Testament saints.

Augustine continues, “For which reason, in the Church of the Saviour, infants believe by



means of other people, even as they have derived those sins which are remitted them in baptism from other people.”

No one can have faith for someone else. But infants who die before the age of accountability are most likely as those in **Deuteronomy 1 (KJV):39** Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.

Augustine continues, “Nor do you think thus, that they cannot have life who have been without the body and blood of Christ, although He said Himself, “Unless ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye shall have no life in you.” (John 6:53)”

He refers in context to **John 6 (KJV):53** Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

Jesus then explains as we continue in **John 6 (KJV):58** This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. 60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. 64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

The issue was faith. It was not about eating His flesh and drinking his blood literally. He even mentions that He would ascend up where he was before, that is, to heaven. Eating his flesh and drinking his blood was the same as believing in Him, and by faith, identifying totally with Him.

Augustine concludes, “Or if you are forced by the words of the gospel to confess that infants departing from the body cannot have either life or salvation unless they have been baptized, ask why those who are not baptized are compelled to undergo the judgment of the second death, by the judgment of Him who condemns nobody undeservingly, and you will find what you do not want,—original sin!”

Augustine defended the doctrine of the Church in his time which tradition had handed down to him. But the Scripture is clear. We are baptized because we believe. And when we believe, in that moment, we are born again. But original sin is a Biblical truth. In Adam all die as in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

And death is the result of sin, as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings**  
**On Grace and Free Will, Chapter 15, page 450**

Chapter 15.—The Pelagians Profess that the Only Grace Which is Not Given According to Our Merits is that of the Forgiveness of Sins.

When, however, the Pelagians say that the only grace which is not given according to our merits is that whereby his sins are forgiven to man, but that that which is given in the end, that is, eternal life, is rendered to our preceding merits: they must not be allowed to go without an answer. If, indeed, they so understand our merits as to acknowledge them, too, to be the gifts of God, then their opinion would not deserve reprobation. But inasmuch as they so preach human merits as to declare that a man has them of his own self, then most rightly the apostle replies: “Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou, that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7) To a man who holds such views, it is perfect truth to say: It is His own gifts that God crowns, not your merits,—if, at least, your merits are of your own self, not of Him. If, indeed, they are such, they are evil; and God does not crown them; but if they are good, they are God’s gifts, because, as the Apostle James says, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.” (James 1:17) In accordance with which John also, the Lord’s forerunner, declares: “A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven”(John 3:27)—from heaven, of course, because from thence came also the Holy Ghost, when Jesus ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. (Ephesians 4:8) If, then, your good merits are God’s gifts, God does not crown your merits as your merits, but as His own gifts.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “When, however, the Pelagians say that the only grace which is not given according to our merits is that whereby his sins are forgiven to man, but that that which is given in the end, that is, eternal life, is rendered to our preceding merits: they must not be allowed to go without an answer.”

So the Pelagians were saying:

- 1.) the only grace which is not given according to our merits is that whereby his sins are forgiven to man
- 2.) that that which is given in the end, that is, eternal life, is rendered to our preceding merits

Augustine continues, “If, indeed, they so understand our merits as to acknowledge them, too, to be the gifts of God, then their opinion would not deserve reprobation. But inasmuch as they so preach human merits as to declare that a man has them of his own self, then most rightly the apostle replies: “Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou, that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):7** For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

He continues, “To a man who holds such views, it is perfect truth to say: It is His own gifts that God crowns, not your merits,—if, at least, your merits are of your own self, not of Him. If, indeed, they are such, they are evil; and God does not crown them; but if they are good, they are God’s gifts, because, as the Apostle James says, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.” (James 1:17)”

He refers to **James 1 (KJV):17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

He continues, “In accordance with which John also, the Lord’s forerunner, declares: “A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven” (John 3:27)—from heaven, of course, because from thence came also the Holy Ghost, when Jesus ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. (Ephesians 4:8)”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):27** John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

And to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):8** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Augustine then concludes, “If, then, your good merits are God’s gifts, God does not crown your merits as your merits, but as His own gifts.”

And this agrees with Scripture as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

God has ordained good works for us to do. We are to walk in them, and He will reward us for what He does through us.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Grace and Free Will, Chapters 19-21, page 451-452**

Chapter 19 [VIII.]—How is Eternal Life Both a Reward for Service and a Free Gift of Grace?

And hence there arises no small question, which must be solved by the Lord’s gift. If eternal life is rendered to good works, as the Scripture most openly declares: “Then He shall reward every man according to his works:” (Matthew 16:27) how can eternal life be a matter of grace, seeing that grace is not rendered to works, but is given gratuitously, as the apostle himself tells us: “To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt;” (Romans 4:4) and again: “There is a remnant saved according to the election of grace;” with these words immediately subjoined: “And if of grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace”? (Romans 11:5-6) How, then, is eternal life by grace, when it is received from works? Does the apostle perchance not say that eternal life is a grace? Nay, he has so called it, with a clearness which none can possibly gainsay. It requires no acute intellect, but only an attentive reader, to discover this. For after saying, “The wages of sin is death,” he at once added, “The grace of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “And hence there arises no small question, which must be solved by the Lord’s gift. If eternal life is rendered to good works, as the

Scripture most openly declares: “Then He shall reward every man according to his works:” (Matthew 16:27) how can eternal life be a matter of grace, seeing that grace is not rendered to works, but is given gratuitously, as the apostle himself tells us: “To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt;” (Romans 4:4) and again: “There is a remnant saved according to the election of grace;” with these words immediately subjoined: “And if of grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace?” (Romans 11:5-6) How, then, is eternal life by grace, when it is received from works?”

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):27** For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

And to **Romans 4 (KJV):4** Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

And to **Romans 11 (KJV):5** Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

Augustine then asks, “Does the apostle perchance not say that eternal life is a grace? Nay, he has so called it, with a clearness which none can possibly gainsay. It requires no acute intellect, but only an attentive reader, to discover this. For after saying, “The wages of sin is death,” he at once added, “The grace of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)”

He then refers to **Romans 6 (Douay Rheims):23** For the wages of sin is death. But the grace of God, life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And to **Romans 6 (KJV):23** For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The word translated “grace” in the **Douay Rheims**, or gift in the **King James Version**, in Greek is **χάρισμα** (pronounced khä'-rē-smä), from G5483; a (divine) gratuity, i.e. deliverance (from danger or passion); (specially), a (spiritual) endowment, i.e. (subjectively) religious qualification, or (objectively) miraculous faculty:—(free) gift. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5486.**

We need to be careful how we hear. Augustine and the **Douay Rheims** translation seems to equate “life everlasting” in Romans 6:23 with grace. But everlasting life is what we receive by faith in Jesus Christ, which faith is given to us by the grace of God. Eternal life is what we receive when we believe, as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

But eternal life is not grace, but is given to us by God's grace. When we believe in Jesus Christ, our spirit is born of the Holy Spirit. We now have a new divine nature in our spirit. Augustine and the early Church did not understand the new birth.

Believers are rewarded for their good works which God ordained beforehand for them to do, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):13** Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Augustine was not clear about the difference between the judgment seat of Christ, the judgment of the nations at the throne of His glory, and the White Throne judgment. We as believers are rewarded eternal life when we believe. If we yield to the Lord afterwards, and He uses us to do the works He has ordained for us to do, we will then be rewarded in addition to the eternal life we received when we believed.

Chapter 20.—The Question Answered. Justification is Grace Simply and Entirely, Eternal Life is Reward and Grace.

This question, then, seems to me to be by no means capable of solution, unless we understand that even those good works of ours, which are recompensed with eternal life, belong to the grace of God, because of what is said by the Lord Jesus: “Without me ye can do nothing.” (John 15:5) And the apostle himself, after saying, “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast;” (Ephesians 2:8-9) saw, of course, the possibility that men would think from this statement that good works are not necessary to those who believe, but that faith alone suffices for them; and again, the possibility of men’s boasting of their good works, as if they were of themselves capable of performing them. To meet, therefore, these opinions on both sides, he immediately added, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10) What is the purport of his saying, “Not of works, lest any man should boast,” while commending the grace of God? And then why does he afterwards, when giving a reason for using such words, say, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works”? Why, therefore, does it run, “Not of works, lest any man should boast”? Now, hear and understand. “Not of works” is spoken of the works which you suppose have their origin in yourself alone; but you have to think of works for which God has moulded (that is, has formed and created) you. For of these he says, “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” Now he does not here speak of that creation which made us human beings, but of that in reference to which one said who was already in full manhood, “Create in me a clean heart, O God;” (Psalm 51:10) concerning which also the apostle says, “Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:17-18) We are framed, therefore, that is, formed and created, “in the good works which” we have not ourselves prepared, but “God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” **It follows, then, dearly beloved, beyond all doubt, that as your good life is nothing else than God’s grace, so also the eternal life which is the recompense of a good life is the grace of God; moreover it is given gratuitously, even as that is given gratuitously to which it is given. But that to which it is given is solely and simply grace; this therefore is also that which is given to it, because it is its reward;—grace is for grace, as if remuneration for righteousness; in order that it may be true, because it is true, that God “shall reward every man according to his works.” (Matthew 16:27, Psalm 62:12, Revelation 22:12)**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “This question, then, seems to me to be by no means capable of solution, unless we understand that even those good works of ours, which are



recompensed with eternal life, belong to the grace of God, because of what is said by the Lord Jesus: “Without me ye can do nothing.” (John 15:5)”

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

He continues, “And the apostle himself, after saying, “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast;” (Ephesians 2:8-9) saw, of course, the possibility that men would think from this statement that good works are not necessary to those who believe, but that faith alone suffices for them; and again, the possibility of men’s boasting of their good works, as if they were of themselves capable of performing them.”

He refers to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

He continues, “To meet, therefore, these opinions on both sides, he immediately added, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10)”

He refers to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

He continues, “What is the purport of his saying, “Not of works, lest any man should boast,” while commending the grace of God? And then why does he afterwards, when giving a reason for using such words, say, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works”? Why, therefore, does it run, “Not of works, lest any man should boast”? Now, hear and understand. “Not of works” is spoken of the works which you suppose have their origin in yourself alone; but you have to think of works for which God has moulded (that is, has formed and created) you. For of these he says, “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.” Now he does not here speak of that creation which made us human beings, but of that in reference to which one said who was already in full manhood, “Create in me a clean heart, O God;” (Psalm 51:10) concerning which also the apostle says, “Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)”

He refers to **Psalms 51 (KJV):10** Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

And to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

He continues, “We are framed, therefore, that is, formed and created, “in the good works which” we have not ourselves prepared, but “God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” **It follows, then, dearly beloved, beyond all doubt, that as your good life is nothing else than God’s grace, so also the eternal life which is the recompense of a good life is the grace of God; moreover it is given gratuitously, even as that is given gratuitously to which it is given. But that to which it is given is solely and simply grace; this therefore is also that which is given to it, because it is its reward;—grace is for grace, as if remuneration for righteousness; in order that it may be true, because it is true, that God “shall reward every man according to his works.” (Matthew 16:27, Psalm 62:12, Revelation 22:12)”**

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):27** For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

And to **Psalms 62 (KJV):12** Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

And to **Revelation 22 (KJV):12** And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

Augustine says here that “**the eternal life which is the recompense of a good life is the grace of God**”. Eternal life is the recompense of faith alone, which is given by God’s grace. Eternal life is what we receive when we believe. After we have been born again, we then can perform the good works that God has ordained for us to do, but these good works do not merit eternal life.

Good works are only the evidence of a saving faith as James reveals in **James 2 (KJV):20** But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? **21** Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? **22** Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? **23** And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. **24** Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. **25** Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? **26** For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Even if we build wood, hay, and stubble, we will still be saved if we have a genuine faith, yet as by fire. But who would want to take that chance? Let’s all build gold, silver, and precious stones.

Augustine did not understand the difference in the three judgments that are to come.

Chapter 21 [IX.]—Eternal Life is “Grace for Grace.”

Perhaps you ask whether we ever read in the Sacred Scriptures of “grace for grace.” Well you possess the Gospel according to John, which is perfectly clear in its very great light. Here John the Baptist says of Christ: “Of His fullness have we all received, even grace for grace.” (John 1:16) So that out of His fullness we have received, according to our humble measure, our particles of ability as it were for leading good lives—“according as God hath dealt to every man his measure of faith;” (Romans 12:3) because “every man hath his proper gift of God; one after this manner, and another after that.” (1 Corinthians 7:7) **And this is grace. But, over and above this, we shall also receive “grace for grace,” when we shall have awarded to us eternal life, of which the apostle said: “The grace of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,” (Romans 6:23) having just said that “the wages of sin is death.” Deservedly did he call it “wages,” because everlasting death is awarded as its proper due to diabolical service.** Now, when it was in his power to say, and rightly to say: “But the wages of righteousness is eternal life,” he yet preferred to say: “The grace of God is eternal life;” in order that we may hence understand that God does not, for any merits of our own, but from His own divine compassion, prolong our existence to everlasting life. Even as the Psalmist says to his soul, “Who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion.” (Psalm 103:4) Well, now, is not a crown given as the reward of good deeds? It is, however, only because He works good works in good men, of whom it is

said, “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure,” (Philippians 2:13) that the Psalm has it, as just now quoted: “He crowneth thee with mercy and compassion,” since it is through His mercy that we perform the good deeds to which the crown is awarded. It is not, however, to be for a moment supposed, because he said, “It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure,” that free will is taken away. If this, indeed, had been his meaning, he would not have said just before, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” (Philippians 2:12) For when the command is given “to work,” their free will is addressed; and when it is added, “with fear and trembling,” they are warned against boasting of their good deeds as if they were their own, by attributing to themselves the performance of anything good. It is pretty much as if the apostle had this question put to him: “Why did you use the phrase, ‘with fear and trembling’?” And as if he answered the inquiry of his examiners by telling them, “For it is God which worketh in you.” Because if you fear and tremble, you do not boast of your good works—as if they were your own, since it is God who works within you.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Perhaps you ask whether we ever read in the Sacred Scriptures of “grace for grace.” Well you possess the Gospel according to John, which is perfectly clear in its very great light. Here John the Baptist says of Christ: “Of His fullness have we all received, even grace for grace.” (John 1:16)”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):16** And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.

He continues, “So that out of His fullness we have received, according to our humble measure, our particles of ability as it were for leading good lives—“according as God hath dealt to every man his measure of faith;” (Romans 12:3) because “every man hath his proper gift of God; one after this manner, and another after that.” (1 Corinthians 7:7)”

And he refers to **Romans 12 (KJV):3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

And to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):7** For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

And he continues, “**And this is grace. But, over and above this, we shall also receive “grace for grace,” when we shall have awarded to us eternal life, of which the apostle said: “The grace of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,” (Romans 6:23) having just said that “the wages of sin is death.” Deservedly did he call it “wages,” because everlasting death is awarded as its proper due to diabolical service.**”

He refers to **Romans 6 (Douay Rheims):23** For the wages of sin is death. But the grace of God, life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord.

He refers to **Romans 6 (KJV):23** For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

He continues, “Now, when it was in his power to say, and rightly to say: “But the wages of righteousness is eternal life,” he yet preferred to say: “The grace of God is eternal life;” in order that we may hence understand that God does not, for any merits of our own, but from His own divine compassion, prolong our existence to everlasting life. Even as the Psalmist says to his soul, “Who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion.” (Psalm 103:4)”

He refers to **Psalm 103 (KJV):4** Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

He continues, “Well, now, is not a crown given as the reward of good deeds? It is, however, only because He works good works in good men, of whom it is said, “It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure,” (Philippians 2:13) that the Psalm has it, as just now quoted: “He crowneth thee with mercy and compassion,” since it is through His mercy that we perform the good deeds to which the crown is awarded. It is not, however, to be for a moment supposed, because he said, “It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure,” that free will is taken away. If this, indeed, had been his meaning, he would not have said just before, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” (Philippians 2:12)”

He refers to **Philippians 2 (KJV):12** Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

He then explains, “For when the command is given “to work,” their free will is addressed; and when it is added, “with fear and trembling,” they are warned against boasting of their good deeds as if they were their own, by attributing to themselves the performance of anything good. It is pretty much as if the apostle had this question put to him: “Why did you use the phrase, ‘with fear and trembling’?” And as if he answered the inquiry of his examiners by telling them, “For it is God which worketh in you.” Because if you fear and tremble, you do not boast of your good works—as if they were your own, since it is God who works within you.”

But we did not have freedom before Christ. We were slaves to sin as Jesus reveals in **John 8 (NASB):34** Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.

And Paul in **Romans 6 (KJV):17** But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

The freedom we have now is because of the truth as Jesus taught in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Grace and Free Will, Chapters 27-28, page 455**

Chapter 27 [XIV.]—Grace Effects the Fulfillment of the Law, the Deliverance of Nature, and the Suppression of Sin’s Dominion.

It has, however, been shown to demonstration that instead of really maintaining free will, they have only inflated a theory of it, which, having no stability, has fallen to the ground. Neither the knowledge of God’s law, nor nature, nor the mere remission of sins is that grace which is given to us through our Lord Jesus Christ; but it is this very grace which accomplishes the fulfillment of the law, and the liberation of nature, and the removal of the dominion of sin. Being, therefore, convicted on these points, they resort to another expedient, and endeavour to

show in some way or other that the grace of God is given us according to our merits. For they say: “Granted that it is not given to us according to the merits of good works, inasmuch as it is through it that we do any good thing, still it is given to us according to the merits of a good will; for,” say they, “the good will of him who prays precedes his prayer, even as the will of the believer preceded his faith, so that according to these merits the grace of God who hears, follows.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “It has, however, been shown to demonstration that instead of really maintaining free will, they have only inflated a theory of it, which, having no stability, has fallen to the ground. Neither the knowledge of God’s law, nor nature, nor the mere remission of sins is that grace which is given to us through our Lord Jesus Christ; but it is this very grace which accomplishes the fulfillment of the law, and the liberation of nature, and the removal of the dominion of sin.”

While all that Augustine says is true, he himself does not seem to realize that eternal life is given to us when we believe in Jesus Christ as the apostle John reveals in **1 John 5 (KJV):12** He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Augustine seemed to think that eternal life was something that was another grace that was given as a reward for good works that God ordained for the believer to do, as he says, “but it is this very grace which accomplishes the fulfillment of the law”. However, to him, it is all by grace, which we also can say “Amen” to.

He continues, “Being, therefore, convicted on these points, they resort to another expedient, and endeavour to show in some way or other that the grace of God is given us according to our merits. For they say: “Granted that it is not given to us according to the merits of good works, inasmuch as it is through it that we do any good thing, still it is given to us according to the merits of a good will; for,” say they, “the good will of him who prays precedes his prayer, even as the will of the believer preceded his faith, so that according to these merits the grace of God who hears, follows.”

Let us continue to the next chapter to hear Augustine’s response.

## Chapter 28.—Faith is the Gift of God.

I have already discussed the point concerning faith, that is, concerning the will of him who believes, even so far as to show that it appertains to grace,—so that the apostle did not tell us, “I have obtained mercy because I was faithful;” but he said, “I have obtained mercy in order to be faithful.” (1 Corinthians 7:25) And there are many other passages of similar import,—among them that in which he bids us “think soberly, according as God hath dealt out to every man the proportion of faith;” (Romans 12:3) and that which I have already quoted: “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God;” (Ephesians 2:8) and again another in the same Epistle to the Ephesians: “Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ;” (Ephesians 6:23) and to the same effect that passage in which he says, “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” (Philippians 1:29) Both alike are therefore due



to the grace of God,—the faith of those who believe, and the patience of those who suffer, because the apostle spoke of both as given. Then, again, there is the passage, especially noticeable, in which he says, “We, having the same spirit of faith,” (2 Corinthians 4:13) for his phrase is not “the knowledge of faith,” but “the spirit of faith;” and he expressed himself thus in order that we might understand how that faith is given to us, even when it is not sought, so that other blessings may be granted to it at its request. For “how,” says he, “shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed?” (Romans 10:14) **The spirit of grace, therefore, causes us to have faith, in order that through faith we may, on praying for it, obtain the ability to do what we are commanded. On this account the apostle himself constantly puts faith before the law; since we are not able to do what the law commands unless we obtain the strength to do it by the prayer of faith.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “I have already discussed the point concerning faith, that is, concerning the will of him who believes, even so far as to show that it appertains to grace,—so that the apostle did not tell us, “I have obtained mercy because I was faithful;” but he said, “I have obtained mercy in order to be faithful.” (1 Corinthians 7:25)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):25** Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. 26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.

Note that Paul here is speaking of his gift to remain unmarried. Nevertheless, Augustine’s point is well taken.

Augustine continues, “And there are many other passages of similar import,—among them that in which he bids us “think soberly, according as God hath dealt out to every man the proportion of faith;” (Romans 12:3) and that which I have already quoted: “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God;” (Ephesians 2:8) and again another in the same Epistle to the Ephesians: “Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ;” (Ephesians 6:23) and to the same effect that passage in which he says, “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.” (Philippians 1:29)”

He refers to **Romans 12 (KJV):3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

And to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

And to **Ephesians 6 (KJV):23** Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

He refers to **Philippians 1 (KJV):29** For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

Augustine then continues, “Both alike are therefore due to the grace of God,—the faith of those who believe, and the patience of those who suffer, because the apostle spoke of both as given. Then, again, there is the passage, especially noticeable, in which he says, “We, having the same spirit of faith,” (2 Corinthians 4:13) for his phrase is not “the knowledge of faith,” but “the spirit of faith;” and he expressed himself thus in order that we might understand how that

faith is given to us, even when it is not sought, so that other blessings may be granted to it at its request. For “how,” says he, “shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed?” (Romans 10:14)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):13** We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

And to **Romans 10 (KJV):14** How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

Faith is an attribute of our spirit. This we receive when we are born again of the Spirit of God.

Augustine continues, “The spirit of grace, therefore, causes us to have faith, in order that through faith we may, on praying for it, obtain the ability to do what we are commanded. On this account the apostle himself constantly puts faith before the law; since we are not able to do what the law commands unless we obtain the strength to do it by the prayer of faith.”

We walk by faith as Paul says in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):6** Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

And James mentions the “prayer of faith” in **James 5 (KJV):15** And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Grace and Free Will, Chapters 30-31, page 456-457**

Chapter 30.—The Grace by Which the Stony Heart is Removed is Not Preceded by Good Deserts, But by Evil Ones.

In another passage, also, by the same prophet, God, in the clearest language, shows us that it is not owing to any good merits on the part of men, but for His own name’s sake, that He does these things. This is His language: “This I do, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle you with clean water, and ye shall be clean: from all your own filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and the stony heart shall be taken away out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” (Ezekiel 36:22-27) Now who is so blind as not to see, and who so stone-like as not to feel, that this grace is not given according to the merits of a good will, when the Lord declares and testifies, “It is I, O house of Israel, who do this, but for my holy name’s sake”? Now why did He say “It is I that do it, but for my holy name’s sake,” were it not that they should not think that it was owing to their own good merits that these things were happening, as the Pelagians

**hesitate not unblushingly to say?** But there were not only no good merits of theirs, but the Lord shows that evil ones actually preceded; for He says, “But for my holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen.” Who can fail to observe how dreadful is the evil of profaning the Lord’s own holy name? And yet, for the sake of this very name of mine, says He, which ye have profaned, I, even I, will make you good, but not for your own sakes; and, as He adds, “I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them.” He says that He sanctifies His name, which He had already declared to be holy. Therefore, this is just what we pray for in the Lord’s Prayer—“Hallowed be Thy name.” (Matthew 6:9) We ask for the hallowing among men of that which is in itself undoubtedly always holy. Then it follows, “And the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you.” Although, then, He is Himself always holy, He is, nevertheless, sanctified in those on whom He bestows His grace, by taking from them that stony heart by which they profaned the name of the Lord.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “**In another passage, also, by the same prophet, God, in the clearest language, shows us that it is not owing to any good merits on the part of men, but for His own name’s sake, that He does these things. This is His language: “This I do, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle you with clean water, and ye shall be clean: from all your own filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and the stony heart shall be taken away out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” (Ezekiel 36:22-27)**”

He refers in context to **Ezekiel 36 (KJV):**22 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. 23 And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. 24 For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. 25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. 28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Augustine had a “replacement theology” in which he believed that Israel was replaced by the Church. However, God makes it clear that there is a future for Israel in their own land in verse 28.

He then argues, “**Now who is so blind as not to see, and who so stone-like as not to feel,**

that this grace is not given according to the merits of a good will, when the Lord declares and testifies, “It is I, O house of Israel, who do this, but for my holy name’s sake”? Now why did He say “It is I that do it, but for my holy name’s sake,” were it not that they should not think that it was owing to their own good merits that these things were happening, as the Pelagians hesitate not unblushingly to say?”

And we have to agree with Augustine here, that “**grace is not given according to the merits of a good will.**” He then continues, “But there were not only no good merits of theirs, but the Lord shows that evil ones actually preceded; for He says, “But for my holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen.” Who can fail to observe how dreadful is the evil of profaning the Lord’s own holy name? And yet, for the sake of this very name of mine, says He, which ye have profaned, I, even I, will make you good, but not for your own sakes; and, as He adds, “I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them.” He says that He sanctifies His name, which He had already declared to be holy. Therefore, this is just what we pray for in the Lord’s Prayer—“Hallowed be Thy name.” (Matthew 6:9) We ask for the hallowing among men of that which is in itself undoubtedly always holy. Then it follows, “And the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you.” Although, then, He is Himself always holy, He is, nevertheless, sanctified in those on whom He bestows His grace, by taking from them that stony heart by which they profaned the name of the Lord.”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):9** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

The root meaning of “sanctified” is “set apart”. That is, His holy name will be set apart from all unclean things as we read again in **Ezekiel 36 (KJV):23** And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

All Israel will be saved, and the heathen shall see it.

Again, we say “Amen” to Augustine’s words here. God’s grace is not given because of our merits, otherwise grace is not longer grace as we read in **Romans 11 (KJV):6** But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

Chapter 31 [XV.]—Free Will Has Its Function in the Heart’s Conversion; But Grace Too Has Its.

Lest, however, it should be thought that men themselves in this matter do nothing by free will, it is said in the Psalm, “Harden not your hearts;” (Psalm 95:8) and in Ezekiel himself, “Cast away from you all your transgressions, which ye have impiously committed against me; and make you a new heart and a new spirit; and keep all my commandments. For why will ye die, O house of Israel, saith the Lord? for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: and turn ye, and live.” (Ezekiel 18:31-32) We should remember that it is He who says, “Turn ye and live,” to whom it is said in prayer, “Turn us again, O God.” (Psalm 80:3) We should remember that He says, “Cast away from you all your transgressions,” when it is even He who justifies the ungodly. We should remember that He says, “Make you a new heart and a new spirit,” who also promises, “I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I put within

you.” (Ezekiel 36:26) How is it, then, that He who says, “Make you,” also says, “I will give you”? Why does He command, if He is to give? Why does He give if man is to make, except it be that He gives what He commands when He helps him to obey whom He commands? There is, however, always within us a free will,—but it is not always good; for it is either free from righteousness when it serves sin,—and then it is evil,—or else it is free from sin when it serves righteousness,—and then it is good. But the grace of God is always good; and by it it comes to pass that a man is of a good will, though he was before of an evil one. By it also it comes to pass that the very good will, which has now begun to be, is enlarged, and made so great that it is able to fulfil the divine commandments which it shall wish, when it shall once firmly and perfectly wish. This is the purport of what the Scripture says: “If thou wilt, thou shalt keep the commandments;” (Ecclesiasticus 15:15) so that the man who wills but is not able knows that he does not yet fully will, and prays that he may have so great a will that it may suffice for keeping the commandments. And thus, indeed, he receives assistance to perform what he is commanded. Then is the will of use when we have ability; just as ability is also then of use when we have the will. For what does it profit us if we will what we are unable to do, or else do not will what we are able to do?

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Lest, however, it should be thought that men themselves in this matter do nothing by free will, it is said in the Psalm, “Harden not your hearts;” (Psalm 95:8) and in Ezekiel himself, “Cast away from you all your transgressions, which ye have impiously committed against me; and make you a new heart and a new spirit; and keep all my commandments. For why will ye die, O house of Israel, saith the Lord? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: and turn ye, and live.” (Ezekiel 18:31-32)”

He refers to **Psalm 95 (KJV):8** Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

He refers to **Ezekiel 18 (KJV):31** Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

In the process of repentance, we get a new heart, and a new spirit when we are born again.

Augustine continues, “We should remember that it is He who says, “Turn ye and live,” to whom it is said in prayer, “Turn us again, O God.” (Psalm 80:3)”

He refers to **Psalm 80 (KJV):3** Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

He continues, “We should remember that He says, “Cast away from you all your transgressions,” when it is even He who justifies the ungodly. We should remember that He says, “Make you a new heart and a new spirit,” who also promises, “I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I put within you.” (Ezekiel 36:26) How is it, then, that He who says, “Make you,” also says, “I will give you”? Why does He command, if He is to give? Why does He give if man is to make, except it be that He gives what He commands when He helps him to obey whom He commands?”



He then explains, “There is, however, always within us a free will,—but it is not always good; for it is either free from righteousness when it serves sin,—and then it is evil,—or else it is free from sin when it serves righteousness,—and then it is good. But the grace of God is always good; and by it it comes to pass that a man is of a good will, though he was before of an evil one.”

Augustine’s explanation is good here. Our will is not truly free before Christ, because it is not free to serve righteousness. But it was free to do evil. We were slaves to sin. But now, after we have received Christ, we are free from sin. That is, we do not have to sin. Our wills are truly free. But we must now choose the good as Paul admonishes in **Romans 6 (KJV):1** What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Augustine continues, “By it also it comes to pass that the very good will, which has now begun to be, is enlarged, and made so great that it is able to fulfill the divine commandments which it shall wish, when it shall once firmly and perfectly wish. This is the purport of what the Scripture says: “If thou wilt, thou shalt keep the commandments;” (Ecclesiasticus 15:15) so that the man who wills but is not able knows that he does not yet fully will, and prays that he may have so great a will that it may suffice for keeping the commandments.”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 15 (Douay Rheims):15** If thou wilt keep the commandments and perform acceptable fidelity for ever, they shall preserve thee.

And to **Ecclesiasticus 15 (KJV):15** If thou wilt, to keep the commandments, and to perform acceptable faithfulness.

He then concludes, “And thus, indeed, he receives assistance to perform what he is commanded. Then is the will of use when we have ability; just as ability is also then of use when we have the will. For what does it profit us if we will what we are unable to do, or else do not will what we are able to do?”

And Paul explains in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Before Christ, we were in the flesh, and we could not be subject to the law of God in this state. After we receive Christ, the Spirit of God dwells in us, and we are thereby empowered to live for God. We have been made free from having to fulfill the desires of our flesh. But we must now exercise the freedom of our will to choose the good, and let go of the bad.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On Grace and Free Will, Chapters 42-46, page 462-463**

Who can help trembling at those judgments of God by which He does in the hearts of even wicked men whatsoever He wills, at the same time rendering to them according to their deeds? Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, rejected the salutary counsel of the old men, not to deal harshly with the people, and preferred listening to the words of the young men of his own age, by returning a rough answer to those to whom he should have spoken gently. Now whence arose such conduct, except from his own will? Upon this, however, the ten tribes of Israel revolted from him, and chose for themselves another king, even Jeroboam, that the will of God in His anger might be accomplished which He had predicted would come to pass. (1 Kings 12:8-14) For what says the Scripture? “The king hearkened not unto the people; for the turning was from the Lord, that He might perform His saying, which the Lord spake to Ahijah the Shilonite concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat.” (1 Kings 12:15) All this, indeed, was done by the will of man, although the turning was from the Lord. Read the books of the Chronicles, and you will find the following passage in the second book: “Moreover, the Lord stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that were neighbours to the Ethiopians; and they came up to the land of Judah, and ravaged it, and carried away all the substance which was found in the king’s house.” (2 Chronicles 21:16-17) Here it is shown that God stirs up enemies to devastate the countries which He adjudges deserving of such chastisement. Still, did these Philistines and Arabians invade the land of Judah to waste it with no will of their own? **Or were their movements so directed by their own will that the Scripture lies which tells us that “the Lord stirred up their spirit” to do all this? Both statements to be sure are true, because they both came by their own will, and yet the Lord stirred up their spirit; and this may also with equal truth be stated the other way: The Lord both stirred up their spirit, and yet they came of their own will. For the Almighty sets in motion even in the innermost hearts of men the movement of their will, so that He does through their agency whatsoever He wishes to perform through them,—even He who knows not how to will anything in unrighteousness.** What, again, is the purport of that which the man of God said to King Amaziah: “Let not the army of Israel go with thee; for the Lord is not with Israel, even with all the children of Ephraim: for if thou shalt think to obtain with these, the Lord shall put thee to flight before thine enemies: for God hath power either to strengthen or to put to flight”? (2 Chronicles 25:7-8) Now, how does the power of God help some in war by giving them confidence, and put others to flight by injecting fear into them, except it be that He who has made all things according to His own will, in heaven and on earth, (Psalm 135:6) also works in the hearts of men? We read also what Joash, king of Israel, said when he sent a message to Amaziah, king of Judah, who wanted to fight with him. After certain other words, he added, “Now tarry at home; why dost thou challenge me to thine hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?” (2 Kings 14:10) Then the Scripture has added this sequel: “But Amaziah would not hear; for it came of God, that he might be delivered into their hands, because they sought after the gods of Edom.” (2 Chronicles 25:20) Behold, now, how God, wishing to punish the sin of idolatry, wrought this in this man’s heart, with whom He was indeed justly angry, not to listen to sound advice, but to despise it, and go to the battle, in which he with his army was routed. God says by the prophet Ezekiel, “If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet: I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him

from the midst of my people Israel.” (Ezekiel 14:9) Then there is the book of Esther, who was a woman of the people of Israel, and in the land of their captivity became the wife of the foreign King Ahasuerus. In this book it is written, that, being driven by necessity to interpose in behalf of her people, whom the king had ordered to be slain in every part of his dominions, she prayed to the Lord. So strongly was she urged by the necessity of the case, that she even ventured into the royal presence without the king’s command, and contrary to her own custom. Now observe what the Scripture says: “He looked at her like a bull in the vehemence of his indignation; and the queen was afraid, and her colour changed as she fainted; and she bowed herself upon the head of her delicate maiden which went before her. But God turned the king, and transformed his indignation into gentleness.” (Esther 5. (according to the Septuagint)) **The Scripture says in the Proverbs of Solomon, “Even as the rush of water, so is the heart of a king in God’s hand; He will turn it in whatever way He shall choose.” (Proverbs 21:1) Again, in the 104th Psalm, in reference to the Egyptians, one reads what God did to them: “And He turned their heart to hate His people, to deal subtilly with His servants.” (Psalm 105:25) Observe, likewise, what is written in the letters of the apostles. In the Epistle of Paul, the Apostle, to the Romans occur these words: “Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts;” (Romans 1:24) and a little afterwards: “For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections;” (Romans 1:26) again, in the next passage: “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.” (Romans 1:28) So also in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians, the apostle says of sundry persons, “Inasmuch as they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; therefore also God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12)**

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Who can help trembling at those judgments of God by which He does in the hearts of even wicked men whatsoever He wills, at the same time rendering to them according to their deeds? Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, rejected the salutary counsel of the old men, not to deal harshly with the people, and preferred listening to the words of the young men of his own age, by returning a rough answer to those to whom he should have spoken gently. Now whence arose such conduct, except from his own will? Upon this, however, the ten tribes of Israel revolted from him, and chose for themselves another king, even Jeroboam, that the will of God in His anger might be accomplished which He had predicted would come to pass. (1 Kings 12:8-14) For what says the Scripture? “The king hearkened not unto the people; for the turning was from the Lord, that He might perform His saying, which the Lord spake to Ahijah the Shilonite concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat.” (1 Kings 12:15)”

He refers in context to **1 Kings 12 (KJV):6** And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? **7** And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. **8** But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood

before him: 9 And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? 10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. 11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. 12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day. 13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him; 14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. 15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

Augustine continues, "All this, indeed, was done by the will of man, although the turning was from the Lord. Read the books of the Chronicles, and you will find the following passage in the second book: "Moreover, the Lord stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that were neighbours to the Ethiopians; and they came up to the land of Judah, and ravaged it, and carried away all the substance which was found in the king's house." (2 Chronicles 21:16-17)"

He refers to **2 Chronicles 21 (KJV)**: 16 Moreover the Lord stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that were near the Ethiopians: 17 And they came up into Judah, and brake into it, and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.

Augustine continues, "Here it is shown that God stirs up enemies to devastate the countries which He adjudges deserving of such chastisement. Still, did these Philistines and Arabians invade the land of Judah to waste it with no will of their own? Or were their movements so directed by their own will that the Scripture lies which tells us that "the Lord stirred up their spirit" to do all this? Both statements to be sure are true, because they both came by their own will, and yet the Lord stirred up their spirit; and this may also with equal truth be stated the other way: The Lord both stirred up their spirit, and yet they came of their own will. For the Almighty sets in motion even in the innermost hearts of men the movement of their will, so that He does through their agency whatsoever He wishes to perform through them,—even He who knows not how to will anything in unrighteousness. What, again, is the purport of that which the man of God said to King Amaziah: "Let not the army of Israel go with thee; for the Lord is not with Israel, even with all the children of Ephraim: for if thou shalt think to obtain with these, the Lord shall put thee to flight before thine enemies: for God hath power either to strengthen or to put to flight"? (2 Chronicles 25:7-8)"

He refers to **2 Chronicles 25 (KJV)**: 7 But there came a man of God to him, saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee; for the Lord is not with Israel, to wit, with all the children of Ephraim. 8 But if thou wilt go, do it; be strong for the battle: God shall make thee fall before the enemy: for God hath power to help, and to cast down.

He continues, "Now, how does the power of God help some in war by giving them

confidence, and put others to flight by injecting fear into them, except it be that He who has made all things according to His own will, in heaven and on earth, (Psalm 135:6) also works in the hearts of men?"

He refers to **Psalm 135 (KJV):6** Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

He continues, "We read also what Joash, king of Israel, said when he sent a message to Amaziah, king of Judah, who wanted to fight with him. After certain other words, he added, "Now tarry at home; why dost thou challenge me to thine hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?" (2 Kings 14:10)"

He refers to **2 Kings 14 (KJV):10** Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and thine heart hath lifted thee up: glory of this, and tarry at home: for why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?

Augustine continues, "Then the Scripture has added this sequel: "But Amaziah would not hear; for it came of God, that he might be delivered into their hands, because they sought after the gods of Edom." (2 Chronicles 25:20)"

He refers to **2 Chronicles 25 (KJV):20** But Amaziah would not hear; for it came of God, that he might deliver them into the hand of their enemies, because they sought after the gods of Edom.

He continues, "Behold, now, how God, wishing to punish the sin of idolatry, wrought this in this man's heart, with whom He was indeed justly angry, not to listen to sound advice, but to despise it, and go to the battle, in which he with his army was routed. God says by the prophet Ezekiel, "If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet: I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel." (Ezekiel 14:9)"

He refers to **Ezekiel 14 (KJV):9** And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.

He continues, "Then there is the book of Esther, who was a woman of the people of Israel, and in the land of their captivity became the wife of the foreign King Ahasuerus. In this book it is written, that, being driven by necessity to interpose in behalf of her people, whom the king had ordered to be slain in every part of his dominions, she prayed to the Lord. So strongly was she urged by the necessity of the case, that she even ventured into the royal presence without the king's command, and contrary to her own custom. Now observe what the Scripture says: "He looked at her like a bull in the vehemence of his indignation; and the queen was afraid, and her colour changed as she fainted; and she bowed herself upon the head of her delicate maiden which went before her. But God turned the king, and transformed his indignation into gentleness." (Esther 5. (according to the Septuagint))"

He refers to **Esther 5 (KJV):1** And it came to pass on the third day, when she had ceased praying, that she put off her mean dress, and put on her glorious apparel. And being splendidly arrayed, and having called upon God the Overseer and Preserver of all things, she took her two maids, and she leaned upon one, as a delicate female, and the other followed bearing her train. And she was blooming in the perfection of her beauty; and her face was cheerful, and it were benevolent, but her heart was straitened for fear. And having passed through all the doors, she stood before the king: and he was sitting upon his royal throne, and he had put on all his



glorious apparel, covered all over with gold and precious stones, and was very terrible. And having raised his face resplendent with glory, he looked with intense anger: and the queen fell, and changed her colour as she fainted; and she bowed herself upon the head of the maid that went before her. But God changed the spirit of the king gentleness, and in intense feeling he sprang from off his throne, and took her into his arms, until she recovered: and he comforted her with peaceable words, and said to her, What is the matter, Esther? I am thy brother; be of good cheer, thou shalt not die, for our command is openly declared to thee, Draw nigh. 2 And having raised the golden sceptre he laid it upon her neck, and embraced her, and said, Speak to me. And she said to him, I saw thee, my lord, as an angel of God, and my heart was troubled for fear of thy glory; for thou, my lord, art to be wondered at, and thy face is full of grace. And while she was speaking, she fainted and fell. Then the king was troubled, and all his servants comforted her. 3 And the king said, What wilt thou, Esther? And what is thy request? Ask even to the half of my kingdom, and it shall be thine. 4 And Esther said, Today is my great day: if then it seem good to the king, let both him and Aman come to the feast which I will prepare this day. 5 And the king said, Hasten Aman hither, that we may perform the word of Esther. So they both come to the feast of which Esther had spoken.

Augustine continues, “The Scripture says in the Proverbs of Solomon, “Even as the rush of water, so is the heart of a king in God’s hand; He will turn it in whatever way He shall choose.” (Proverbs 21:1) Again, in the 104th Psalm, in reference to the Egyptians, one reads what God did to them: “And He turned their heart to hate His people, to deal subtilly with His servants.” (Psalm 105:25)”

He refers to **Proverbs 21 (KJV):1** The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

And to **Psalm 105 (KJV):25** He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants.

He continues, “Observe, likewise, what is written in the letters of the apostles. In the Epistle of Paul, the Apostle, to the Romans occur these words: “Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts;” (Romans 1:24) and a little afterwards: “For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections;” (Romans 1:26) again, in the next passage: “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.” (Romans 1:28) So also in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians, the apostle says of sundry persons, “Inasmuch as they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; therefore also God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12)”

He refers in context to **Romans 1 (KJV):24** Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to

retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

And to **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):10** And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.  
11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:  
12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Augustine has rightly divided the word of God here.

Chapter 43.—God Operates on Men’s Hearts to Incline Their Wills Whithersoever He Pleases.

From these statements of the inspired word, and from similar passages which it would take too long to quote in full, it is, I think, sufficiently clear that God works in the hearts of men to incline their wills whithersoever He wills, whether to good deeds according to His mercy, or to evil after their own deserts; His own judgment being sometimes manifest, sometimes secret, but always righteous. This ought to be the fixed and immoveable conviction of your heart, that there is no unrighteousness with God. Therefore, whenever you read in the Scriptures of Truth, that men are led aside, or that their hearts are blunted and hardened by God, never doubt that some ill deserts of their own have first occurred, so that they justly suffer these things. Thus you will not run counter to that proverb of Solomon: “The foolishness of a man perverteth his ways, yet he blameth God in his heart.” (Proverbs 19:3) Grace, however, is not bestowed according to men’s deserts; otherwise grace would be no longer grace. (Romans 11:6) For grace is so designated because it is given gratuitously. Now if God is able, either through the agency of angels (whether good ones or evil), or in any other way whatever, to operate in the hearts even of the wicked, in return for their deserts,—whose wickedness was not made by Him, but was either derived originally from Adam, or increased by their own will,—what is there to wonder at if, through the Holy Spirit, He works good in the hearts of the elect, who has wrought it that their hearts become good instead of evil?

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “From these statements of the inspired word, and from similar passages which it would take too long to quote in full, it is, I think, sufficiently clear that God works in the hearts of men to incline their wills whithersoever He wills, whether to good deeds according to His mercy, or to evil after their own deserts; His own judgment being sometimes manifest, sometimes secret, but always righteous. This ought to be the fixed and immoveable conviction of your heart, that there is no unrighteousness with God. Therefore, whenever you read in the Scriptures of Truth, that men are led aside, or that their hearts are blunted and hardened by God, never doubt that some ill deserts of their own have first occurred, so that they justly suffer these things. Thus you will not run counter to that proverb of Solomon: “The foolishness of a man perverteth his ways, yet he blameth God in his heart.” (Proverbs 19:3)”

He refers to **Proverbs 19 (Septuagint):1** The folly of a man spoils his ways: and he blames God in his heart.

And to **Proverbs 19 (KJV):3** The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the Lord.

He continues, “Grace, however, is not bestowed according to men’s deserts; otherwise grace would be no longer grace. (Romans 11:6)”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):6** And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

He then concludes, “For grace is so designated because it is given gratuitously. Now if God is able, either through the agency of angels (whether good ones or evil), or in any other way whatever, to operate in the hearts even of the wicked, in return for their deserts,—whose wickedness was not made by Him, but was either derived originally from Adam, or increased by their own will,—what is there to wonder at if, through the Holy Spirit, He works good in the hearts of the elect, who has wrought it that their hearts become good instead of evil?”

And we can say “Amen” with Augustine here.

#### Chapter 44 [XXII.]—Gratuitous Grace Exemplified in Infants.

Men, however, may suppose that there are certain good deserts which they think are precedent to justification through God’s grace; all the while failing to see, when they express such an opinion, that they do nothing else than deny grace. But, as I have already remarked, let them suppose what they like respecting the case of adults, in the case of infants, at any rate, the Pelagians find no means of answering the difficulty. For these in receiving grace have no will; from the influence of which they can pretend to any precedent merit. We see, moreover, how they cry and struggle when they are baptized, and feel the divine sacraments. Such conduct would, of course, be charged against them as a great impiety, if they already had free will in use; and notwithstanding this, grace cleaves to them even in their resisting struggles. But most certainly there is no prevenient merit, otherwise the grace would be no longer grace. Sometimes, too, this grace is bestowed upon the children of unbelievers, when they happen by some means or other to fall, by reason of God’s secret providence, into the hands of pious persons; but, on the other hand, the children of believers fail to obtain grace, some hindrance occurring to prevent the approach of help to rescue them in their danger. These things, no doubt, happen through the secret providence of God, whose judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out. These are the words of the apostle; and you should observe what he had previously said, to lead him to add such a remark. He was discoursing about the Jews and Gentiles, when he wrote to the Romans—themselves Gentiles—to this effect: “For as ye, in times past, have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy; for God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.” (Romans 11:30-32) Now, after he had thought upon what he said, full of wonder at the certain truth of his own assertion, indeed, but astonished at its great depth, how God concluded all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all,—as if doing evil that good might come,—he at once exclaimed, and said, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33) Perverse men, who do not reflect upon these unsearchable judgments and untraceable ways, indeed, but are ever prone to censure, being unable to understand, have supposed the apostle to say, and censoriously gloried over him for saying, “Let us do evil, that good may come!” God forbid that the apostle should

say so! But men, without understanding, have thought that this was in fact said, when they heard these words of the apostle: “Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” (Romans 5:20) But grace, indeed, effects this purpose—that good works should now be wrought by those who previously did evil; not that they should persevere in evil courses and suppose that they are recompensed with good. Their language, therefore, ought not to be: “Let us do evil, that good may come;” but: “We have done evil, and good has come; let us henceforth do good, that in the future world we may receive good for good, who in the present life are receiving good for evil.” Wherefore it is written in the Psalm, “I will sing of mercy and judgment unto Thee, O Lord.” (Psalm 101:1) When the Son of man, therefore, first came into the world, it was not to judge the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3:17) And this dispensation was for mercy; by and by, however, He will come for judgment—to judge the quick and the dead. And yet even in this present time salvation itself does not eventuate without judgment—although it be a hidden one; therefore He says, “For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not may see, and that they which see may be made blind.” (John 9:39)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Men, however, may suppose that there are certain good deserts which they think are precedent to justification through God’s grace; all the while failing to see, when they express such an opinion, that they do nothing else than deny grace. But, as I have already remarked, let them suppose what they like respecting the case of adults, in the case of infants, at any rate, the Pelagians find no means of answering the difficulty. For these in receiving grace have no will; from the influence of which they can pretend to any precedent merit. We see, moreover, how they cry and struggle when they are baptized, and feel the divine sacraments. Such conduct would, of course, be charged against them as a great impiety, if they already had free will in use; and notwithstanding this, grace cleaves to them even in their resisting struggles. But most certainly there is no prevenient merit, otherwise the grace would be no longer grace. Sometimes, too, this grace is bestowed upon the children of unbelievers, when they happen by some means or other to fall, by reason of God’s secret providence, into the hands of pious persons; but, on the other hand, the children of believers fail to obtain grace, some hindrance occurring to prevent the approach of help to rescue them in their danger. These things, no doubt, happen through the secret providence of God, whose judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out.”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):33** O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

He continues, “These are the words of the apostle; and you should observe what he had previously said, to lead him to add such a remark. He was discoursing about the Jews and Gentiles, when he wrote to the Romans—themselves Gentiles—to this effect: “For as ye, in times past, have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy; for God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.” (Romans 11:30-32)”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):30** For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: 31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

He continues, “Now, after he had thought upon what he said, full of wonder at the certain truth of his own assertion, indeed, but astonished at its great depth, how God concluded all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all,—as if doing evil that good might come,—he at once exclaimed, and said, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33) Perverse men, who do not reflect upon these unsearchable judgments and untraceable ways, indeed, but are ever prone to censure, being unable to understand, have supposed the apostle to say, and censoriously gloried over him for saying, “Let us do evil, that good may come!””

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):8** And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? Whose damnation is just.

He continues, “God forbid that the apostle should say so! But men, without understanding, have thought that this was in fact said, when they heard these words of the apostle: “Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” (Romans 5:20)”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):20** Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

He continues, “But grace, indeed, effects this purpose—that good works should now be wrought by those who previously did evil; not that they should persevere in evil courses and suppose that they are recompensed with good. Their language, therefore, ought not to be: “Let us do evil, that good may come;” but: “We have done evil, and good has come; let us henceforth do good, that in the future world we may receive good for good, who in the present life are receiving good for evil.” Wherefore it is written in the Psalm, “I will sing of mercy and judgment unto Thee, O Lord.” (Psalm 101:1)”

He refers to **Psalm 101 (KJV):1** I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.

He continues, “When the Son of man, therefore, first came into the world, it was not to judge the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3:17)”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):17** For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

He continues, “And this dispensation was for mercy; by and by, however, He will come for judgment—to judge the quick and the dead.”

He refers to **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):1** I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

And to **1 Peter 4 (KJV):5** Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

He concludes, “And yet even in this present time salvation itself does not eventuate without judgment—although it be a hidden one; therefore He says, “For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not may see, and that they which see may be made blind.” (John 9:39)”

He refers to **John 9 (KJV):39** And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

Chapter 45 [XXIII]—The Reason Why One Person is Assisted by Grace, and Another is Not Helped, Must Be Referred to the Secret Judgments of God.



You must refer the matter, then, to the hidden determinations of God, when you see, in one and the same condition, such as all infants unquestionably have,—who derive their hereditary evil from Adam,—that one is assisted so as to be baptized, and another is not assisted, so that he dies in his very bondage; and again, that one baptized person is left and forsaken in his present life, who God foreknew would be ungodly, while another baptized person is taken away from this life, “lest that wickedness should alter his understanding;” (Wisdom 4:11) and be sure that you do not in such cases ascribe unrighteousness or unwisdom to God, in whom is the very fountain of righteousness and wisdom, but, as I have exhorted you from the commencement of this treatise, “whereto you have already attained, walk therein,” (Philippians 3:16) and “even this shall God reveal unto you,” (Philippians 3:15)—if not in this life, yet certainly in the next, “for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed.” (Matthew 10:26) When, therefore, you hear the Lord say, “I the Lord have deceived that prophet,” (Ezekiel 14:9) and likewise what the apostle says: “He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth,” (Romans 9:18) believe that, in the case of him whom He permits to be deceived and hardened, his evil deeds have deserved the judgment; whilst in the case of him to whom He shows mercy, you should loyally and unhesitatingly recognise the grace of the God who “rendereth not evil for evil; but contrariwise blessing.” (1 Peter 3:9) **Nor should you take away from Pharaoh free will, because in several passages God says, “I have hardened Pharaoh;” or, “I have hardened or I will harden Pharaoh’s heart;” (Exodus 4:21, 7:3, 14:4) for it does not by any means follow that Pharaoh did not, on this account, harden his own heart. For this, too, is said of him, after the removal of the fly-plague from the Egyptians, in these words of the Scripture: “And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go.” (Exodus 8:32) Thus it was that both God hardened him by His just judgment, and Pharaoh by his own free will.** Be ye then well assured that your labour will never be in vain, if, setting before you a good purpose, you persevere in it to the last. For God, who fails to render, according to their deeds, only to those whom He liberates, will then “recompense every man according to his works.” (Matthew 16:27) God will, therefore, certainly recompense both evil for evil, because He is just; and good for evil, because He is good; and good for good, because He is good and just; only, evil for good He will never recompense, because He is not unjust. He will, therefore, recompense evil for evil—punishment for unrighteousness; and He will recompense good for evil—grace for unrighteousness; and He will recompense good for good—grace for grace.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “You must refer the matter, then, to the hidden determinations of God, when you see, in one and the same condition, such as all infants unquestionably have,—who derive their hereditary evil from Adam,—that one is assisted so as to be baptized, and another is not assisted, so that he dies in his very bondage; and again, that one baptized person is left and forsaken in his present life, who God foreknew would be ungodly, while another baptized person is taken away from this life, “lest that wickedness should alter his understanding;” (Wisdom 4:11)”

He refers to **Wisdom 4 (Douay Rheims):11** He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul.

He continues, “and be sure that you do not in such cases ascribe unrighteousness or

unwisdom to God, in whom is the very fountain of righteousness and wisdom, but, as I have exhorted you from the commencement of this treatise, “whereto you have already attained, walk therein,” (Philippians 3:16) and “even this shall God reveal unto you,” (Philippians 3:15)—if not in this life, yet certainly in the next, “for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed.” (Matthew 10:26)”

He refers to **Philippians 3 (KJV):15** Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. 16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

And to **Matthew 10 (KJV):26** Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

He continues, “When, therefore, you hear the Lord say, “I the Lord have deceived that prophet,” (Ezekiel 14:9) and likewise what the apostle says: “He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth,” (Romans 9:18) believe that, in the case of him whom He permits to be deceived and hardened, his evil deeds have deserved the judgment;”

He refers to **Ezekiel 14 (KJV):9** And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.

And to **Romans 9 (KJV):18** Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

He then continues, “whilst in the case of him to whom He shows mercy, you should loyally and unhesitatingly recognize the grace of the God who “rendereth not evil for evil; but contrariwise blessing.” (1 Peter 3:9)”

He refers to **1 Peter 3 (KJV):9** Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

And he continues, “Nor should you take away from Pharaoh free will, because in several passages God says, “I have hardened Pharaoh;” or,” I have hardened or I will harden Pharaoh’s heart;” (Exodus 4:21, 7:3, 14:4) for it does not by any means follow that Pharaoh did not, on this account, harden his own heart. For this, too, is said of him, after the removal of the fly-plague from the Egyptians, in these words of the Scripture: “And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go.” (Exodus 8:32) Thus it was that both God hardened him by His just judgment, and Pharaoh by his own free will.”

He refers to **Exodus 4 (KJV):21** And the Lord said unto Moses, When thou goest to return into Egypt, see that thou do all those wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he shall not let the people go.

And to **Exodus 7 (KJV):3** And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt.

And to **Exodus 14 (KJV):4** And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord. And they did so.

And to **Exodus 8 (KJV):32** And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

He continues, “Be ye then well assured that your labour will never be in vain, if, setting before you a good purpose, you persevere in it to the last. For God, who fails to render,

according to their deeds, only to those whom He liberates, will then “recompense every man according to his works.” (Matthew 16:27)”

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):27** For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

He concludes, “God will, therefore, certainly recompense both evil for evil, because He is just; and good for evil, because He is good; and good for good, because He is good and just; only, evil for good He will never recompense, because He is not unjust. He will, therefore, recompense evil for evil—punishment for unrighteousness; and He will recompense good for evil—grace for unrighteousness; and He will recompense good for good—grace for grace.”

Chapter 46 [XXIV.]—Understanding and Wisdom Must Be Sought from God.

Peruse attentively this treatise, and if you understand it, give God the praise; but where you fail to understand it, pray for understanding, for God will give you understanding. Remember what the Scriptures say: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given to him.” (James 1:5) Wisdom itself cometh down from above, as the Apostle James himself tells us. (James 1:17, 3:17) There is, however, another wisdom, which you must repel from you, and pray against its remaining in you; this the same apostle expressed his detestation of when he said, “But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, . . . this is not the wisdom which descendeth from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For wherever there is envying and strife, there is also confusion, and every evil work. **But the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good works, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.**” (James 3:14-17) What blessing, then, will that man not have who has prayed for this wisdom and obtained it of the Lord? And from this you may understand what grace is; because if this wisdom were of ourselves, it would not be from above; nor would it be an object to be asked for of the God who created us. Brethren, pray ye for us also, that we may live “soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” (Titus 2:12) to whom belong the honour, and the glory, and the kingdom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Peruse attentively this treatise, and if you understand it, give God the praise; but where you fail to understand it, pray for understanding, for God will give you understanding. Remember what the Scriptures say: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given to him.” (James 1:5) Wisdom itself cometh down from above, as the Apostle James himself tells us. (James 1:17, 3:17)”

He refers to **James 1 (KJV):5** If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

And to **James 1 (KJV):17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

And to **James 3 (KJV):17** But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

He continues, “There is, however, another wisdom, which you must repel from you, and pray against its remaining in you; this the same apostle expressed his detestation of when he said, “But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, . . . this is not the wisdom which descendeth from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For wherever there is envying and strife, there is also confusion, and every evil work. **But the wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good works, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” (James 3:14-17)”**

He refers to **James 3 (KJV):14** But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

He continues, “**What blessing, then, will that man not have who has prayed for this wisdom and obtained it of the Lord?**”

Augustine implies that he will have every blessing “**who has prayed for this wisdom and obtained it of the Lord**”.

He concludes, “**And from this you may understand what grace is; because if this wisdom were of ourselves, it would not be from above; nor would it be an object to be asked for of the God who created us.** Brethren, pray ye for us also, that we may live “soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” (Titus 2:12) to whom belong the honour, and the glory, and the kingdom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.”

He refers in context to **Titus 2 (KJV):11** For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Rebuke and Grace, Chapter 3, page 472-473**

Chapter 3 [II.]—What the Grace of God Through Jesus Christ is.

**For the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord must be apprehended,—as that by which alone men are delivered from evil, and without which they do absolutely no good thing, whether in thought, or will and affection, or in action; not only in order that they may know, by the manifestation of that grace, what should be done, but moreover in order that, by its enabling, they may do with love what they know.** Certainly the apostle asked for this inspiration of good will and work on behalf of those to whom he said, “Now we pray to God that ye do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is good.” (2 Corinthians 13:7) Who can hear this and not awake and confess that we have it from the Lord God that we turn aside from evil and do good?—since the apostle indeed says not, We admonish, we teach, we

exhort, we rebuke; but he says, “We pray to God that ye do no evil, but that ye should do that which is good.” (2 Corinthians 13:7) And yet he was also in the habit of speaking to them, and doing all those things which I have mentioned,—he admonished, he taught, he exhorted, he rebuked. But he knew that all these things which he was doing in the way of planting and watering openly were of no avail unless He who giveth the increase in secret should give heed to his prayer on their behalf. Because, as the same teacher of the Gentiles says, “Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.” (1 Corinthians 3:7)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “For the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord must be apprehended,—as that by which alone men are delivered from evil, and without which they do absolutely no good thing, whether in thought, or will and affection, or in action; not only in order that they may know, by the manifestation of that grace, what should be done, but moreover in order that, by its enabling, they may do with love what they know.”

We can agree with Augustine here, for he had “apprehended” grace. He continues, “Certainly the apostle asked for this inspiration of good will and work on behalf of those to whom he said, “Now we pray to God that ye do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is good.” (2 Corinthians 13:7)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):7** Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

He continues, “Who can hear this and not awake and confess that we have it from the Lord God that we turn aside from evil and do good?—since the apostle indeed says not, We admonish, we teach, we exhort, we rebuke; but he says, “We pray to God that ye do no evil, but that ye should do that which is good.” (2 Corinthians 13:7) And yet he was also in the habit of speaking to them, and doing all those things which I have mentioned,—he admonished, he taught, he exhorted, he rebuked. But he knew that all these things which he was doing in the way of planting and watering openly were of no avail unless He who giveth the increase in secret should give heed to his prayer on their behalf. Because, as the same teacher of the Gentiles says, “Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.” (1 Corinthians 3:7)”

And he in context refers to **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):6** I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. **7** So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Predestination of the Saints, Chapters 13-14, page 504-505**

### **Chapter 13 [VIII.]—The Effect of Divine Grace.**

Accordingly, our only Master and Lord Himself, when He had said what I have above mentioned,—“This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent,”—says a little afterwards in that same discourse of His, “I said unto you that ye also have seen me and have not believed. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.” (John 6:29-37) What is the meaning of “shall come to me,” but, “shall believe in me”? But it is the Father’s gift that this



may be the case. Moreover, a little after He says, “Murmur not among yourselves. No one can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all teachable of God. Every man that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me.” (John 6:43 ff.) What is the meaning of, “Every man that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me,” except that there is none who hears from the Father, and learns, who cometh not to me? For if every one who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes, certainly every one who does not come has not heard from the Father; for if he had heard and learned, he would come. For no one has heard and learned, and has not come; but every one, as the Truth declares, who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes. **Far removed from the senses of the flesh is this teaching in which the Father is heard, and teaches to come to the Son.** Engaged herein is also the Son Himself, because He is His Word by which He thus teaches; and He does not do this through the ear of the flesh, but of the heart. Herein engaged, also, at the same time, is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son; and He, too, teaches, and does not teach separately, since we have learned that the workings of the Trinity are inseparable. And that is certainly the same Holy Spirit of whom the apostle says, “We, however, having the same Spirit of faith.” (2 Corinthians 4:13) But this is especially attributed to the Father, for the reason that of Him is begotten the Only Begotten, and from Him proceeds the Holy Spirit, of which it would be tedious to argue more elaborately; and I think that my work in fifteen books on the Trinity which God is, has already reached you. Very far removed, I say, from the senses of the flesh is this instruction wherein God is heard and teaches. We see that many come to the Son because we see that many believe on Christ, but when and how they have heard this from the Father, and have learned, we see not. **It is true that that grace is exceedingly secret, but who doubts that it is grace? This grace, therefore, which is hiddenly bestowed in human hearts by the Divine gift, is rejected by no hard heart, because it is given for the sake of first taking away the hardness of the heart. When, therefore, the Father is heard within, and teaches, so that a man comes to the Son, He takes away the heart of stone and gives a heart of flesh, as in the declaration of the prophet He has promised. Because He thus makes them children and vessels of mercy which He has prepared for glory.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Accordingly, our only Master and Lord Himself, when He had said what I have above mentioned,—“This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent,”—says a little afterwards in that same discourse of His, “I said unto you that ye also have seen me and have not believed. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.” (John 6:29-37)”

He refers in context to **John 6 (KJV):29** Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. 30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work? 31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. 36 But I

said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. 37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Augustine then asks rhetorically, “What is the meaning of “shall come to me,” but, “shall believe in me”? But it is the Father’s gift that this may be the case. Moreover, a little after He says, “Murmur not among yourselves. No one can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all teachable of God. Every man that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me.” (John 6:43-45)”

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):43** Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

Augustine then again asks rhetorically, “What is the meaning of, “Every man that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me,” except that there is none who hears from the Father, and learns, who cometh not to me? For if every one who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes, certainly every one who does not come has not heard from the Father; for if he had heard and learned, he would come. For no one has heard and learned, and has not come; but every one, as the Truth declares, who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes. **Far removed from the senses of the flesh is this teaching in which the Father is heard, and teaches to come to the Son.** Engaged herein is also the Son Himself, because He is His Word by which He thus teaches; and He does not do this through the ear of the flesh, but of the heart. Herein engaged, also, at the same time, is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son; and He, too, teaches, and does not teach separately, since we have learned that the workings of the Trinity are inseparable. And that is certainly the same Holy Spirit of whom the apostle says, “We, however, having the same Spirit of faith.” (2 Corinthians 4:13)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):13** We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

This is wonderful insight into the working of the Lord in the hearts of men and women to bring them to faith for we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

As he says above, **“Far removed from the senses of the flesh is this teaching in which the Father is heard, and teaches to come to the Son”.**

And we read in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

He continues, “But this is especially attributed to the Father, for the reason that of Him is begotten the Only Begotten, and from Him proceeds the Holy Spirit, of which it would be tedious to argue more elaborately; and I think that my work in fifteen books on the Trinity

which God is, has already reached you. Very far removed, I say, from the senses of the flesh is this instruction wherein God is heard and teaches. We see that many come to the Son because we see that many believe on Christ, but when and how they have heard this from the Father, and have learned, we see not. **It is true that that grace is exceedingly secret, but who doubts that it is grace? This grace, therefore, which is hiddenly bestowed in human hearts by the Divine gift, is rejected by no hard heart, because it is given for the sake of first taking away the hardness of the heart. When, therefore, the Father is heard within, and teaches, so that a man comes to the Son, He takes away the heart of stone and gives a heart of flesh, as in the declaration of the prophet He has promised. Because He thus makes them children and vessels of mercy which He has prepared for glory.”**

He refers in context to **Ezekiel 36 (KJV):26** A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

But the Lord also puts a new spirit within us when we are born again of the Spirit of God. So it is not a matter of just **“grace, therefore, which is hiddenly bestowed in human hearts by the Divine gift”**. There is also a new birth in our spirits as a result of God’s grace. Our spirit was dead in trespasses and sins. When we believed in Jesus, our spirit was made alive to God and given eternal life, and a new divine nature.

#### Chapter 14.—Why the Father Does Not Teach All that They May Come to Christ.

Why, then, does He not teach all that they may come to Christ, except because all whom He teaches, He teaches in mercy, while those whom He teaches not, in judgment He teaches not? Since, “On whom He will He has mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth.” (Romans 9:18) But He has mercy when He gives good things. He hardens when He recompenses what is deserved. Or if, as some would prefer to distinguish them, those words also are his to whom the apostle says, “Thou sayest then unto me,” so that he may be regarded as having said, “Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth,” as well as those which follow,—to wit, “What is it that is still complained of? For who resists His will?” does the apostle answer, “O man, what thou hast said is false?” No; but he says, “O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Doth the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump?” (Romans 9:18 ff.) and what follows, which you very well know. And yet in a certain sense the Father teaches all men to come to His Son. For it was not in vain that it was written in the prophets, “And they shall all be teachable of God.” (John 6:45) And when He too had premised this testimony, He added, “Every man, therefore, who has heard of the Father, and has learned, cometh to me.” As, therefore, we speak justly when we say concerning any teacher of literature who is alone in a city, He teaches literature here to everybody,—not that all men learn, but that there is none who learns literature there who does not learn from him,—**so we justly say, God teaches all men to come to Christ, not because all come, but because none comes in any other way. And why He does not teach all men the apostle explained, as far as he judged that it was to be explained, because, “willing to show His wrath, and to exhibit His power, He endured with much patience the vessels of wrath which were perfected for destruction; and that He might make known the**

riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He has prepared for glory.” (Romans 9:22) Hence it is that the “word of the cross is foolishness to them that perish; but unto them that are saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18) God teaches all such to come to Christ, for He wills all such to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. And if He had willed to teach even those to whom the word of the cross is foolishness to come to Christ, beyond all doubt these also would have come. For He neither deceives nor is deceived when He says, “Everyone that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to me.” Away, then, with the thought that any one cometh not, who has heard of the Father and has learned.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Why, then, does He not teach all that they may come to Christ, except because all whom He teaches, He teaches in mercy, while those whom He teaches not, in judgment He teaches not? Since, “On whom He will He has mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth.” (Romans 9:18)”

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):18** Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

He then explains, “But He has mercy when He gives good things. He hardens when He recompenses what is deserved. Or if, as some would prefer to distinguish them, those words also are his to whom the apostle says, “Thou sayest then unto me,” so that he may be regarded as having said, “Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth,” as well as those which follow,—to wit, “What is it that is still complained of? For who resists His will?” does the apostle answer, “O man, what thou hast said is false?” No; but he says, “O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Doth the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump?” (Romans 9:18 ff.) and what follows, which you very well know.”

He refers in context to **Romans 9 (KJV):19** Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? 25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. 26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

He continues, “And yet in a certain sense the Father teaches all men to come to His Son. For it was not in vain that it was written in the prophets, “And they shall all be teachable of God.” (John 6:45)”

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):45** It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

And he continues, “And when He too had premised this testimony, He added, “Every man, therefore, who has heard of the Father, and has learned, cometh to me.” As, therefore, we speak justly when we say concerning any teacher of literature who is alone in a city, He teaches

literature here to everybody,—not that all men learn, but that there is none who learns literature there who does not learn from him,—so we justly say, God teaches all men to come to Christ, not because all come, but because none comes in any other way. And why He does not teach all men the apostle explained, as far as he judged that it was to be explained, because, “willing to show His wrath, and to exhibit His power, He endured with much patience the vessels of wrath which were perfected for destruction; and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He has prepared for glory.” (Romans 9:22)”

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):22** What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.

He continues, “Hence it is that the “word of the cross is foolishness to them that perish; but unto them that are saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):18** For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

He concludes, “God teaches all such to come to Christ, for He wills all such to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. And if He had willed to teach even those to whom the word of the cross is foolishness to come to Christ, beyond all doubt these also would have come. For He neither deceives nor is deceived when He says, “Everyone that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to me.” Away, then, with the thought that any one cometh not, who has heard of the Father and has learned.”

And he refers in context to **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):1** I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapter 28, page 536**

Chapter 28 [XII.]—God’s Goodness and Righteousness Shown in All.

It is therefore settled that God’s grace is not given according to the deserts of the recipients, but according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise and glory of His own grace; so that he who glorieth may by no means glory in himself, but in the Lord, who gives to those men to whom He will, because He is merciful, what if, however, He does not give, He is righteous: and He does not give to whom He will not, that He may make known the riches of His glory to the vessels of mercy. (Romans 9:23) For by giving to some what they do not deserve, He has certainly willed that His grace should be gratuitous, and thus genuine grace; by not giving to all, He has shown what all deserve. Good in His goodness to some, righteous in the punishment of others; both good in respect of all, because it is good when that which is due is rendered, and righteous in respect of all, since that which is not due is given without wrong to any one.



**Commentary:** Augustine summarizes as he says, “It is therefore settled that God’s grace is not given according to the deserts of the recipients, but according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise and glory of His own grace; so that he who glorieth may by no means glory in himself, but in the Lord, who gives to those men to whom He will, because He is merciful, what if, however, He does not give, He is righteous: and He does not give to whom He will not, that He may make known the riches of His glory to the vessels of mercy. (Romans 9:23)”

He refers in context to **Romans 9 (KJV):22** What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

He then concludes, “For by giving to some what they do not deserve, He has certainly willed that His grace should be gratuitous, and thus genuine grace; by not giving to all, He has shown what all deserve. Good in His goodness to some, righteous in the punishment of others; both good in respect of all, because it is good when that which is due is rendered, and righteous in respect of all, since that which is not due is given without wrong to any one.”

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermon XX. [LXX. Ben.] Again on the words of the Gospel, Matt. xi. 28, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” etc., paragraph 3, page 318**

3. Now in all these instances, they who do not love these things feel them as great severities; whereas they who love them endure the same, it is true, but they do not seem to feel them severe. For love makes all, the hardest and most distressing things, altogether easy, and almost nothing. How much more surely then and easily will charity do with a view to true blessedness, that which mere desire does as it can, with a view to what is but misery? How easily is any temporal adversity endured, if it be that eternal punishment may be avoided, and eternal rest procured! Not without good reason did that vessel of election say with exceeding joy, “The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:18) See then how it is that that “yoke is easy, and that burden light.” And if it be strait to the few who choose it, yet is it easy to all who love it. The Psalmist saith, “Because of the words of Thy lips I have kept hard ways.” (Psalm 17:4) But the things which are hard to those who labour, lose their roughness to those same men when they love. Wherefore it has been so arranged by the dispensation of the Divine goodness, that to “the inner man who is renewed from day to day,” (2 Corinthians 4:16) placed no longer under the Law but under Grace, and freed from the burdens of numberless observances which were indeed a heavy yoke, but meetly imposed on a stubborn neck, every grievous trouble which that prince who is cast forth could inflict from without on the outward man, should through the easiness of a simple faith, and a good hope, and a holy charity, become light through the joy within. For to a good will nothing is so easy, as this good will to itself, and this is enough for

God. How much soever therefore this world may rage, most truly did the angels exclaim when the Lord was born in the flesh, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will;” (Luke 2:14) because “His yoke,” who was then born, “is easy, and His burden light.” And as the Apostle saith, “God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Now in all these instances, they who do not love these things feel them as great severities; whereas they who love them endure the same, it is true, but they do not seem to feel them severe. For love makes all, the hardest and most distressing things, altogether easy, and almost nothing. How much more surely then and easily will charity do with a view to true blessedness, that which mere desire does as it can, with a view to what is but misery? How easily is any temporal adversity endured, if it be that eternal punishment may be avoided, and eternal rest procured! Not without good reason did that vessel of election say with exceeding joy, “The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:18)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):18** For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

He continues, “See then how it is that that “yoke is easy, and that burden light.””

He is referring in context to **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

He continues, “And if it be strait to the few who choose it, yet is it easy to all who love it. The Psalmist saith, “Because of the words of Thy lips I have kept hard ways.” (Psalm 17:4)”

He refers to **Psalms 16 (Douay Rheims):4** That my mouth may not speak the works of men: for the sake of the words of thy lips, I have kept hard ways.

And to **Psalms 17 (Septuagint):4** As for the works of men, by the words of thy lips I have guarded myself from hard ways.

And to **Psalms 17 (KJV):4** Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.

He continues, “But the things which are hard to those who labour, lose their roughness to those same men when they love. **Wherefore it has been so arranged by the dispensation of the Divine goodness, that to “the inner man who is renewed from day to day,” (2 Corinthians 4:16) placed no longer under the Law but under Grace, and freed from the burdens of numberless observances which were indeed a heavy yoke, but meetly imposed on a stubborn neck, every grievous trouble which that prince who is cast forth could inflict from without on the outward man, should through the easiness of a simple faith, and a good hope, and a holy charity, become light through the joy within.”**

He refers to **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):16** For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

And to **Romans 6 (KJV):14** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

And in part to **Acts 15 (KJV):10** Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

He continues, “For to a good will nothing is so easy, as this good will to itself, and this is enough for God. How much soever therefore this world may rage, most truly did the angels exclaim when the Lord was born in the flesh, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will;” (Luke 2:14) because “His yoke,” who was then born, “is easy, and His burden light.” And as the Apostle saith, “God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)”

He refers in context to **Luke 2 (KJV):13** And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

And to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):13** There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

And we read in **Nehemiah 8 (KJV):10** Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

#### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermon L. [C. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel, Luke ix. 57, etc., where the case of the three persons is treated of, of whom one said, “I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,” and was disallowed: another did not dare to offer himself, and was aroused; the third wished to delay, and was blamed., paragraph 4, page 421**

4. Beware, O Christian, beware of pride. For though thou art a follower of the saints, ascribe it always wholly to grace; for that there should be any “remnant” in thee, the grace of God hath brought to pass, not thine own deserts. For the Prophet Isaiah again having this remnant in view, had said already, “Except the Lord of Hosts had left us a seed, we should have become as Sodom, and should have been like unto Gomorrah.” (Isaiah 1:9) “So then,” says the Apostle, “at this present time also a remnant is saved through the election of grace. But if by grace,” says he, “then is it no more of works” (that is, “be now no more lifted up upon thine own deserts”); “otherwise grace is no more grace.” (Romans 11:5-6) For if thou dost build on thine own work; then is a reward rendered unto thee, not grace freely bestowed. But if it be grace, it is gratuitously given. I ask thee then, O sinner, “Dost thou believe in Christ?” Thou sayest, “I do believe.” “What dost thou believe? That all thy sins may be forgiven thee freely through Him?” Then hast thou what thou hast believed. O grace gratuitously given! And thou, righteous man, what dost thou believe, that thou canst not keep thy righteousness without God? That thou art righteous then, impute it wholly to His mercy; but that thou art a sinner, ascribe it to thine own iniquity. Be thou thine own accuser, and He will be thy gracious Deliverer. For every crime, wickedness, or sin comes of our own negligence, and all virtue and holiness come of God’s gracious goodness. “Let us turn to the Lord.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Beware, O Christian, beware of pride. For

though thou art a follower of the saints, ascribe it always wholly to grace; for that there should be any “remnant” in thee, the grace of God hath brought to pass, not thine own deserts. For the Prophet Isaiah again having this remnant in view, had said already, “Except the Lord of Hosts had left us a seed, we should have become as Sodom, and should have been like unto Gomorrah.” (Isaiah 1:9)”

He refers to **Isaiah 1 (KJV):9** Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

He continues, ““So then,” says the Apostle, “at this present time also a remnant is saved through the election of grace. But if by grace,” says he, “then is it no more of works” (that is, “be now no more lifted up upon thine own deserts”); “otherwise grace is no more grace.” (Romans 11:5-6)”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):5** Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

He continues, “For if thou dost build on thine own work; then is a reward rendered unto thee, not grace freely bestowed. But if it be grace, it is gratuitously given. I ask thee then, O sinner, “Dost thou believe in Christ?” Thou sayest, “I do believe.” “What dost thou believe? That all thy sins may be forgiven thee freely through Him?” Then hast thou what thou hast believed. O grace gratuitously given! And thou, righteous man, what dost thou believe, that thou canst not keep thy righteousness without God? That thou art righteous then, impute it wholly to His mercy; but that thou art a sinner, ascribe it to thine own iniquity. Be thou thine own accuser, and He will be thy gracious Deliverer. For every crime, wickedness, or sin comes of our own negligence, and all virtue and holiness come of God’s gracious goodness. “Let us turn to the Lord.””

We can agree with Augustine here. Grace is grace, not work.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermon LX. [CX. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel, Luke xiii. 6, where we are told of the fig tree, which bare no fruit for three years; and of the woman which was in an infirmity eighteen years; and on the words of the ninth Psalm, v. 19, “Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail: let the nations be judged in thy sight.”, paragraph 2, page 444**

2. What is that “woman who was in an infirmity eighteen years”? In six days God finished His works. Three times six are eighteen. What the “three years” then in “the tree” signified, that do the “eighteen years” in this woman. She was bent down, she could not look up; because in vain did she hear, “Up with your hearts.” But the Lord made her straight. There is hope then, for the children, that is, even until the day of judgment come. Man ascribes much to himself. Yet what is man? A righteous man is something great. But yet a righteous man is righteous only by the grace of God. “For what is man, save that thou art mindful of him?” (Psalm 8:4) Wouldest thou see what man is? “All men are liars.” (Psalm 116:11) We have chanted, “Arise, Lord; let not man prevail.” (Psalm 9:19) What is, “let not man prevail”? Were not the Apostles men? Were not Martyrs men? The Lord Jesus Himself, without ceasing to be God, vouchsafed to be Man. What then is, “Arise, Lord; let not man prevail”? If “all men are

liars; arise,” Truth, “let not” falsehood “prevail.” If man then would be anything good, it must not be of anything of his own. For if he should wish to be anything of his own he will be “a liar.” If he would wish to be true, he must be so of that which is from God, not of anything of his own.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “What is that “woman who was in an infirmity eighteen years”? In six days God finished His works. Three times six are eighteen. What the “three years” then in “the tree” signified, that do the “eighteen years” in this woman.”

He refers to the previous paragraph 1 where he said, “Touching “the fig tree” which had its three years’ trial, and bare no fruit, and “the woman which was in an infirmity eighteen years,” hearken to what the Lord may grant me to say. The fig tree is the human race. And the three years are the three times; one before the Law, the second under the Law, the third under grace.”

He continues, “She was bent down, she could not look up; because in vain did she hear, “Up with your hearts.” But the Lord made her straight. There is hope then, for the children, that is, even until the day of judgment come. Man ascribes much to himself. Yet what is man? A righteous man is something great. But yet a righteous man is righteous only by the grace of God. “For what is man, save that thou art mindful of him?” (Psalm 8:4)”

He refers to **Psalm 8 (KJV):4** What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him?

He continues, “Wouldest thou see what man is? “All men are liars.” (Psalm 116:11) We have chanted, “Arise, Lord; let not man prevail.” (Psalm 9:19)”

He refers to **Psalm 116 (KJV):11** I said in my haste, All men are liars.

And to **Psalm 9 (KJV):19** Arise, O Lord; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight.

He continues, “What is, “let not man prevail”? Were not the Apostles men? Were not Martyrs men? The Lord Jesus Himself, without ceasing to be God, vouchsafed to be Man. What then is, “Arise, Lord; let not man prevail”? If “all men are liars; arise,” Truth, “let not” falsehood “prevail.” If man then would be anything good, it must not be of anything of his own. For if he should wish to be anything of his own he will be “a liar.” If he would wish to be true, he must be so of that which is from God, not of anything of his own.”

We can agree with Augustine here.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine** **Tractate III.Chapter I. 15–18, paragraphs 8-12, page 21-22**

8. Therefore this follows: “And of His fullness have all we received.” What have ye received? “And grace for grace.” For so run the words of the Gospel, as we find by a comparison of the Greek copies. He does not say, And of His fullness have all we received grace for grace; but thus He says: “And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace,”—that is, have we received; so that He would wish us to understand that we have received from His fullness something unexpressed, and something besides, grace for grace. For we received of His fullness grace in the first instance; and again we received grace, grace for grace. What grace did we, in the first instance, receive? Faith: walking in faith, we walk in



grace. How have we merited this? By what previous merits of ours? Let not each one flatter himself, but let him return into his own conscience, seek out the secret places of his own thoughts, recall the series of his deeds; let him not consider what he is if now he is something, but what he was that he might be something: he will find that he was not worthy of anything save punishment. If, then, thou wast worthy of punishment, and He came not to punish sins, but to forgive sins, grace was given to thee, and not reward rendered. Wherefore is it called grace? Because it is bestowed gratuitously. For thou didst not, by previous merits, purchase that which thou didst receive. This first grace, then, the sinner received, that his sins were forgiven. What did he deserve? Let him interrogate justice, he finds punishment; let him interrogate mercy, he finds grace. But God promised this also through the prophets; therefore, when He came to give what He had promised, He not only gave grace, but also truth. How was truth exhibited? Because that was done which had been promised.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Therefore this follows: “And of His fullness have all we received.” What have ye received? “And grace for grace.””

He refers in context to **John 1 (KJV):12** He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. 15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. 16 And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

He continues, “For so run the words of the Gospel, as we find by a comparison of the Greek copies. He does not say, And of His fullness have all we received grace for grace; but thus He says: “And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace,”—that is, have we received; so that He would wish us to understand that we have received from His fullness something unexpressed, and something besides, grace for grace. For we received of His fullness grace in the first instance; and again we received grace, grace for grace. What grace did we, in the first instance, receive? Faith: walking in faith, we walk in grace.”

And we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Faith is the gift of God. That it is not of works proves that it is by grace.

Augustine continues, as he explains, “How have we merited this? By what previous merit of ours? Let not each one flatter himself, but let him return into his own conscience, seek out the secret places of his own thoughts, recall the series of his deeds; let him not consider what he is if now he is something, but what he was that he might be something: he will find that he was not worthy of anything save punishment. If, then, thou wast worthy of punishment, and He came not to punish sins, but to forgive sins, grace was given to thee, and not reward rendered. Wherefore is it called grace? Because it is bestowed gratuitously. For thou didst not, by previous merits, purchase that which thou didst receive. This first grace, then, the sinner

received, that his sins were forgiven. What did he deserve? Let him interrogate justice, he finds punishment; let him interrogate mercy, he finds grace. But God promised this also through the prophets; therefore, when He came to give what He had promised, He not only gave grace, but also truth. How was truth exhibited? Because that was done which had been promised.”

Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

9. What, then, is “grace for grace”? By faith we render God favorable to us; and inasmuch as we were not worthy to have our sins forgiven, and because we, who were unworthy, received so great a benefit, it is called grace. What is grace? That which is freely given. What is “freely given”? Given, not paid. If it was due, wages were given, not grace bestowed; but if it was reply due, thou wast good; but if, as is true, thou wast evil, but didst believe on Him who justifieth the ungodly (Romans 4:5) (What is, Who justifieth the ungodly? Of the ungodly maketh pious), consider what did by right hang over thee by the law, and what thou hast obtained by grace. But having obtained that grace of faith, thou shalt be just by faith (for the just lives by faith): (Habbakuk 2:4, Romans 1:17) and thou shalt obtain favor of God by living by faith. And having obtained favor from God by living by faith, thou shalt receive immortality as a reward, and life eternal. And that is grace. For because of what merit dost thou receive life eternal? Because of grace. For if faith is grace, life eternal is, as it were, the wages of faith: God, indeed, appears to bestow eternal life as if it were due (To whom due? To the faithful, because he had merited it by faith); but because faith itself is grace, life eternal also is grace for grace.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he then explains, “What, then, is “grace for grace”? By faith we render God favorable to us; and inasmuch as we were not worthy to have our sins forgiven, and because we, who were unworthy, received so great a benefit, it is called grace. What is grace? That which is freely given. What is “freely given”? Given, not paid. If it was due, wages were given, not grace bestowed; but if it was reply due, thou wast good; but if, as is true, thou wast evil, but didst believe on Him who justifieth the ungodly (Romans 4:5) (What is, Who justifieth the ungodly? Of the ungodly maketh pious), consider what did by right hang over thee by the law, and what thou hast obtained by grace.”

He refers in context to **Romans 4 (KJV):4** Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5 But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

In verse 4, the word “reckoned” in the Greek is λογίζομαι (pronounced lo-gē'-zo-mī), and is “from G3056; to take an inventory, i.e. estimate (literally or figuratively):—conclude, (ac-)count (of), + despise, esteem, impute, lay, number, reason, reckon, suppose, think (on).”

**Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3049.**

And in verse 5, the word “counted”, and in verse 6, the word “imputeth” are translations of the same Greek word, λογίζομαι (pronounced lo-gē'-zo-mī).

So in verse 5, God has justified those who have faith, and their faith is counted for righteousness, and in verse 6, righteousness is imputed, or put down to one’s account, without

works, and in verse 8, blessed is the one to whom the Lord will not impute, or count, sin, that is, put sin down to one's account.

He continues, "But having obtained that grace of faith, thou shalt be just by faith (for the just lives by faith): (Habbakuk 2:4, Romans 1:17)"

He refers to **Habbakuk 2 (KJV):4** Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

And to **Romans 1 (KJV):17** For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

He then concludes, "and thou shalt obtain favor of God by living by faith. And having obtained favor from God by living by faith, thou shalt receive immortality as a reward, and life eternal. And that is grace. For because of what merit dost thou receive life eternal? Because of grace. For if faith is grace, life eternal is, as it were, the wages of faith: God, indeed, appears to bestow eternal life as if it were due (To whom due? To the faithful, because he had merited it by faith); but because faith itself is grace, life eternal also is grace for grace."

But we must understand that "faith" is not "grace", but is a gift of God given by grace. The word translated "faith" in Greek is **πίστις** (pronounced, pis'-tis); from G3982; persuasion, i.e. credence; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; abstractly, constancy in such profession; by extension, the system of religious (Gospel) truth itself:—assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity.

Faith is a conviction of the truth. The word translated "grace" in Greek is **χάρις** (pronounced khar'-ece); from G5463; graciousness (as gratifying), of manner or act (abstract or concrete; literal, figurative or spiritual; especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude):—acceptable, benefit, favour, gift, grace(-ious), joy, liberality, pleasure, thank(-s, -worthy).

Grace describes how the gift of faith was given.

And "life eternal" is not grace, but the gift given by the grace of God. And "life eternal" is now the present possession of the one who has believed in Jesus Christ as John reveals in **1 John 5 (KJV):11** And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Augustine did not understand regeneration. He thought regeneration occurred in the soul, which he thought was composed of spirit. He did not understand that regeneration is being born again by the Spirit of God in our spirits. We are composed of body, soul, and spirit as we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That our spirit is different from the Holy Spirit is evident as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

This is what the apostle John is speaking of in **1 John 5 (KJV):10** He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

So faith also is not grace, but faith is a gift given by grace. And so “life eternal” is also not grace, but the gift that is given to the one who has received faith by grace. But we can ultimately agree with Augustine that salvation is the result of “grace for grace”. It is how God deals with us, as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):** 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

We are children of God “according to the good pleasure of his will” in verse 5, “To the praise of the glory of his grace” in verse 6, and in His grace “he hath made us accepted in the beloved”, also in verse 6. Not only so, but “we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” in verse 7, and in “the riches of his grace” He has “abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence” in verse 8. The word in the Greek for “abounded” is **περισσεύω** (pronounced pe-rēs-syü'-ō), from G4053; to superabound (in quantity or quality), be in excess, be superfluous; also (transitively) to cause to superabound or excel:—(make, more) abound, (have, have more) abundance (be more) abundant, be the better, enough and to spare, exceed, excel, increase, be left, redound, remain (over and above). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G4052.**

God’s grace has superabounded to us. God has given to us eternal life, His righteousness, a standing as sons and daughters, and His Spirit all by His grace.

10. Listen to the Apostle Paul acknowledging grace, and afterwards desiring the payment of a debt. What acknowledgment of grace is there in Paul? “Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained,” saith he, “mercy.” (1 Timothy 1:13) He said that he who obtained it was unworthy; that he had, however, obtained it, not through his own merits, but through the mercy of God. Listen to him now demanding the payment of a debt, who had first received unmerited grace: “For,” saith he, “I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.” (2 Timothy 4:6-8) Now he demands a debt, he exacts what is due. For consider the following words: “Which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall render unto me in that day.” That he might in the former instance receive grace, he stood in need of a merciful Father; for the reward of grace, of a just judge. Will He who did not condemn the ungodly man condemn the faithful man? And yet, if thou dost rightly consider, it was He who first gave thee faith, whereby thou didst obtain favor; for not of thine own didst thou so obtain favor that anything should be due to thee. Wherefore, then, in afterwards bestowing the reward of immortality, He crowns His own gifts, not thy merits. Therefore, brethren, “we all of His fullness have received;” of the fullness of His mercy, of the abundance of His goodness have we received. What? The remission of sins that we might be justified by faith. And what besides? “And grace for grace;” that is, for this grace by which we live by faith we shall receive another grace. What, then, is it except grace? For if I shall say that this also is due, I attribute something to myself as if to me it were due. But God crowns in us the gifts of His own mercy; but on condition that we walk with perseverance in that grace which in the first instance we received.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he then explains, “Listen to the Apostle Paul acknowledging grace, and afterwards desiring the payment of a debt. What acknowledgment of grace is there in Paul? “Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained,” saith he, “mercy.” (1 Timothy 1:13)”

He refers to **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):13** Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

He continues, “He said that he who obtained it was unworthy; that he had, however, obtained it, not through his own merits, but through the mercy of God. Listen to him now demanding the payment of a debt, who had first received unmerited grace: “For,” saith he, “I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.” (2 Timothy 4:6-8)”

He refers to **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):6** For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

He continues, “Now he demands a debt, he exacts what is due. For consider the following words: “Which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall render unto me in that day.” That he might in the former instance receive grace, he stood in need of a merciful Father; for the reward of grace, of a just judge. Will He who did not condemn the ungodly man condemn the faithful man? And yet, if thou dost rightly consider, it was He who first gave thee faith, whereby thou didst obtain favor; for not of thine own didst thou so obtain favor that anything should be due to thee. Wherefore, then, in afterwards bestowing the reward of immortality, He crowns His own gifts, not thy merits. Therefore, brethren, “we all of His fullness have received;” of the fullness of His mercy, of the abundance of His goodness have we received. What? The remission of sins that we might be justified by faith. And what besides? “And grace for grace;” that is, for this grace by which we live by faith we shall receive another grace. What, then, is it except grace? For if I shall say that this also is due, I attribute something to myself as if to me it were due. But God crowns in us the gifts of His own mercy; but on condition that we walk with perseverance in that grace which in the first instance we received.”

Augustine understood the new birth by the Spirit of God to be a matter of the grace of God received by faith, which faith was also the gift of God given by the grace of God, and that all of this would be kept by the believer “on condition that we walk with perseverance in that grace which in the first instance we received.”

Again, Augustine did not understand that the new birth by the Spirit of God was not just a matter of receiving the grace of God by faith, which faith was given also by God’s grace. The new birth is an actual event in the life of the believer in which we are made alive to God as we read in **Colossians 2 (NASB):13** When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

We have been born of the Spirit of God, who made alive in our spirit with eternal life, and a new divine nature, and set us free from the law of sin and death in our flesh, as we read in



**Romans 8 (KJV):**2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

This “law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” has given us the new divine nature in our spirits, as Peter reveals in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):**3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

We have been raised up with Him as we read also in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):**4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Christ is now our life as we read in **Colossians 3 (KJV):**1 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

So the grace of God is not something that is given by God, and then kept by walking “with perseverance in that grace which in the first instance we received.” The new birth is an event that happens the moment we truly believe in Jesus Christ, as is our justification as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):**1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

And in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):**11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

After having truly believed, we have a standing with God as sons and daughters. And God treats us now as sons and daughters as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):**3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

He is the Father of our spirit when we are born of the Spirit of God. Now if we build on the foundation precious stones, we will receive a reward, in addition to our salvation, as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):8** Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Once we have truly believed, and have been born again, we cannot lose our salvation, but we can lose our rewards. After we have believed, we stand in grace as in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

But let us test ourselves as Paul taught in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

11. "For the law was given by Moses;" which law held the guilty. For what saith the apostle? "The law entered that the offense might abound." It was a benefit to the proud that the offense abounded, for they gave much to themselves, and, as it were, attributed much to their own strength; and they were unable to fulfill righteousness without the aid of Him who had commanded it. God, desirous to subdue their pride, gave the law, as if saying: Behold, fulfill, and do not think that there is One wanting to command. One to command is not wanting, but one to fulfill.

**Commentary:** In summary, he refers to **John 1 (KJV):17** For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

And to **Romans 5 (KJV):20** Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

Augustine explains as we continue in the next paragraph.

12. If, then, there is one wanting to fulfill, whence does he not fulfill? Because born with the heritage of sin and death. Born of Adam, he drew with him that which was there conceived. The first man fell, and all who were born of him from him derived the concupiscence of the flesh. It was needful that another man should be born who derived no concupiscence. A man and a man: a man to death and a man to life. Thus saith the apostle: "Since, indeed, by man death, by man also the resurrection of the dead." By which man death, and by which man the resurrection of the dead? Do not make haste: he goes on to say, "For as in Adam all die, so also

in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:21-22) Who belong to Adam? All who are born of Adam. Who to Christ? All who were born through Christ. Wherefore all in sin? Because no one was born except through Adam. But that they were born of Adam was of necessity, arising from damnation; to be born through Christ is of will and grace. Men are not compelled to be born through Christ: not because they wished were they born of Adam. All, however, who are of Adam are sinners with sin: all who are through Christ are justified, and just not in themselves, but in Him. For in themselves, if thou shouldest ask, they belong to Adam: in Him, if thou shouldest ask, they belong to Christ. Wherefore? Because He, the Head, our Lord Jesus Christ, did not come with the heritage of sin; but He came nevertheless with mortal flesh.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues, as he says, “If, then, there is one wanting to fulfill, whence does he not fulfill? Because born with the heritage of sin and death. Born of Adam, he drew with him that which was there conceived. The first man fell, and all who were born of him from him derived the concupiscence of the flesh. It was needful that another man should be born who derived no concupiscence. A man and a man: a man to death and a man to life. Thus saith the apostle: “Since, indeed, by man death, by man also the resurrection of the dead.” By which man death, and by which man the resurrection of the dead? Do not make haste: he goes on to say, “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):**21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

He continues, “Who belong to Adam? All who are born of Adam. Who to Christ? All who were born through Christ. Wherefore all in sin? Because no one was born except through Adam. But that they were born of Adam was of necessity, arising from damnation; to be born through Christ is of will and grace.”

We can agree with Augustine here. But that we are willing is because of grace, for we read in **John 1 (KJV):**12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

He concludes, “Men are not compelled to be born through Christ: not because they wished were they born of Adam. All, however, who are of Adam are sinners with sin: all who are through Christ are justified, and just not in themselves, but in Him. For in themselves, if thou shouldest ask, they belong to Adam: in Him, if thou shouldest ask, they belong to Christ. Wherefore? Because He, the Head, our Lord Jesus Christ, did not come with the heritage of sin; but He came nevertheless with mortal flesh.”

We can agree with Augustine here. But that we are willing, is because of grace, which was given to us before the foundation of the world as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):**4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

## Losing Grace

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Rebuke and Grace, Chapter 9, page 474-475

Chapter 9 [VI]—Why They May Justly Be Rebuked Who Do Not Obey God, Although They Have Not Yet Received the Grace of Obedience.

“The apostle says,” say they, “For who maketh thee to differ? And what hast thou that thou hast not received? Now also if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7) Why, then, are we rebuked, censured, reprovèd, accused? What do we do, we who have not received?” They who say this wish to appear without blame in respect of their not obeying God, because assuredly obedience itself is His gift; and that gift must of necessity be in him in whom dwells love, which without doubt is of God, (1 John 4:7) and the Father gives it to His children. “This,” say they, “we have not received. Why, then, are we rebuked, as if we were able to give it to ourselves, and of our own choice would not give it?” And they do not observe that, if they are not yet regenerated, the first reason why, when they are reproached because they are disobedient to God, they ought to be dissatisfied with themselves is, that God made man upright from the beginning of the human creation, (Ecclesiastes 7:30 Septuagint) and there is no unrighteousness with God. (Romans 9:14) And thus the first depravity, whereby God is not obeyed, is of man, because, falling by his own evil will from the rectitude in which God at first made him, he became depraved. Is, then, that depravity not to be rebuked in a man because it is not peculiar to him who is rebuked, but is common to all? Nay, let that also be rebuked in individuals, which is common to all. For the circumstance that none is altogether free from it is no reason why it should not attach to each man. Those original sins, indeed, are said to be the sins of others, because individuals derived them from their parents; but they are not unreasonably said to be our own also, because in that one, as the apostle says, all have sinned. (Romans 3:23) Let, then, the damnable source be rebuked, that from the mortification of rebuke may spring the will of regeneration,—if, indeed, he who is rebuked is a child of promise,—in order that, by the noise of the rebuke sounding and lashing from without, God may by His hidden inspiration work in him from within to will also. If, however, being already regenerate and justified, he relapses of his own will into an evil life, assuredly he cannot say, “I have not received,” because of his own free choice to evil he has lost the grace of God, that he had received. And if, stung with compunction by rebuke, he wholesomely bewails, and returns to similar good works, or even better, certainly here most manifestly appears the advantage of rebuke. But yet for rebuke by the agency of man to avail, whether it be of love or not, depends only upon God.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““The apostle says,” say they, ““For who maketh thee to differ? And what hast thou that thou hast not received? Now also if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):7** For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

He continues, “Why, then, are we rebuked, censured, reprov’d, accused? What do we do, we who have not received?” They who say this wish to appear without blame in respect of their not obeying God, because assuredly obedience itself is His gift; and that gift must of necessity be in him in whom dwells love, which without doubt is of God, (1 John 4:7) and the Father gives it to His children.”

He refers to **1 John 4 (KJV):7** Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

He continues, ““This,” say they, “we have not received. Why, then, are we rebuked, as if we were able to give it to ourselves, and of our own choice would not give it?” And they do not observe that, if they are not yet regenerated, the first reason why, when they are reproached because they are disobedient to God, they ought to be dissatisfied with themselves is, that God made man upright from the beginning of the human creation, (Ecclesiastes 7:29) and there is no unrighteousness with God. (Romans 9:14)”

He refers to **Ecclesiastes 7 (Septuagint):30** But, behold, this have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many devices.

And to **Romans 9 (KJV):14** What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

Augustine continues, “And thus the first depravity, whereby God is not obeyed, is of man, because, falling by his own evil will from the rectitude in which God at first made him, he became depraved. Is, then, that depravity not to be rebuked in a man because it is not peculiar to him who is rebuked, but is common to all? Nay, let that also be rebuked in individuals, which is common to all. For the circumstance that none is altogether free from it is no reason why it should not attach to each man. Those original sins, indeed, are said to be the sins of others, because individuals derived them from their parents; but they are not unreasonably said to be our own also, because in that one, as the apostle says, all have sinned. (Romans 3:23)”

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

And to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

And to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

He continues, “Let, then, the damnable source be rebuked, that from the mortification of rebuke may spring the will of regeneration,—if, indeed, he who is rebuked is a child of promise,—in order that, by the noise of the rebuke sounding and lashing from without, God may by His hidden inspiration work in him from within to will also. **If, however, being already regenerate and justified, he relapses of his own will into an evil life, assuredly he cannot say, “I have not received,” because of his own free choice to evil he has lost the grace of God, that he had received. And if, stung with compunction by rebuke, he wholesomely bewails, and returns to similar good works, or even better, certainly here most manifestly appears the advantage of rebuke. But yet for rebuke by the agency of man to avail, whether it be of love or not, depends only upon God.”**



Augustine asserts here that the grace of God may be lost because of one's "own free choice to evil". But he intimates that he may be restored "if, stung with compunction by rebuke, he wholesomely bewails, and returns to similar good works, or even better..."

Paul speaks of those Galatians who had fallen from grace in **Galatians 5 (KJV)**:4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

The Galatians had "fallen from grace" because they were trying to keep the law as we read in context in **Galatians 5 (KJV)**:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. 2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. 3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. 4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

Paul was correcting their understanding about the grace of God. It wasn't that they had lost the grace of God, but that they were walking as if they had been saved by works, that is, by keeping the law. But losing the grace of God is never spoken of in the Scripture. When we have believed in Jesus Christ, we are born again, and we receive eternal life in our spirit, having been born of the Spirit of God. Christ is now our life as we read in **Colossians 3 (KJV)**:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. 5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

But if we then do not mortify our members, and we fall back into sinful ways, we will be chastened by the Lord, for the Lord chastens every son and daughter He loves as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV)**:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. 14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

In verse 15, we must be "looking diligently lest any man fail", or "come short", as it is in the **New King James Version**, "of the grace of God". That is, we must watch if someone

should fall into sin, or if someone has not truly repented, and “thereby many be defiled”. We must encourage some to test themselves whether they are in the faith, as we read again in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

If Christ is in us, and we fall back into sinful ways, we will be chastened by the Lord.

This can take many forms as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):29** For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. **30** For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. **31** For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. **32** But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

There is a sin unto death as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):16** If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. **17** All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. **18** We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

The sin unto death relates to physical death as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):30** For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

“Sleep” is referring to physical death. But the one who is born of God, though they are chastened in this way, will still not suffer spiritual death, or the second death. Suffering death in this way is being saved by fire as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

So if we have been born again, we cannot lose the grace of God. But if we sin, we will be chastened by the Lord, for whom the Lord loves, He chastens.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Rebuke and Grace, Chapter 41, page 488-489**

Chapter 41.—Even in Judgment God’s Mercy Will Be Necessary to Us.

For the Holy Scripture testifies that God’s mercy is then also necessary for them, when the Saint says to his soul concerning the Lord its God, “Who crowneth thee in mercy and compassion.” (Psalm 103:4) The Apostle James also says: “He shall have judgment without mercy who hath showed no mercy;” (James 2:13) where he sets forth that even in that judgment in which the righteous are crowned and the unrighteous are condemned, some will be judged with mercy, others without mercy. On which account also the mother of the Maccabees says to her son, “That in that mercy I may receive thee with thy brethren.” (2 Maccabees 7:29) “For when a righteous king,” as it is written, “shall sit on the throne, no evil thing shall oppose itself to him. Who will boast that he has a pure heart? Or who will boast that he is pure from sin?” (Proverbs 20:8) And thus God’s mercy is even then necessary, by which he is made “blessed to whom the Lord has not imputed sin.” (Psalm 32:2) But at that time even mercy itself shall be allotted in righteous judgment in accordance with the merits of good works. For when it is said, “Judgment without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy,” it is plainly shown that in those in whom are found the good works of mercy, judgment shall be executed with mercy; and thus even that mercy itself shall be returned to the merits of good works. It is not so now; when not

only no good works, but many bad works precede, His mercy anticipates a man so that he is delivered from evils,—as well from evils which he has done, as from those which he would have done if he were not controlled by the grace of God; and from those, too, which he would have suffered for ever if he were not plucked from the power of darkness, and transferred into the kingdom of the Son of God’s love. (Colossians 1:13) **Nevertheless, since even that life eternal itself, which, it is certain, is given as due to good works, is called by so great an apostle the grace of God, although grace is not rendered to works, but is given freely, it must be confessed without any doubt, that eternal life is called grace for the reason that it is rendered to those merits which grace has conferred upon man. Because that saying is rightly understood which in the gospel is read, “grace for grace,” (John 1:16)—that is, for those merits which grace has conferred.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “For the Holy Scripture testifies that God’s mercy is then also necessary for them, when the Saint says to his soul concerning the Lord its God, “Who crowneth thee in mercy and compassion.” (Psalm 103:4)”

He refers to **Psalms 103 (KJV):4** Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;

He continues, “The Apostle James also says: “He shall have judgment without mercy who hath showed no mercy;” (James 2:13) where he sets forth that even in that judgment in which the righteous are crowned and the unrighteous are condemned, some will be judged with mercy, others without mercy.”

He refers to **James 2 (KJV):13** For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

He continues, “On which account also the mother of the Maccabees says to her son, “That in that mercy I may receive thee with thy brethren.” (2 Maccabees 7:29) “For when a righteous king,” as it is written, “shall sit on the throne, no evil thing shall oppose itself to him. Who will boast that he has a pure heart? or who will boast that he is pure from sin?” (Proverbs 20:8) And thus God’s mercy is even then necessary, by which he is made “blessed to whom the Lord has not imputed sin.” (Psalm 32:2)”

He refers to **2 Maccabees 7 (KJV):29** Fear not this tormentor, but, being worthy of thy brethren, take thy death that I may receive thee again in mercy with thy brethren.

And to **Psalms 32 (KJV):2** Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

Augustine continues, “But at that time even mercy itself shall be allotted in righteous judgment in accordance with the merits of good works. For when it is said, “Judgment without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy,” it is plainly shown that in those in whom are found the good works of mercy, judgment shall be executed with mercy; and thus even that mercy itself shall be returned to the merits of good works. It is not so now; when not only no good works, but many bad works precede, His mercy anticipates a man so that he is delivered from evils,—as well from evils which he has done, as from those which he would have done if he were not controlled by the grace of God; and from those, too, which he would have suffered for ever if he were not plucked from the power of darkness, and transferred into the kingdom of the Son of God’s love. (Colossians 1:13)”

He refers to **Colossians 1 (KJV):13** Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

He continues, “Nevertheless, since even that life eternal itself, which, it is certain, is given as due to good works, is called by so great an apostle the grace of God, although grace is not rendered to works, but is given freely, it must be confessed without any doubt, that eternal life is called grace for the reason that it is rendered to those merits which grace has conferred upon man. Because that saying is rightly understood which in the gospel is read, “grace for grace,” (John 1:16)—that is, for those merits which grace has conferred.”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):16** And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.

Augustine seems to equivocate here. He says that “eternal life is called grace for the reason that it is rendered to those merits which grace has conferred upon man”. So in other words, good works in his thinking are those ordained by God by His grace to merit eternal life.

Eternal life is only mentioned as the possession of the one who has believed in Jesus Christ. Eternal life is given to the one who believes in Jesus Christ, and it is given by the Spirit of God when we are born of the Spirit. It is now the possession of the one who has believed. This is what the apostle John says in **1 John 5 (KJV):11** And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

And this is the clear teaching of Jesus in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

And in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

And in **John 3 (KJV):36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

This is what we receive when we are born of the Spirit of God. Our spirit, which was dead in trespasses and sins and has been made alive to God by the Holy Spirit, now has eternal life. Eternal life is not grace, and it is not merited by any good works, or kept by perseverance. He that has believed in Jesus Christ has eternal life.

What Augustine is saying is that one can lose eternal life if they have lost grace. And as we just read in the previous segment, **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings, On Rebuke and Grace, Chapter 9**, Augustine said, “If, however, being already regenerate and justified, he relapses of his own will into an evil life, assuredly he cannot say, “I have not received,” because of his own free choice to evil he has lost the grace of God, that he had received.”

Augustine did not understand that once one has been born again of the Spirit of God, they have eternal life, being saved by grace. This is what we read in **Romans 10 (ESV):8** But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in

your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

If we have a genuine faith, His justification keeps us because He has put His righteousness down to our account. The security of the believer is our justification, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

## Participation

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XLVIII. Chapter X. 22–42, paragraph 10, page 269**

10. “If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye will not believe me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in Him.” The Son says not, “the Father is in me, and I in Him,” as men can say it. **For if we think well, we are in God; and if we live well, God is in us: believers, by participating in His grace, and being illuminated by Himself, are in Him, and He in us.** But not so is it with the only begotten Son: He is in the Father, and the Father in Him; as one who is equal is in him whose equal he is. In short, we can sometimes say, We are in God, and God is in us; but can we say, I and God are one? Thou art in God, because God contains thee; God is in thee, because thou art become the temple of God: but because thou art in God, and God is in thee, canst thou say, He that seeth me seeth God; as the Only begotten said, “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father also;” and “I and the Father are one”? Recognize the prerogative of the Lord, and the privilege of the servant. The prerogative of the Lord is equality with the Father: the privilege of the servant is fellowship with the Saviour.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, as he says, ““If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye will not believe me, believe the works; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in Him.””

He refers to **John 10 (KJV):37** If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.

He continues, “The Son says not, “the Father is in me, and I in Him,” as men can say it. **For if we think well, we are in God; and if we live well, God is in us: believers, by participating in His grace, and being illuminated by Himself, are in Him, and He in us.** But not so is it with the only begotten Son: He is in the Father, and the Father in Him; as one who is equal is in him whose equal he is. In short, we can sometimes say, We are in God, and God is in us; but can we say, I and God are one? Thou art in God, because God contains thee; God is in thee, because thou art become the temple of God: but because thou art in God, and God is in thee, canst thou say, He that seeth me seeth God; as the Only begotten said, “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father also;” and “I and the Father are one”?”



He refers to **John 14 (KJV):9** Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?

And to **John 10 (KJV):30** I and my Father are one.

We can understand the difference Augustine is making here between the intimacy of the Father and the Son, and the intimacy we have as believers with the Lord. But to say that “if we think well, we are in God”, and “if we live well, God is in us”, and that “by participating in His grace, and being illuminated by Himself”, we “are in Him, and He in us”, makes it sound like God leaves us and we return to being dead in sin after we have been born again if we do not think well, or live well. Once we have truly believed in Jesus Christ and have been born again, we are new creations, being born of the Spirit of God. We are justified by God. We are adopted into the family of God with full rights of sonship. We are not just “participating in His grace”, so that, if we don’t live or think well, we lose His grace.

Grace is the unmerited favor of God as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

If we live well after we are saved by grace through faith, we will receive a reward. If we do not live well after we are saved by grace through faith, we will not receive any rewards, but we will still be saved, yet so as by fire as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

If we have truly believed, we are now the sons and daughters of God as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

He concludes, “Recognize the prerogative of the Lord, and the privilege of the servant. The prerogative of the Lord is equality with the Father: the privilege of the servant is fellowship with the Saviour.”

And this agrees with **1 John 1 (KJV):6** If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

#### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate LXXXII. Chapter XV. 8–10, paragraph 4, page 347-348**

4. But what are we to make of that which follows: “Even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in His love”? Here also He certainly intended us to understand that

fatherly love wherewith He was loved of the Father. For this was what He has just said, “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you;” and then to these He added the words, “Continue ye in my love;” in that, doubtless, wherewith I have loved you. Accordingly, when He says also of the Father, “I abide in His love,” we are to understand it of that love which was borne Him by the Father. **But then, in this case also, is that love which the Father bears to the Son referable to the same grace as that wherewith we are loved of the Son: seeing that we on our part are sons, not by nature, but by grace; while the Only-begotten is so by nature and not by grace?** Or is this even in the Son Himself to be referred to His condition as man? Certainly so. For in saying, “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you,” He pointed to the grace that was His as Mediator. For Christ Jesus is the Mediator between God and men, not in respect to His Godhead, but in respect to His manhood. And certainly it is in reference to this His human nature that we read, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and age, and in favor [grace] with God and men.” (Luke 2:52) In harmony, therefore, with this, we may rightly say that while human nature belongs not to the nature of God, yet such human nature does by grace belong to the person of the only begotten Son of God; and that by grace so great, that there is none greater, yea, none that even approaches equality. For there were no merits that preceded that assumption of humanity, but all His merits began with that very assumption. The Son, therefore, abideth in the love wherewith the Father hath loved Him, and so hath kept His commandments. For what are we to think of Him even as man, but that God is His lifter up? (Psalm 3:3) for the Word was God, the Only begotten, coeternal with Him that begat; but that He might be given to us as Mediator, by grace ineffable, the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, as he says, “But what are we to make of that which follows: “Even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in His love?””

He refers in context to **John 15 (KJV):9** As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

He continues, “Here also He certainly intended us to understand that fatherly love wherewith He was loved of the Father. For this was what He has just said, “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you;” and then to these He added the words, “Continue ye in my love;” in that, doubtless, wherewith I have loved you. Accordingly, when He says also of the Father, “I abide in His love,” we are to understand it of that love which was borne Him by the Father. **But then, in this case also, is that love which the Father bears to the Son referable to the same grace as that wherewith we are loved of the Son: seeing that we on our part are sons, not by nature, but by grace; while the Only begotten is so by nature and not by grace?**”

But when we are born again by the Spirit of God, we receive a new nature in our spirit because whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

So we receive a new nature as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

So we are sons and daughters by nature, and because of His grace.

He continues, “Or is this even in the Son Himself to be referred to His condition as man? Certainly so. For in saying, “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you,” He pointed to

the grace that was His as Mediator. For Christ Jesus is the Mediator between God and men, not in respect to His Godhead, but in respect to His manhood. And certainly it is in reference to this His human nature that we read, “And Jesus increased in wisdom and age, and in favor [grace] with God and men.” (Luke 2:52)”

He refers to **Luke 2 (KJV):52** And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

The word in the Greek translated “favour” is **χάρις** (pronounced khä'-rēs) and is translated “grace” 130 times in the **King James Bible**, and 6 times as favour.

Augustine continues, “In harmony, therefore, with this, we may rightly say that while human nature belongs not to the nature of God, yet such human nature does by grace belong to the person of the only begotten Son of God; and that by grace so great, that there is none greater, yea, none that even approaches equality. For there were no merits that preceded that assumption of humanity, but all His merits began with that very assumption. The Son, therefore, abideth in the love wherewith the Father hath loved Him, and so hath kept His commandments. For what are we to think of Him even as man, but that God is His lifter up? (Psalm 3:3) for the Word was God, the Only begotten, coeternal with Him that begat; but that He might be given to us as Mediator, by grace ineffable, the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.”

The word “ineffable” means indescribable. And he refers to **Psalms 3 (KJV):3** But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

But when he says, “**seeing that we on our part are sons, not by nature, but by grace**”, this explains how we could lose our sonship if we simply lost grace. And then we could gain our sonship back again by getting full of grace again. But if we have made a genuine commitment to the Lord, we cannot lose what He has done in us because of what He has done for us.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm LIII, paragraph 5, page 204**

5. What is that which looking forth we acknowledge? What is that which looking forth God acknowledgeth? What (because here He giveth it) doth He acknowledge? Hear what it is; that “All have gone aside, together useless they have become: there is not one that doeth good, there is not so much as one.” What then is that other question, but the same whereof a little before I have made mention? If, “There is not one that doeth good, is not so much as one,” no one remaineth to groan amid evil men. Stay, saith the Lord, do not hastily give judgment. I have given to men to do well; but of Me, He saith, not of themselves: for of themselves evil they are: sons of men they are, when they do evil; when well, My sons. **For this thing God doth, out of sons of men He maketh sons of God: because out of Son of God He hath made Son of Man. See what this participation is: there hath been promised to us a participation of Divinity: He lieth that hath promised, if He is not first made partaker of mortality. For the Son of God hath been made partaker of mortality, in order that mortal man may be made partaker of divinity. He that hath promised that His good is to be shared with thee, first with thee hath shared thy evil: He that to thee hath promised divinity, sheweth in thee love. Therefore take away that men are sons of God, there remaineth that they are sons of men: “There is none that doeth good, is not so much as one.”**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins, as he says, “What is that which looking forth we acknowledge? What is that which looking forth God acknowledgeth? What (because here He giveth it) doth He acknowledge? Hear what it is; that “All have gone aside, together useless they have become: there is not one that doeth good, there is not so much as one.””

He refers in context to **Psalm 53 (KJV):2** God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. 3 Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

He continues, “What then is that other question, but the same whereof a little before I have made mention? If, “There is not one that doeth good, is not so much as one,” no one remaineth to groan amid evil men. Stay, saith the Lord, do not hastily give judgment. I have given to men to do well; but of Me, He saith, not of themselves: for of themselves evil they are: sons of men they are, when they do evil; when well, My sons. **For this thing God doth, out of sons of men He maketh sons of God.**”

And we do “well” when we believe in Him. And this is what we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

He continues, “**because out of Son of God He hath made Son of Man. See what this participation is: there hath been promised to us a participation of Divinity: He lieth that hath promised, if He is not first made partaker of mortality. For the Son of God hath been made partaker of mortality, in order that mortal man may be made partaker of divinity. He that hath promised that His good is to be shared with thee, first with thee hath shared thy evil: He that to thee hath promised divinity, showeth in thee love. Therefore take away that men are sons of God, there remaineth that they are sons of men: “There is none that doeth good, is not so much as one.”**”

And so we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):3** According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

But Augustine seems to only allow this to be a promise of God, as he says, “**See what this participation is: there hath been promised to us a participation of Divinity:**”, and “**He that to thee hath promised divinity, showeth in thee love.**” He did not understand what takes place in the believer when he or she is born again by faith in Jesus Christ.

## Perseverance

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Rebuke and Grace, Chapters 10-20, page 475-480

#### Chapter 10—All Perseverance is God’s Gift.

**Is such an one as is unwilling to be rebuked still able to say, “What have I done,—I who have not received?” When it appears plainly that he has received, and by his own fault has lost**

that which he has received? “I am able,” says he, “I am altogether able,—when you reprove me for having of my own will relapsed from a good life into a bad one,—still to say, What have I done,—I who have not received? For I have received faith, which worketh by love, but I have not received perseverance therein to the end. Will any one dare to say that this perseverance is not the gift of God, and that so great a possession as this is ours in such wise that if any one have it the apostle could not say to him, ‘For what hast thou which thou hast not received?’ (1 Corinthians 4:7) since he has this in such a manner as that he has not received it?” To this, indeed, we are not able to deny, that perseverance in good, progressing even to the end, is also a great gift of God; and that it exists not save it come from Him of whom it is written, “Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.” (James 1:17) But the rebuke of him who has not persevered must not on that account be neglected, “lest God perchance give unto him repentance, and he recover from the snares of the devil;” (2 Timothy 2:25) since to the usefulness of rebuke the apostle has subjoined this decision, saying, as I have above mentioned, “Rebuking with moderation those that think differently, lest at any time God give them repentance.” (2 Timothy 2:25) For if we should say that such a perseverance, so laudable and so blessed, is man’s in such wise as that he has it not from God, we first of all make void that which the Lord says to Peter: “I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.” (Luke 22:32) For what did He ask for him, but perseverance to the end? And assuredly, if a man could have this from man, it should not have been asked from God. Then when the apostle says, “Now we pray to God that ye do no evil,” (2 Corinthians 13:7) beyond a doubt he prays to God on their behalf for perseverance. For certainly he does not “do no evil” who forsakes good, and, not persevering in good, turns to the evil, from which he ought to turn aside. In that place, moreover, where he says, “I thank my God in every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making quest with joy for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,” (Philippians 1:3-6)—what else does he promise to them from the mercy of God than perseverance in good to the end? And again where he says, “Epaphras saluteth you, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, always striving for you in prayer, that you may stand perfect and fulfilled in all the will of God,” (Colossians 4:12)—what is “that you may stand” but “that you may persevere”? Whence it was said of the devil, “He stood not in the truth;” (John 8:44) because he was there, but he did not continue. For assuredly those were already standing in the faith. And when we pray that he who stands may stand, we do not pray for anything else than that he may persevere. Jude the apostle, again, when he says, “Now unto Him that is able to keep you without offence, and to establish you before the presence of His glory, immaculate in joy,” (Jude 24) does he not most manifestly show that perseverance in good unto the end is God’s gift? For what but a good perseverance does He give who preserves without offence that He may place before the presence of His glory immaculate in joy? What is it, moreover, that we read in the Acts of the Apostles: “And when the Gentiles heard, they rejoiced and received the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed”? (Acts 13:48) Who could be ordained to eternal life save by the gift of perseverance? And when we read, “He that shall persevere unto the end shall be saved;” (Matthew 10:22) with what salvation but eternal? And when, in the Lord’s Prayer, we say to God the Father, “Hallowed be Thy name,” (Matthew 6:9) what do we ask but that His name may be hallowed in us? And as this is already accomplished by means of



the laver of regeneration, why is it daily asked by believers, except that we may persevere in that which is already done in us? For the blessed Cyprian also understands this in this manner, inasmuch as, in his exposition of the same prayer, he says: “We say, ‘Hallowed be Thy name,’ not that we wish for God that He may be hallowed by our prayers, but that we ask of God that His name may be hallowed in us. But by whom is God hallowed; since He Himself hallows? Well, because He said, ‘Be ye holy, since I also am holy;’ we ask and entreat that we who have been hallowed in baptism may persevere in that which we have begun to be.” (Cyprian, Treatise on the Lord’s Prayer, ch. 12; see The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. v. p. 450.) Behold the most glorious martyr is of this opinion, that what in these words Christ’s faithful people are daily asking is, that they may persevere in that which they have begun to be. **And no one need doubt, but that whosoever prays from the Lord that he may persevere in good, confesses thereby that such perseverance is His gift.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “**Is such an one as is unwilling to be rebuked still able to say, ‘What have I done,—I who have not received?’**” When it appears plainly that he has received, and by his own fault has lost that which he has received? “I am able,” says he, “I am altogether able,—when you reprove me for having of my own will relapsed from a good life into a bad one,—still to say, What have I done,—I who have not received? For I have received faith, which worketh by love, but I have not received perseverance therein to the end. Will any one dare to say that this perseverance is not the gift of God, and that so great a possession as this is ours in such wise that if any one have it the apostle could not say to him, ‘For what hast thou which thou hast not received?’ (1 Corinthians 4:7) since he has this in such a manner as that he has not received it?” To this, indeed, we are not able to deny, that perseverance in good, progressing even to the end, is also a great gift of God; and that it exists not save it come from Him of whom it is written, “Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.” (James 1:17)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):7** For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

And to **James 1 (KJV):17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

He continues, “But the rebuke of him who has not persevered must not on that account be neglected, “lest God perchance give unto him repentance, and he recover from the snares of the devil;” (2 Timothy 2:25) since to the usefulness of rebuke the apostle has subjoined this decision, saying, as I have above mentioned, “Rebuking with moderation those that think differently, lest at any time God give them repentance.” (2 Timothy 2:25)”

He refers in context to **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):25** In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

He continues, “For if we should say that such a perseverance, so laudable and so blessed, is man’s in such wise as that he has it not from God, we first of all make void that which the Lord says to Peter: “I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.” (Luke 22:32)”

He refers to **Luke 22 (KJV):32** But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

He continues, “For what did He ask for him, but perseverance to the end? And assuredly, if a man could have this from man, it should not have been asked from God. Then when the apostle says, “Now we pray to God that ye do no evil,” (2 Corinthians 13:7) beyond a doubt he prays to God on their behalf for perseverance.”

He refers in context to **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? 6 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. 7 Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates. 8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

He continues, “For certainly he does not “do no evil” who forsakes good, and, not persevering in good, turns to the evil, from which he ought to turn aside. In that place, moreover, where he says, “I thank my God in every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making quest with joy for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,” (Philippians 1:3-6)—what else does he promise to them from the mercy of God than perseverance in good to the end?”

He refers to **Philippians 1 (KJV):3** I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, 5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; 6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

He continues, “And again where he says, “Epaphras saluteth you, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, always striving for you in prayer, that you may stand perfect and fulfilled in all the will of God,” (Colossians 4:12)—what is “that you may stand” but “that you may persevere”?”

He refers to **Colossians 4 (KJV):12** Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

He continues, “Whence it was said of the devil, “He stood not in the truth;” (John 8:44) because he was there, but he did not continue.”

He refers to **John 8 (KJV):44** Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

He continues, “For assuredly those were already standing in the faith. And when we pray that he who stands may stand, we do not pray for anything else than that he may persevere. Jude the apostle, again, when he says, “Now unto Him that is able to keep you without offence, and to establish you before the presence of His glory, immaculate in joy,” (Jude 24) does he not most manifestly show that perseverance in good unto the end is God’s gift?”

**Jude 24 (KJV):24** Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy...

He continues, “For what but a good perseverance does He give who preserves without offence that He may place before the presence of His glory immaculate in joy? What is it, moreover, that we read in the Acts of the Apostles: “And when the Gentiles heard, they rejoiced and received the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed?” (Acts 13:48)”

He refers to **Acts 13 (KJV):48** And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

He continues, “Who could be ordained to eternal life save by the gift of perseverance? And when we read, “He that shall persevere unto the end shall be saved,” (Matthew 10:22) with what salvation but eternal?”

He refers to **Matthew 10 (KJV):22** And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

He continues, “And when, in the Lord’s Prayer, we say to God the Father, “Hallowed be Thy name,” (Matthew 6:9) what do we ask but that His name may be hallowed in us?”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):9** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

He continues, “And as this is already accomplished by means of the laver of regeneration, why is it daily asked by believers, except that we may persevere in that which is already done in us? For the blessed Cyprian also understands this in this manner, inasmuch as, in his exposition of the same prayer, he says: “We say, ‘Hallowed be Thy name,’ not that we wish for God that He may be hallowed by our prayers, but that we ask of God that His name may be hallowed in us. But by whom is God hallowed; since He Himself hallows? Well, because He said, ‘Be ye holy, since I also am holy;’ we ask and entreat that we who have been hallowed in baptism may persevere in that which we have begun to be.” (Cyprian, Treatise on the Lord’s Prayer, ch.12; see The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. v. p. 450.)”

He refers to **Leviticus 11 (KJV):44** For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 45 For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.

And to **1 Peter 1 (KJV):16** Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

He continues, “Behold the most glorious martyr is of this opinion, that what in these words Christ’s faithful people are daily asking is, that they may persevere in that which they have begun to be. **And no one need doubt, but that whosoever prays from the Lord that he may persevere in good, confesses thereby that such perseverance is His gift.**”

Before commenting, let us read more of Augustine’s thoughts on perseverance.

Chapter 11 [VII.]—They Who Have Not Received the Gift of Perseverance, and Have Relapsed into Mortal Sin and Have Died Therein, Must Righteously Be Condemned.

**If, then, these things be so, we still rebuke those, and reasonably rebuke them, who, although they were living well, have not persevered therein; because they have of their own will been changed from a good to an evil life, and on that account are worthy of rebuke; and if rebuke should be of no avail to them, and they should persevere in their ruined life until death, they are also worthy of divine condemnation for ever.** Neither shall they excuse themselves,

saying,—as now they say, “Wherefore are we rebuked?”—so then, “Wherefore are we condemned, since indeed, that we might return from good to evil, we did not receive that perseverance by which we should abide in good?” They shall by no means deliver themselves by this excuse from righteous condemnation. For if, according to the word of truth, no one is delivered from the condemnation which was incurred through Adam except through the faith of Jesus Christ, and yet from this condemnation they shall not deliver themselves who shall be able to say that they have not heard the gospel of Christ, on the ground that “faith cometh by hearing,” (Romans 10:17) how much less shall they deliver themselves who shall say, “We have not received perseverance!” For the excuse of those who say, “We have not received hearing,” seems more equitable than that of those who say, “We have not received perseverance;” since it may be said, O man, in that which thou hadst heard and kept, in that thou mightest persevere if thou wouldest; but in no wise can it be said, That which thou hadst not heard thou mightest believe if thou wouldest.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “If, then, these things be so, we still rebuke those, and reasonably rebuke them, who, although they were living well, have not persevered therein; because they have of their own will been changed from a good to an evil life, and on that account are worthy of rebuke; and if rebuke should be of no avail to them, and they should persevere in their ruined life until death, they are also worthy of divine condemnation for ever.”

First of all, we read in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

The one who has believed in Him has eternal life and shall not perish as we read in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The one who believes in Him has eternal life as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):12** He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

The one who is born of God cannot sin as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):9** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

The “seed” refers to the new divine nature in our spirit after we are born again. It is this part of us that cannot sin after we are born again. Our soul, that is our mind, will, heart, feelings, and conscience, still needs cleansing.

And we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):18** We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

The reason is because of the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

The life that is given to us when we are born again is the life of the Spirit of God because we are born of God as we read in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave

he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Having been born of God, we received a new divine nature as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

And because of our faith, God has justified us as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

And in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

The righteousness of God has been put down to our account as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

As a result, Paul says in **Romans 8 (KJV):33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If we sin after we have been born again, we have an advocate with the Father as John reveals in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Being a son of God by faith, we are disciplined by God who is our Father. This may take several forms, such as weakness, sickness, and even death. But if we have believed from our heart in Jesus Christ, and confessed Him as Lord we shall be saved as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):9** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Augustine continues, “Neither shall they excuse themselves, saying,—as now they say, “Wherefore are we rebuked?”—so then, “Wherefore are we condemned, since indeed, that we might return from good to evil, we did not receive that perseverance by which we should abide in good?” They shall by no means deliver themselves by this excuse from righteous



condemnation. For if, according to the word of truth, no one is delivered from the condemnation which was incurred through Adam except through the faith of Jesus Christ, and yet from this condemnation they shall not deliver themselves who shall be able to say that they have not heard the gospel of Christ, on the ground that “faith cometh by hearing,” (Romans 10:17) how much less shall they deliver themselves who shall say, “We have not received perseverance!” For the excuse of those who say, “We have not received hearing,” seems more equitable than that of those who say, “We have not received perseverance;” since it may be said, O man, in that which thou hadst heard and kept, in that thou mightest persevere if thou wouldest; but in no wise can it be said, That which thou hadst not heard thou mightest believe if thou wouldest.

He refers to **Romans 10 (KJV):17** So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

But even the invisible things of Him are clearly seen by the things which are made as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV):20** For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Augustine continues in the next Chapter.

Chapter 12.—They Who Have Not Received Perseverance are Not Distinguished from the Mass of Those that are Lost.

And, consequently, both those who have not heard the gospel, and those who, having heard it and been changed by it for the better, have not received perseverance, and those who, having heard the gospel, have refused to come to Christ, that is, to believe on Him, since He Himself says, “No man cometh unto me, except it were given him of my Father,” (John 6:65) and those who by their tender age were unable to believe, but might be absolved from original sin by the sole laver of regeneration, and yet have not received this laver, and have perished in death: are not made to differ from that lump which it is plain is condemned, as all go from one into condemnation. Some are made to differ, however, not by their own merits, but by the grace of the Mediator; that is to say, they are justified freely in the blood of the second Adam. Therefore, when we hear, “For who maketh thee to differ? And what hast thou that thou hast not received? Now, if thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Corinthians 4:7) We ought to understand that from that mass of perdition which originated through the first Adam, no one can be made to differ except he who has this gift, which whosoever has, has received by the grace of the Saviour. And this apostolical testimony is so great, that the blessed Cyprian writing to Quirinus put it in the place of a title, when he says, “That we must boast in nothing, since nothing is our own.” (Cyprian, Testimonies, Book iii. ch. 4; see The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. v. pp. 528 and 533.)

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine is trying to show that perseverance is the gift of God, and that it is necessary to persevere in order to be saved. Let us continue to read in the next chapter.

Chapter 13.—Election is of Grace, Not of Merit.

Whosoever, then, are made to differ from that original condemnation by such bounty of divine grace, there is no doubt but that for such it is provided that they should hear the gospel, and when they hear they believe, and in the faith which worketh by love they persevere unto the end; and if, perchance, they deviate from the way, when they are rebuked they are amended and some of them, although they may not be rebuked by men, return into the path which they had left; and some who have received grace in any age whatever are withdrawn from the perils of this life by swiftness of death. For He worketh all these things in them who made them vessels of mercy, who also elected them in His Son before the foundation of the world by the election of grace: “And if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace.” (Romans 11:6) For they were not so called as not to be elected, in respect of which it is said, “For many are called but few are elected;” (Matthew 20:16) but because they were called according to the purpose, they are of a certainty also elected by the election, as it is said, of grace, not of any precedent merits of theirs, because to them grace is all merit.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Whosoever, then, are made to differ from that original condemnation by such bounty of divine grace, there is no doubt but that for such it is provided that they should hear the gospel, and when they hear they believe, and in the faith which worketh by love they persevere unto the end; and if, perchance, they deviate from the way, when they are rebuked they are amended and some of them, although they may not be rebuked by men, return into the path which they had left; and some who have received grace in any age whatever are withdrawn from the perils of this life by swiftness of death. For He worketh all these things in them who made them vessels of mercy, who also elected them in His Son before the foundation of the world by the election of grace: “And if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace.” (Romans 11:6)”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):6** And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

And to **Romans 8 (KJV):29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

And to **Romans 8 (KJV):33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

He continues, “For they were not so called as not to be elected, in respect of which it is said, “For many are called but few are elected;” (Matthew 20:16) but because they were called according to the purpose, they are of a certainty also elected by the election, as it is said, of grace, not of any precedent merits of theirs, because to them grace is all merit.

And to **Matthew 20 (KJV):16** So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

And in context to **Romans 8 (KJV):28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

And to **Romans 9 (KJV):11** (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

Of such says the apostle, “We know that to those that love God He worketh together all things for good, to them who are called according to His purpose; because those whom He before foreknew, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” (Romans 8:28 ff.) Of these no one perishes, because all are elected. And they are elected because they were called according to the purpose—the purpose, however, not their own, but God’s; of which He elsewhere says, “That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her that the elder shall serve the younger.” (Romans 9:11) And in another place he says, “Not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace.” (2 Timothy 1:9) When, therefore, we hear, “Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called,” (Romans 8:29) we ought to acknowledge that they were called according to His purpose; since He thence began, saying, “He worketh together all things for good to those who are called according to His purpose,” and then added, “Because those whom He before foreknew, He also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” And to these promises He added, “Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called.” He wishes these, therefore, to be understood whom He called according to His purpose, lest any among them should be thought to be called and not elected, on account of that sentence of the Lord’s: “Many the called but few are elected.” (Matthew 20:16) For whoever are elected are without doubt also called; but not whosoever are called are as a consequence elected. Those, then, are elected, as has often been said, who are called according to the purpose, who also are predestinated and foreknown. If any one of these perishes, God is mistaken; but none of them perishes, because God is not mistaken. If any one of these perish, God is overcome by human sin; but none of them perishes, because God is overcome by nothing. Moreover, they are elected to reign with Christ, not as Judas was elected, to a work for which he was fitted. Because he was chosen by Him who well knew how to make use even of wicked men, so that even by his damnable deed that venerable work, for the sake of which He Himself had come, might be accomplished. When, therefore, we hear, “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” (John 6:70) we ought to understand that the rest were elected by mercy, but he by judgment; those to obtain His kingdom, he to shed His blood!

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Of such says the apostle, “We know that to those that love God He worketh together all things for good, to them who are called according to His purpose; because those whom He before foreknew, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” (Romans 8:28 ff.)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

He continues, “Of these no one perishes, because all are elected. And they are elected because they were called according to the purpose—the purpose, however, not their own, but God’s; of which He elsewhere says, “That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her that the elder shall serve the younger.” (Romans 9:11)”

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):11** (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

He continues, “And in another place he says, “Not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace.” (2 Timothy 1:9)”

He refers to **2 Timothy 1 (KJV):9** Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began...

He continues, “When, therefore, we hear, “Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called,” (Romans 8:29) we ought to acknowledge that they were called according to His purpose; since He thence began, saying, “He worketh together all things for good to those who are called according to His purpose,” and then added, “Because those whom He before foreknew, He also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” And to these promises He added, “Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called.” He wishes these, therefore, to be understood whom He called according to His purpose, lest any among them should be thought to be called and not elected, on account of that sentence of the Lord’s: “Many the called but few are elected.” (Matthew 20:16) For whoever are elected are without doubt also called; but not whosoever are called are as a consequence elected. Those, then, are elected, as has often been said, who are called according to the purpose, who also are predestinated and foreknown. If any one of these perishes, God is mistaken; but none of them perishes, because God is not mistaken. If any one of these perish, God is overcome by human sin; but none of them perishes, because God is overcome by nothing. Moreover, they are elected to reign with Christ, not as Judas was elected, to a work for which he was fitted. Because he was chosen by Him who well knew how to make use even of wicked men, so that even by his damnable deed that venerable work, for the sake of which He Himself had come, might be accomplished. When, therefore, we hear, “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” (John 6:70) we ought to understand that the rest were elected by mercy, but he by judgment; those to obtain His kingdom, he to shed His blood!

He refers in context to **John 6 (KJV):70** Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 71 He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

And we read in **John 18 (KJV):8** Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: 9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

Those whom God has chosen He chose before the foundation of the world as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to

himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

#### Chapter 15.—Perseverance is Given to the End.

Rightly follows the word to the kingdom of the elect: “If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how has He not also with Him given us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? God who justifieth? Who condemneth? Christ who died? Yea, rather who rose again also, who is at the right hand of God, who also soliciteth on our behalf?” (Romans 8:31 ff.) And of how steadfast a perseverance even to the end they have received the gift, let them follow on to say: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, Because for thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. But in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that hath loved us. For I am certain, that neither death, nor life, nor angel, nor principality, nor things present, nor things to come, nor power, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:35 ff.)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Rightly follows the word to the kingdom of the elect: “If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how has He not also with Him given us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? God who justifieth? Who condemneth? Christ who died? Yea, rather who rose again also, who is at the right hand of God, who also soliciteth on our behalf?” (Romans 8:31-34) And of how steadfast a perseverance even to the end they have received the gift, let them follow on to say: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, Because for thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. But in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that hath loved us. For I am certain, that neither death, nor life, nor angel, nor principality, nor things present, nor things to come, nor power, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:35-39)

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):**31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor



things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And Augustine is very much in agreement with the Scriptures here.

#### Chapter 16.—Whosoever Do Not Persevere are Not Distinguished from the Mass of Perdition by Predestination.

Such as these were they who were signified to Timothy, where, when it had been said that Hymenæus and Philetus had subverted the faith of some, it is presently added, “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord has known them that are His.” (2 Timothy 2:19) The faith of these, which worketh by love, either actually does not fail at all, or, if there are any whose faith fails, it is restored before their life is ended, and the iniquity which had intervened is done away, and perseverance even to the end is allotted to them. But they who are not to persevere, and who shall so fall away from Christian faith and conduct that the end of this life shall find them in that case, beyond all doubt are not to be reckoned in the number of these, even in that season wherein they are living well and piously. For they are not made to differ from that mass of perdition by the foreknowledge and predestination of God, and therefore are not called according to God’s purpose, and thus are not elected; but are called among those of whom it was said, “Many are called,” not among those of whom it was said, “But few are elected.” And yet who can deny that they are elect, since they believe and are baptized, and live according to God? Manifestly, they are called elect by those who are ignorant of what they shall be, but not by Him who knew that they would not have the perseverance which leads the elect forward into the blessed life, and knows that they so stand, as that He has foreknown that they will fall.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Such as these were they who were signified to Timothy, where, when it had been said that Hymenæus and Philetus had subverted the faith of some, it is presently added, “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord has known them that are His.” (2 Timothy 2:19)”

He refers in context to 2 **Timothy 2 (KJV):**16 But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus; 18 Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. 19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

He continues, “The faith of these, which worketh by love, either actually does not fail at all, or, if there are any whose faith fails, it is restored before their life is ended, and the iniquity which had intervened is done away, and perseverance even to the end is allotted to them. But they who are not to persevere, and who shall so fall away from Christian faith and conduct that the end of this life shall find them in that case, beyond all doubt are not to be reckoned in the number of these, even in that season wherein they are living well and piously. For they are not made to differ from that mass of perdition by the foreknowledge and predestination of God, and therefore are not called according to God’s purpose, and thus are not elected; but are called among those of whom it was said, “Many are called,” not among those of whom it was said,

“But few are elected.” And yet who can deny that they are elect, since they believe and are baptized, and live according to God? Manifestly, they are called elect by those who are ignorant of what they shall be, but not by Him who knew that they would not have the perseverance which leads the elect forward into the blessed life, and knows that they so stand, as that He has foreknown that they will fall.”

Augustine did not understand the sin unto death mentioned by the apostle John in **1 John 5 (KJV):16** If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

That is, he is referring to a brother in Christ in verse 16.

Some examples of this sin are in the Scriptures. In the Old Testament we read of Saul in **1 Samuel 28 (KJV):6** And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. 7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. 8 And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee. 9 And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? 10 And Saul sware to her by the Lord, saying, As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. 11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. 12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? For thou art Saul. 13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. 14 And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. 15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. 16 Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? 17 And the Lord hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David: 18 Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day. 19 Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

Samuel told Saul that on the next day, he and his sons would be with him. That is, they would die and go to Abraham’s bosom, and be with Samuel and the other righteous dead.

Saul’s death is then recorded in **1 Samuel 31 (KJV):1** Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. 2 And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines

slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchishua, Saul's sons. 3 And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers. 4 Then said Saul unto his armour bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armour bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. 5 And when his armour bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. 6 So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour bearer, and all his men, that same day together.

So Saul died for his sin as we read in **1 Chronicles 10 (KJV):13** So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it;

Saul committed the sin unto death, that is, physical death, but not spiritual death. He was saved so as by fire. Augustine did not understand this sin.

A New Testament example is found in **Acts 5 (KJV):1** But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. 6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, that is, to God in verse 4, in a time when great grace was upon the Church as we read in **Acts 4 (KJV):33** And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

But they had believed in the Lord and were baptized. If they truly believed in Jesus Christ, they were saved, yet so as by fire.

Another New Testament example was in Corinth, as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):26** For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. 33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

Whom the Lord loves, He chastens. So in verse 30, “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep...” Let us examine ourselves and stay in fellowship with the Lord moment by moment. Let us “judge ourselves”, that we “not be judged”, in verse 31, because “when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world”, in verse 32. Let us have grace as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):28** Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29 For our God is a consuming fire.

#### Chapter 17 [VIII.]—Why Perseverance Should Be Given to One and Not Another is Inscrutable.

Here, if I am asked why God should not have given them perseverance to whom He gave that love by which they might live Christianly, I answer that I do not know. For I do not speak arrogantly, but with acknowledgment of my small measure, when I hear the apostle saying, “O man, who art thou that repliest against God?” (Romans 9:20) and, “O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways untraceable!” (Romans 11:33) So far, therefore, as He condescends to manifest His judgments to us, let us give thanks; but so far as He thinks fit to conceal them, let us not murmur against His counsel, but believe that this also is the most wholesome for us. But whoever you are that are hostile to His grace, and thus ask, what do you yourself say? It is well that you do not deny yourself to be a Christian and boast of being a Catholic. If, therefore, you confess that to persevere to the end in good is God’s gift, I think that equally with me you are ignorant why one man should receive this gift and another should not receive it; and in this case we are both unable to penetrate the unsearchable judgments of God. Or if you say that it pertains to man’s free will—which you defend, not in accordance with God’s grace, but in opposition to it—that any one should persevere in good, or should not persevere, and it is not by the gift of God if he persevere, but by the performance of human will, why will you strive against the words of Him who says, “I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not”? (Luke 22:32) Will you dare to say that even when Christ prayed that Peter’s faith might not fail, it would still have failed if Peter had willed it to fail; that is, if he had been unwilling that it should continue even to the end? As if Peter could in any measure will otherwise than Christ had asked for him that he might will. For who does not know that Peter’s faith would then have perished if that will by which he was faithful should fail, and that it would have continued if that same will should abide? But because “the will is prepared by the Lord,” (Proverbs 8:35) therefore Christ’s petition on his behalf could not be a vain petition. When, then, He prayed that his faith should not fail, what was it that he asked for, but that in his faith he should have a most free, strong, invincible, persevering will! Behold to what an extent the freedom of the will is defended in accordance with the grace of God, not in opposition to it; because the human will does not attain grace by freedom, but rather attains freedom by grace, and a delightful constancy, and an insuperable fortitude that it may persevere.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Here, if I am asked why God should not have given them perseverance to whom He gave that love by which they might live Christianly, I answer that I do not know. For I do not speak arrogantly, but with acknowledgment of my

small measure, when I hear the apostle saying, “O man, who art thou that repliest against God?” (Romans 9:20) and, “O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways untraceable!” (Romans 11:33)”

He refers to **Romans 9 (KJV):20** Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

And to **Romans 11 (KJV):33** O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

He continues, “So far, therefore, as He condescends to manifest His judgments to us, let us give thanks; but so far as He thinks fit to conceal them, let us not murmur against His counsel, but believe that this also is the most wholesome for us. But whoever you are that are hostile to His grace, and thus ask, what do you yourself say? It is well that you do not deny yourself to be a Christian and boast of being a Catholic. If, therefore, you confess that to persevere to the end in good is God’s gift, I think that equally with me you are ignorant why one man should receive this gift and another should not receive it; and in this case we are both unable to penetrate the unsearchable judgments of God. Or if you say that it pertains to man’s free will—which you defend, not in accordance with God’s grace, but in opposition to it—that any one should persevere in good, or should not persevere, and it is not by the gift of God if he persevere, but by the performance of human will, why will you strive against the words of Him who says, “I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not”? (Luke 22:32)”

He refers to **Luke 22 (KJV):32** But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

He continues, “Will you dare to say that even when Christ prayed that Peter’s faith might not fail, it would still have failed if Peter had willed it to fail; that is, if he had been unwilling that it should continue even to the end? As if Peter could in any measure will otherwise than Christ had asked for him that he might will. For who does not know that Peter’s faith would then have perished if that will by which he was faithful should fail, and that it would have continued if that same will should abide? But because “the will is prepared by the Lord,” (Proverbs 8:35) therefore Christ’s petition on his behalf could not be a vain petition.”

He refers to **Proverbs 8 (Septuagint):35** For my outgoings are the outgoings of life, and in them is prepared favour from the Lord.

And to **Proverbs 8 (KJV):35** For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.

He continues, “When, then, He prayed that his faith should not fail, what was it that he asked for, but that in his faith he should have a most free, strong, invincible, persevering will! Behold to what an extent the freedom of the will is defended in accordance with the grace of God, not in opposition to it; because the human will does not attain grace by freedom, but rather attains freedom by grace, and a delightful constancy, and an insuperable fortitude that it may persevere.”

The will is indeed made free by grace, but perseverance does not save us. Jesus spoke as in **Matthew 10 (KJV):22** And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

The word “endureth” in the Greek is ὑπομένω (pronounced hoop-om-en'-o); from G5259 ( ὑπό (pronounced hū-po', under)) and G3306 (μένω (pronounced me'-nō, abide, remain)); to stay under (behind), i.e. remain; figuratively, to undergo, i.e. bear (trials), have fortitude,



persevere:—abide, endure, (take) patient(-ly), suffer, tarry behind. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G5278.**

This is an encouragement by Jesus to abide under trials, knowing that we will still be saved, even though we are hated of all men for His name's sake. He is not saying that our salvation is dependent on our endurance. When we believe we pass from death to life, as Jesus taught in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Our rewards are dependent on our perseverance, but our salvation has been by grace through faith which is the gift of God. Once we have truly believed, and have been born again, we are not our own as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Chapter 18.—Some Instances of God's Amazing Judgments.

It is, indeed, to be wondered at, and greatly to be wondered at, that to some of His own children—whom He has regenerated in Christ—to whom He has given faith, hope, and love, God does not give perseverance also, when to children of another He forgives such wickedness, and, by the bestowal of His grace, makes them His own children. Who would not wonder at this? Who would not be exceedingly astonished at this? But, moreover, it is not less marvelous, and still true, and so manifest that not even the enemies of God's grace can find any means of denying it, that some children of His friends, that is, of regenerated and good believers, departing this life as infants without baptism,—although He certainly might provide the grace of this laver if He willed, since in His power are all things,—He alienates from His kingdom into which He introduces their parents; and some children of His enemies He causes to come into the hands of Christians, and by means of this laver introduces into the kingdom, from which their parents are aliens; although, as well to the former infants there is no evil deserving, as to the latter there is no good, of their own proper will. Certainly, in this case the judgments of God, because they are righteous and deep, may neither be blamed nor penetrated. Among these also is that concerning perseverance, of which we are now discoursing. Of both, therefore, we may exclaim, “O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments!” (Romans 11:33)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he argues, “It is, indeed, to be wondered at, and greatly to be wondered at, that to some of His own children—whom He has regenerated in Christ—to whom He has given faith, hope, and love, God does not give perseverance also, when to children of another He forgives such wickedness, and, by the bestowal of His grace, makes them His own children.”

Augustine thought that to some of God's own children “—whom He has regenerated in Christ—to whom He has given faith, hope, and love, God does not give perseverance also”.

But those He has regenerated in Christ have eternal life. His sheep will never perish as we read in **John 10 (KJV):27** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and my Father are one.

His belief in baptismal regeneration clouded his thinking about how one is regenerated. People could be baptized who had never truly believed. They just went through the ritual. It is who we have faith in that saves us, that is, in Jesus.

He continues, “Who would not wonder at this? Who would not be exceedingly astonished at this? But, moreover, it is not less marvelous, and still true, and so manifest that not even the enemies of God’s grace can find any means of denying it, that some children of His friends, that is, of regenerated and good believers, departing this life as infants without baptism,—although He certainly might provide **the grace of this laver** if He willed, since in His power are all things,—He alienates from His kingdom into which He introduces their parents; and some children of His enemies He causes to come into the hands of Christians, and **by means of this laver introduces into the kingdom**, from which their parents are aliens; although, as well to the former infants there is no evil deserving, as to the latter there is no good, of their own proper will.”

Augustine believed that through the ritual of baptism, grace was given to enter the kingdom. But grace is not given by performing rituals. We are saved by grace through faith as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

And it is by faith, not by ritual, that we have been justified, and we have access into this grace wherein we stand as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we also have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we celebrate in hope of the glory of God.

He continues, “Certainly, in this case the judgments of God, because they are righteous and deep, may neither be blamed nor penetrated. Among these also is that concerning perseverance, of which we are now discoursing. Of both, therefore, we may exclaim, “O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments!” (Romans 11:33)”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):33** O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

And we read in **Ecclesiastes 8 (KJV):17** Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea farther; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.

Chapter 19.—God’s Ways Past Finding Out.

Nor let us wonder that we cannot trace His unsearchable ways. For, to say nothing of innumerable other things which are given by the Lord God to some men, and to others are not given, since with Him is no respect of persons; such things as are not conferred on the merits of

will, as bodily swiftness, strength, good health, and beauty of body, marvelous intellects and mental natures capable of many arts, or such as fall to man's lot from without, such as are wealth, nobility, honours, and other things of this kind, which it is in the power of God alone that a man should have; not to dwell even on the **baptism of infants** (which none of those objectors can say does not pertain, as might be said of those other matters, to the kingdom of God), why it is given to this infant and not given to that, since both of them are equally in God's power, **and without that sacrament none can enter into the kingdom of God**;—to be silent, then, on these matters, or to leave them on one side, let men consider those very special cases of which we are treating. For we are discoursing of such as have not perseverance in goodness, but die in the decline of their good will from good to evil. Let the objectors answer, if they can, why, when these were living faithfully and piously, God did not then snatch them from the perils of this life, “lest wickedness should change their understanding, and lest deceit should beguile their souls”? (Wisdom 4:11) Had He not this in His power, or was He ignorant of their future sinfulness? Assuredly, nothing of this kind is said, except most perversely and insanely. Why, then, did He not do this? Let them reply who mock at us when in such matters we exclaim, “How inscrutable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33) For either God giveth this to whom He will, or certainly that Scripture is wrong which says concerning the immature death of the righteous man, “He was taken away lest wickedness should change his understanding, or lest deceit should beguile his soul.” (Wisdom 9:11) Why, then, does God give this so great benefit to some, and not give it to others, seeing that in Him is no unrighteousness (Romans 9:14) nor acceptance of persons, (Romans 2:11) and that it is in His power how long every one may remain in this life, which is called a trial upon earth? (Job 7:1) As, then, they are constrained to confess that it is God's gift for a man to end this life of his before it can be changed from good to evil, but they do not know why it is given to some and not given to others, so let them confess with us that perseverance in good is God's gift, according to the Scriptures, from which I have already set down many testimonies; and let them condescend with us to be ignorant, without a murmur against God, why it is given to some and not given to others.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he argues, “Nor let us wonder that we cannot trace His unsearchable ways. For, to say nothing of innumerable other things which are given by the Lord God to some men, and to others are not given, since with Him is no respect of persons; such things as are not conferred on the merits of will, as bodily swiftness, strength, good health, and beauty of body, marvelous intellects and mental natures capable of many arts, or such as fall to man's lot from without, such as are wealth, nobility, honours, and other things of this kind, which it is in the power of God alone that a man should have; not to dwell even on the **baptism of infants** (which none of those objectors can say does not pertain, as might be said of those other matters, to the kingdom of God), why it is given to this infant and not given to that, since both of them are equally in God's power, **and without that sacrament none can enter into the kingdom of God**,”

The word “sacrament” is not found in the Bible. The “**baptism of infants**” is not necessary since infants have not reached the age of accountability. Baptism is only a token of faith that we do in obedience to the Lord because we believe.

He continues, “—to be silent, then, on these matters, or to leave them on one side, let

men consider those very special cases of which we are treating. For we are discoursing of such as have not perseverance in goodness, but die in the decline of their good will from good to evil.”

We read in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):11** It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: 12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: 13 If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

He cannot deny himself because Jesus Christ is in us, unless we have believed in vain. That is, unless we have not truly believed. Therefore we must examine ourselves as we read in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Once we have truly believed, we have been born again, and Jesus Christ is in us, and He will never deny Himself. The evidence that we have truly believed is the fruit of the Spirit.

Augustine continues, “Let the objectors answer, if they can, why, when these were living faithfully and piously, God did not then snatch them from the perils of this life, “lest wickedness should change their understanding, and lest deceit should beguile their souls”? (Wisdom 4:11)”

He refers to **Wisdom 4 (KJV):11** Yea speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul.

He continues, “Had He not this in His power, or was He ignorant of their future sinfulness? Assuredly, nothing of this kind is said, except most perversely and insanely. Why, then, did He not do this? Let them reply who mock at us when in such matters we exclaim, “How inscrutable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33)”

He refers again to **Romans 11 (KJV):33** O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

He continues, “For either God giveth this to whom He will, or certainly that Scripture is wrong which says concerning the immature death of the righteous man, “He was taken away lest wickedness should change his understanding, or lest deceit should beguile his soul.” (Wisdom 4:11) Why, then, does God give this so great benefit to some, and not give it to others, seeing that in Him is no unrighteousness (Romans 9:14) nor acceptance of persons, (Romans 2:11) and that it is in His power how long every one may remain in this life, which is called a trial upon earth? (Job 7:1)”

He refers to **Wisdom 4 (Septuagint):11** Yea speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul.

And to **Romans 9 (KJV):14** What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

And to **Romans 2 (KJV):11** For there is no respect of persons with God.

And to **Job 7 (Septuagint):1** Is not the life of man upon earth a state of trial? and his existence as that of a hireling by the day?

And to **Job 7 (KJV):1** Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? Are not his days also like the days of an hireling?

He continues, “As, then, they are constrained to confess that it is God’s gift for a man to end this life of his before it can be changed from good to evil, but they do not know why it is given to some and not given to others, so let them confess with us that perseverance in good is God’s gift, according to the Scriptures, from which I have already set down many testimonies;

and let them condescend with us to be ignorant, without a murmur against God, why it is given to some and not given to others.”

Augustine really speaks of predestination here, and not perseverance. Let us continue to the next chapter.

Chapter 20 [IX.]—Some are Children of God According to Grace Temporally Received, Some According to God’s Eternal Foreknowledge.

Nor let it disturb us that to some of His children God does not give this perseverance. Be this far from being so, however, if these were of those who are predestinated and called according to His purpose,—who are truly the children of the promise. For the former, while they live piously, are called children of God; but because they will live wickedly, and die in that impiety, the foreknowledge of God does not call them God’s children. For they are children of God whom as yet we have not, and God has already, of whom the Evangelist John says, “that Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad;” (John 11:51-52) and this certainly they were to become by believing, through the preaching of the gospel. And yet before this had happened they had already been enrolled as sons of God with unchangeable steadfastness in the memorial of their Father. And, again, there are some who are called by us children of God on account of grace received even in temporal things, yet are not so called by God; of whom the same John says, “They went out from us, but they were not of us, because if they had been of us they would, no doubt, have continued with us.” (1 John 2:19) He does not say, “They went out from us, but because they did not abide with us they are no longer now of us;” but he says, “They went out from us, but they were not of us,”—that is to say, even when they appeared among us, they were not of us. And as if it were said to him, Whence do you prove this? he says, “Because if they had been of us, they would assuredly have continued with us.” (1 John 2:19) It is the word of God’s children; John is the speaker, who was ordained to a chief place among the children of God. When, therefore, God’s children say of those who had not perseverance, “They went out from us, but they were not of us,” and add, “Because if they had been of us, they would assuredly have continued with us,” what else do they say than that they were not children, even when they were in the profession and name of children? Not because they simulated righteousness, but because they did not continue in it. For he does not say, “For if they had been of us, they would assuredly have maintained a real and not a feigned righteousness with us;” but he says, “If they had been of us, they would assuredly have continued with us.” **Beyond a doubt, he wished them to continue in goodness. Therefore they were in goodness; but because they did not abide in it,—that is, they did not persevere unto the end,—he says, They were not of us, even when they were with us,—that is, they were not of the number of children, even when they were in the faith of children; because they who are truly children are foreknown and predestinated as conformed to the image of His Son, and are called according to His purpose, so as to be elected. For the son of promise does not perish, but the son of perdition.**

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he argues, “Nor let it disturb us that to some of His children God does not give this perseverance. Be this far from being so, however, if these were



of those who are predestinated and called according to His purpose,—who are truly the children of the promise.”

And this is according to Scripture as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

He continues, “For the former, while they live piously, are called children of God; but because they will live wickedly, and die in that impiety, the foreknowledge of God does not call them God’s children.”

So the former only appear to be children of God, but are not really so.

He continues, “For they are children of God whom as yet we have not, and God has already, of whom the Evangelist John says, “that Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad;” (John 11:51-52) and this certainly they were to become by believing, through the preaching of the gospel.”

He refers in context to **John 11 (KJV):**47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? For this man doeth many miracles. 48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. 49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; 52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

The apostle John quotes Caiaphas. Augustine continues, “And yet before this had happened they had already been enrolled as sons of God with unchangeable steadfastness in the memorial of their Father. And, again, there are some who are called by us children of God on account of grace received even in temporal things, yet are not so called by God; of whom the same John says, “They went out from us, but they were not of us, because if they had been of us they would, no doubt, have continued with us.” (1 John 2:19)”

He refers in context to **1 John 2 (KJV):**18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

He then explains, “He does not say, “They went out from us, but because they did not abide with us they are no longer now of us;” but he says, “They went out from us, but they were not of us,”—that is to say, even when they appeared among us, they were not of us. And as if it were said to him, Whence do you prove this? he says, “Because if they had been of us, they would assuredly have continued with us.” (1 John 2:19) It is the word of God’s children; John is the speaker, who was ordained to a chief place among the children of God. When, therefore,

God's children say of those who had not perseverance, "They went out from us, but they were not of us," and add, "Because if they had been of us, they would assuredly have continued with us," what else do they say than that they were not children, even when they were in the profession and name of children?"

By the context we can agree with Augustine here. They were not of us, that is, of those who truly believed. They were of the antichrist. And "they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us", as John reveals in verse 19 above.

Augustine continues, "Not because they simulated righteousness, but because they did not continue in it. For he does not say, "For if they had been of us, they would assuredly have maintained a real and not a feigned righteousness with us;" but he says, "If they had been of us, they would assuredly have continued with us." **Beyond a doubt, he wished them to continue in goodness. Therefore they were in goodness; but because they did not abide in it,—that is, they did not persevere unto the end,**"

Augustine makes it difficult to understand his true meaning here. When he says, **"Therefore they were in goodness; but because they did not abide in it,—that is, they did not persevere unto the end"**, he makes it sound as if they had lost what they once had. But if we have truly been born again, we cannot lose what we have been given by the Spirit of God in the new birth, that is, our regeneration.

He continues, **"—he says, They were not of us, even when they were with us,—that is, they were not of the number of children, even when they were in the faith of children;"**

If they had **"the faith of children"**, they would have been born again, that is, regenerated. Augustine seems to equivocate here.

He continues, **"because they who are truly children are foreknown and predestinated as conformed to the image of His Son, and are called according to His purpose, so as to be elected. For the son of promise does not perish, but the son of perdition."**

Augustine believed in the predestination of the saints, according to the Scriptures. And his understanding of election is also according to the Scriptures. However, he seems to believe that one could lose grace, and therefore lose what one has become after regeneration, that is, after being born again.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapter 1, page 526**

### **Chapter 1 [I.]—Of the Nature of the Perseverance Here Discoursed of.**

**I have now to consider the subject of perseverance with greater care; for in the former book also I said some things on this subject when I was discussing the beginning of faith. I assert, therefore, that the perseverance by which we persevere in Christ even to the end is the gift of God; and I call that the end by which is finished that life wherein alone there is peril of falling. Therefore it is uncertain whether any one has received this gift so long as he is still alive. For if he fall before he dies, he is, of course, said not to have persevered; and most truly is it said. How, then, should he be said to have received or to have had perseverance who has not persevered? For if any one have continence, and fall away from that virtue and become incontinent,—or, in like manner, if he have righteousness, if patience, if even faith, and fall**

away, he is rightly said to have had these virtues and to have them no longer; for he was continent, or he was righteous, or he was patient, or he was believing, as long as he was so; but when he ceased to be so, he no longer is what he was. But how should he who has not persevered have ever been persevering, since it is only by persevering that any one shows himself persevering,—and this he has not done? But lest any one should object to this, and say, If from the time at which any one became a believer he has lived—for the sake of argument—ten years, and in the midst of them has fallen from the faith, has he not persevered for five years? I am not contending about words. If it be thought that this also should be called perseverance, as it were for so long as it lasts, assuredly he is not to be said to have had in any degree that perseverance of which we are now discoursing, by which one perseveres in Christ even to the end. And the believer of one year, or of a period as much shorter as may be conceived of, if he has lived faithfully until he died, has rather had this perseverance than the believer of many years' standing, if a little time before his death he has fallen away from the steadfastness of his faith.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “I have now to consider the subject of perseverance with greater care; for in the former book also I said some things on this subject when I was discussing the beginning of faith. I assert, therefore, that the perseverance by which we persevere in Christ even to the end is the gift of God; and I call that the end by which is finished that life wherein alone there is peril of falling.”

So he refers to this life on earth “wherein alone there is peril of falling.”

He continues, “Therefore it is uncertain whether any one has received this gift so long as he is still alive. For if he fall before he dies, he is, of course, said not to have persevered; and most truly is it said. How, then, should he be said to have received or to have had perseverance who has not persevered?”

Augustine is reasoning from a single verse of Scripture in **Matthew 10 (KJV):22** And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

Or as we read in **Matthew 10 (Douay Rheims):22** And you shall be hated by all men for my name's sake: but he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved.

He then explains, “For if any one have continence, and fall away from that virtue and become incontinent,—or, in like manner, if he have righteousness, if patience, if even faith, and fall away, he is rightly said to have had these virtues and to have them no longer; for he was continent, or he was righteous, or he was patient, or he was believing, as long as he was so; but when he ceased to be so, he no longer is what he was. But how should he who has not persevered have ever been persevering, since it is only by persevering that any one shows himself persevering,—and this he has not done? But lest any one should object to this, and say, If from the time at which any one became a believer he has lived—for the sake of argument—ten years, and in the midst of them has fallen from the faith, has he not persevered for five years? I am not contending about words. If it be thought that this also should be called perseverance, as it were for so long as it lasts, assuredly he is not to be said to have had in any degree that perseverance of which we are now discoursing, by which one perseveres in Christ even to the end.”

Augustine is clear here as to what he means by perseverance. One must persevere unto the end, that is unto death, to be saved.

He concludes, “And the believer of one year, or of a period as much shorter as may be conceived of, if he has lived faithfully until he died, has rather had this perseverance than the believer of many years’ standing, if a little time before his death he has fallen away from the steadfastness of his faith.”

But Jesus said that if one has truly believed, he has passed from death to life, whether he perseveres or not, as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Amen, amen I say unto you, that he who heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath life everlasting; and cometh not into judgment, but is passed from death to life.

The life that we have passed to is eternal life, if we have truly believed. Let us persevere in this life so that we are rewarded in the next life with the Lord in heaven.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapter 4, page 527-528**

#### **Chapter 4.—Three Leading Points of the Pelagian Doctrine.**

Read with a little more attention its exposition in the treatise of the blessed martyr Cyprian, which he wrote concerning this matter, the title of which is, On the Lord’s Prayer; and see how many years ago, and what sort of an antidote was prepared against those poisons which the Pelagians were one day to use. For there are three points, as you know, which the Catholic Church chiefly maintains against them. One of these is, that the grace of God is not given according to our merits; because even every one of the merits of the righteous is God’s gift, and is conferred by God’s grace. The second is, that no one lives in this corruptible body, however righteous he may be, without sins of some kind. The third is, that man is born obnoxious to the first man’s sin, and bound by the chain of condemnation, unless the guilt which is contracted by generation be loosed by regeneration. Of these three points, that which I have placed last is the only one that is not treated of in the above named book of the glorious martyr; but of the two others the discourse there is of such perspicuity, that the above named heretics, modern enemies of the grace of Christ, are found to have been convicted long before they were born. Among these merits of the saints, then, which are no merits unless they are the gifts of God, he says that perseverance also is God’s gift, in these words: “We say, ‘Hallowed be Thy name;’ not that we ask for God that He may be hallowed by our prayers, but that we beseech of Him that His name may be hallowed in us. But by whom is God sanctified, since He Himself sanctifies? Well, because He says, Be ye holy because I also am holy, we ask and entreat that we, who were sanctified in baptism, may persevere in that which we have begun to be.” (Cyprian, On the Lord’s Prayer; see The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. v. p. 450.) And a little after, still arguing about that selfsame matter, and teaching that we entreat perseverance from the Lord, which we could in no wise rightly and truly do unless it were His gift, he says: “We pray that this sanctification may abide in us; and because our Lord and Judge warns the man that was healed and quickened by Him to sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto him, we make this supplication in our constant prayers; we ask this, day and night, that the sanctification and quickening which is received from the grace of God may be preserved by His protection.” (Cyprian, On the Lord’s Prayer; see The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. v. p. 450.) That teacher, therefore, understands that we are asking from Him for perseverance in sanctification, that is,

that we should persevere in sanctification, when we who are sanctified say, “Hallowed be Thy name.” For what else is it to ask for what we have already received, than that it be given to us also not to cease from its possession? As, therefore, the saint, when he asks God that he may be holy, is certainly asking that he may continue to be holy, so certainly the chaste person also, when he asks that he may be chaste, the continent that he may be continent, the righteous that he may be righteous, the pious that he may be pious, and the like,—which things, against the Pelagians, we maintain to be God’s gifts,—are asking, without doubt, that they may persevere in those good things which they have acknowledged that they have received. And if they receive this, assuredly they also receive perseverance itself, the great gift of God, whereby His other gifts are preserved.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Read with a little more attention its exposition in the treatise of the blessed martyr Cyprian, which he wrote concerning this matter, the title of which is, On the Lord’s Prayer; and see how many years ago, and what sort of an antidote was prepared against those poisons which the Pelagians were one day to use. **For there are three points, as you know, which the Catholic Church chiefly maintains against them.**”

He enumerates them as follows:

- 1.) “One of these is, that the grace of God is not given according to our merits; because even every one of the merits of the righteous is God’s gift, and is conferred by God’s grace.
- 2.) The second is, that no one lives in this corruptible body, however righteous he may be, without sins of some kind.
- 3.) The third is, that man is born obnoxious to the first man’s sin, and bound by the chain of condemnation, unless the guilt which is contracted by generation be loosed by regeneration.”

He continues, “Of these three points, that which I have placed last is the only one that is not treated of in the above named book of the glorious martyr; but of the two others the discourse there is of such perspicuity, that the above named heretics, modern enemies of the grace of Christ, are found to have been convicted long before they were born. Among these merits of the saints, then, which are no merits unless they are the gifts of God, he says that perseverance also is God’s gift, in these words: “We say, ‘Hallowed be Thy name;’ not that we ask for God that He may be hallowed by our prayers, but that we beseech of Him that His name may be hallowed in us. But by whom is God sanctified, since He Himself sanctifies? Well, because He says, Be ye holy because I also am holy, we ask and entreat that we, who were sanctified in baptism, may persevere in that which we have begun to be.” (Cyprian, On the Lord’s Prayer; see The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. v. p. 450.)”

The word “Hallowed” in the Greek is **ἁγιασθήτω** (pronounced hä-gē-ä'-zthetō); “from G40; to make holy, i.e. (ceremonially) purify or consecrate; (mentally) to venerate:—hallow, be holy, sanctify.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G37.**

Augustine continues, “**And a little after, still arguing about that selfsame matter, and teaching that we entreat perseverance from the Lord, which we could in no wise rightly and truly do unless it were His gift, he says: “We pray that this sanctification may abide in us; and**



because our Lord and Judge warns the man that was healed and quickened by Him to sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto him, we make this supplication in our constant prayers; we ask this, day and night, that the sanctification and quickening which is received from the grace of God may be preserved by His protection.” (Cyprian, *On the Lord’s Prayer*; see *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. v. p. 450.)”

So what Cyprian is saying is “that the sanctification and quickening which is received from the grace of God may be preserved by His protection.” The implication is that we could lose that “sanctification and quickening which is received from the grace of God”.

Augustine continues, “That teacher, therefore, understands that we are asking from Him for perseverance in sanctification, that is, that we should persevere in sanctification, when we who are sanctified say, “Hallowed be Thy name.” For what else is it to ask for what we have already received, than that it be given to us also not to cease from its possession?”

Again, we understand “that we are asking from Him for perseverance in sanctification”, in order that “when we who are sanctified say, “Hallowed be Thy name”” we might keep “what we have already received”, and that it will not cease from our possession. The implication is that we could lose that sanctification if we did not persevere.

He continues, “As, therefore, the saint, when he asks God that he may be holy, is certainly asking that he may continue to be holy, so certainly the chaste person also, when he asks that he may be chaste, the continent that he may be continent, the righteous that he may be righteous, the pious that he may be pious, and the like,—which things, against the Pelagians, we maintain to be God’s gifts,—are asking, without doubt, that they may persevere in those good things which they have acknowledged that they have received. And if they receive this, assuredly they also receive perseverance itself, the great gift of God, whereby His other gifts are preserved.”

But the righteousness of God has been put down to our account because of our faith when we were justified by God, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Augustine makes our righteousness dependent on our perseverance, but it is God who has justified us. Let us continue to read his thoughts.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapters 11-12, page 529-530**

### **Chapter 11.—Effect of Prayer for Perseverance.**

But, lest perchance it be said that perseverance even to the end is not indeed lost when it has once been given,—that is, when a man has persevered unto the end,—but that it is lost, in some sense, when a man by contumacy so acts that he is not able to attain to it; **just as we say that a man who has not persevered unto the end has lost eternal life or the kingdom of God, not because he had already received and actually had it, but because he would have received and had it if he had persevered;—let us lay aside controversies of words, and say that some things even which are not possessed, but are hoped to be possessed, may be lost.** Let any one who dares, tell me whether God cannot give what He has commanded to be asked from Him.

Certainly he who affirms this, I say not is a fool, but he is mad. But God commanded that His saints should say to Him in prayer, “Lead us not into temptation.” Whoever, therefore, is heard when he asks this, is not led into the temptation of contumacy, whereby he could or would be worthy to lose perseverance in holiness.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “But, lest perchance it be said that perseverance even to the end is not indeed lost when it has once been given,—that is, when a man has persevered unto the end,—but that it is lost, in some sense, when a man by contumacy so acts that he is not able to attain to it;”

Contumacy means “stubborn resistance to authority specifically: willful contempt of court”. (**Merriam Webster**)

He continues, “just as we say that a man who has not persevered unto the end has lost eternal life or the kingdom of God, not because he had already received and actually had it, but because he would have received and had it if he had persevered;—let us lay aside controversies of words, and say that some things even which are not possessed, but are hoped to be possessed, may be lost.”

Augustine is logical and makes sense, but he is not abiding in the context of Scripture. While he acknowledges predestination, he does not understand what happens when one is regenerated by faith. We were washed, sanctified, and justified when we were born again as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Our standing is as sons of God as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

God now deals with us as His sons and daughters. And He will discipline every son and daughter whom he receives. And we are now not our own. We have been bought with a price. If we stubbornly refuse to obey Him, He will take us home early. But He will never, never, not under any circumstances, leave us or forsake us as we read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):5** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Kenneth Wuest wrote, “The reason why the child of God can and should obey these admonitions, is now given. The words “He hath said,” are intensive in the Greek text, “He Himself hath said.” The following promise and guarantee was spoken by God Himself. The word “leave” is not the usual word, which means “to leave,” *leipo*, but *aniemi* “to send back, to relax, to loosen, not to uphold, to let sink.” It is preceded by two negatives in the Greek text, which in English make a positive, but which in Greek only serve to strengthen the negation. It is “I will not, I will not cease to sustain and uphold thee.” The word “forsake” is a compound of three Greek words, *egkataleipo*, *eg* meaning “in,” *kata* meaning “down,” and *leipo* meaning, “to leave.” *Leipo* has the idea of forsaking one, *kata* suggests rejection, defeat, helplessness, and *eg* refers to some place or circumstance in which a person may find himself helpless, forsaken. The meaning of the word is that of forsaking someone in a state of defeat or

helplessness in the midst of hostile circumstances. The word in its totality means "to abandon, desert, leave in straits, leave helpless, leave destitute, leave in the lurch, let one down." There are three negatives before this word, making the promise one of triple assurance. It is, "I will not, I will not, I will not let thee down, leave thee in the lurch, leave thee destitute, leave thee in straits and helpless, abandon thee." All of which means that our God will come to our rescue when we find ourselves in difficult circumstances." **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume II, Hebrews in the Greek New Testament, Page 234.**

The construction in the Greek in this verse is actually a triple negative, a "triple assurance" as Wuest says above, and could also be translated, "for he hath said, I will never, no never, not under any circumstances leave you or forsake you".

Augustine then argues, "Let any one who dares, tell me whether God cannot give what He has commanded to be asked from Him. Certainly he who affirms this, I say not is a fool, but he is mad. But God commanded that His saints should say to Him in prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." Whoever, therefore, is heard when he asks this, is not led into the temptation of contumacy, whereby he could or would be worthy to lose perseverance in holiness."

God can give what He has commanded to be asked from Him. But if we have made a genuine commitment with faith in the Lord, and we have been born again, Jesus Christ is in us. The Holy Spirit is the life of our spirits. He will not deny Himself, even if we surrender to "contumacy", and "lose perseverance in holiness". We may commit the sin unto death, but He will not forsake us. But we are saved in hope. And we are commanded not to take any chances with our salvation. God knows our hearts. We must examine ourselves as Paul encourages in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

We must not take any chances with our salvation. But we can be always confident, as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):6** Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

We are always confident because God is for us as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):30** Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. 31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We are more than conquerors through him that loved us. It is God that justifies. That is, He has put His righteousness down to our account.

Chapter 12.—Of His Own Will a Man Forsakes God, So that He is Deservedly Forsaken of Him.

But, on the other hand, “of his own will a man forsakes God, so as to be deservedly forsaken by God.” Who would deny this? But it is for that reason we ask not to be led into temptation, so that this may not happen. And if we are heard, certainly it does not happen, because God does not allow it to happen. For nothing comes to pass except what either He Himself does, or Himself allows to be done. Therefore He is powerful both to turn wills from evil to good, and to convert those that are inclined to fall, or to direct them into a way pleasing to Himself. For to Him it is not said in vain, “O God, Thou shalt turn again and quicken us;” (Psalm 84:6) it is not vainly said, “Give not my foot to be moved;” (Psalm 66:9) it is not vainly said, “Give me not over, O Lord, from my desire to the sinner;” (Psalm 140:8) finally, not to mention many passages, since probably more may occur to you, it is not vainly said, “Lead us not into temptation.” (Matthew 6:13) For whoever is not led into temptation, certainly is not led into the temptation of his own evil will; and he who is not led into the temptation of his own evil will, is absolutely led into no temptation. For “every one is tempted,” as it is written, “when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed;” (James 1:14) “but God tempteth no man, (James 1:13)—that is to say, with a hurtful temptation. For temptation is moreover beneficial by which we are not deceived or overwhelmed, but proved, according to that which is said, “Prove me, O Lord, and try me.” (Psalm 26:2) Therefore, with that hurtful temptation which the apostle signifies when he says, “Lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain,” (1 Thessalonians 3:5) “God tempteth no man,” as I have said,—that is, He brings or leads no one into temptation. For to be tempted and not to be led into temptation is not evil,—nay, it is even good; for this it is to be proved. When, therefore, we say to God, “Lead us not into temptation,” what do we say but, “Permit us not to be led”? Whence some pray in this manner, and it is read in many codices, and the most blessed Cyprian thus uses it: “Do not suffer us to be led into temptation.” In the Greek gospel, however, I have never found it otherwise than, “Lead us not into temptation.” We live, therefore, more securely if we give up the whole to God, and do not entrust ourselves partly to Him and partly to ourselves, as that venerable martyr saw. For when he would expound the same clause of the prayer, he says among other things, “But when we ask that we may not come into temptation, we are reminded of our infirmity and weakness while we thus ask, lest any should insolently vaunt himself,—lest any should proudly and arrogantly assume anything to himself,—lest any should take to himself the glory either of confession or suffering as his own; since the Lord Himself, teaching humility, said, ‘Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ So that when a humble and submissive confession comes first and all is attributed to God, whatever is sought for suppliantly, with the fear of God, may be granted by His own lovingkindness.” (Cyprian, On the Lord’s Prayer; see The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. v. p. 450.)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “But, on the other hand, “of his own will a man forsakes God, so as to be deservedly forsaken by God.” Who would deny this? But it is for that reason we ask not to be led into temptation, so that this may not happen.”

But grace is about what we don't deserve as Augustine as described repeatedly in his writing. And there is no threat of being forsaken by God in the Lord's prayer, as we read in **Matthew 6 (KJV):9** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Augustine interprets verse 12, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors", to mean that, if we don't forgive our debtors, we will not be forgiven. This then becomes another way we might be disqualified in his mind.

He continues, "And if we are heard, certainly it does not happen, because God does not allow it to happen. For nothing comes to pass except what either He Himself does, or Himself allows to be done. Therefore He is powerful both to turn wills from evil to good, and to convert those that are inclined to fall, or to direct them into a way pleasing to Himself. For to Him it is not said in vain, "O God, Thou shalt turn again and quicken us;" (Psalm 80:18) it is not vainly said, "Give not my foot to be moved;" (Psalm 66:9) it is not vainly said, "Give me not over, O Lord, from my desire to the sinner;" (Psalm 140:8) finally, not to mention many passages, since probably more may occur to you, it is not vainly said, "Lead us not into temptation." (Matthew 6:13)"

He refers to **Psalm 80 (KJV):18** So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.

And to **Psalm 66 (Septuagint):8** Bless our God, ye Gentiles, and make the voice of his praise to be heard; 9 who quickens my soul in life, and does not suffer my feet to be moved.

And to **Psalm 66 (KJV):8** O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: 9 Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.

And to **Psalm 140 (Septuagint):8** Deliver me not, O Lord, to the sinner, according to my desire: they have devised mischief against me; forsake me not, lest they should be exalted. Pause.

He continues, "For whoever is not led into temptation, certainly is not led into the temptation of his own evil will; and he who is not led into the temptation of his own evil will, is absolutely led into no temptation. For "every one is tempted," as it is written, "when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed;" (James 1:14) "but God tempteth no man, (James 1:13)—that is to say, with a hurtful temptation."

He refers to **James 1 (KJV):13** Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

He continues, "For temptation is moreover beneficial by which we are not deceived or overwhelmed, but proved, according to that which is said, "Prove me, O Lord, and try me." (Psalm 26:2)"

He refers to **Psalm 26 (KJV):2** Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

He continues, "Therefore, with that hurtful temptation which the apostle signifies when he says, "Lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain," (1 Thessalonians 3:5) "God tempteth no man," as I have said,—that is, He brings or leads no one



into temptation.”

It is the work of the devil to tempt us, as we read in **1 Thessalonians 3 (KJV):5** For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.

He continues, “For to be tempted and not to be led into temptation is not evil,—nay, it is even good; for this it is to be proved. When, therefore, we say to God, “Lead us not into temptation,” what do we say but, “Permit us not to be led”? Whence some pray in this manner, and it is read in many codices, and the most blessed Cyprian thus uses it: “Do not suffer us to be led into temptation.” In the Greek gospel, however, I have never found it otherwise than, “Lead us not into temptation.” We live, therefore, more securely if we give up the whole to God, and do not entrust ourselves partly to Him and partly to ourselves, as that venerable martyr saw. For when he would expound the same clause of the prayer, he says among other things, “But when we ask that we may not come into temptation, we are reminded of our infirmity and weakness while we thus ask, lest any should insolently vaunt himself,—lest any should proudly and arrogantly assume anything to himself,—lest any should take to himself the glory either of confession or suffering as his own; since the Lord Himself, teaching humility, said, ‘Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.’ So that when a humble and submissive confession comes first and all is attributed to God, whatever is sought for suppliantly, with the fear of God, may be granted by His own lovingkindness.” (Cyprian, On the Lord’s Prayer; see The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. v. p. 450.)”

He refers to **Matthew 26 (KJV):41** Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Augustine would lead us to believe that we can lose our salvation. So we must keep ourselves saved by praying day and night not to be led into temptation. But Jesus calls us into His rest, as He taught in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapter 23, page 533-534**

Chapter 23.—Why for the People of Tyre and Sidon, Who Would Have Believed, the Miracles Were Not Done Which Were Done in Other Places Which Did Not Believe.

For if we are asked why such miracles were done among those who, when they saw them, would not believe them, and were not done among those who would have believed them if they had seen them, what shall we answer? Shall we say what I have said in that book wherein I answered some six questions of the Pagans, yet without prejudice of other matters which the wise can inquire into? This indeed I said, as you know, when it was asked why Christ came after so long a time: “that at those times and in those places in which His gospel was not preached, He foreknew that all men would, in regard of His preaching, be such as many were in His bodily presence,—people, namely, who would not believe on Him, even though the dead were raised by Him.” Moreover, a little after in the same book, and on the same question, I say,

“What wonder, if Christ knew in former ages that the world was so filled with unbelievers, that He was, with reason, unwilling for His gospel to be preached to them whom He foreknew to be such as would not believe either His words or His miracles”? Certainly we cannot say this of Tyre and Sidon; and in their case we recognize that those divine judgments had reference to those causes of predestination, without prejudice to which hidden causes I said that I was then answering such questions as those. Certainly it is easy to accuse the unbelief of the Jews, arising as it did from their free will, since they refused to believe in such great wonders done among themselves. And this the Lord, reproaching them, declares when He says, “Woe unto thee, Chorazin and Bethsaida, because if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they would long ago have repented in dust and ashes.” (Luke 10:13) But can we say that even the Tyrians and Sidonians would have refused to believe such mighty works done among them, or would not have believed them if they had been done, when the Lord Himself bears witness to them that they would have repented with great humility if those signs of divine power had been done among them? And yet in the day of judgment they will be punished; although with a less punishment than those cities which would not believe the mighty works done in them. For the Lord goes on to say, “Nevertheless, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.” (Matthew 11:22) Therefore the former shall be punished with greater severity, the latter with less; but yet they shall be punished. Again, if the dead are judged even in respect of deeds which they would have done if they had lived, assuredly since these would have been believers if the gospel had been preached to them with so great miracles, they certainly ought not to be punished; but they will be punished. It is therefore false that the dead are judged in respect also of those things which they would have done if the gospel had reached them when they were alive. And if this is false, there is no ground for saying, concerning infants who perish because they die without baptism, that this happens in their case deservedly, because God foreknew that if they should live and the gospel should be preached to them, they would hear it with unbelief. It remains, therefore, that they are kept bound by original sin alone, and for this alone they go into condemnation; and we see that in others in the same case this is not remitted, except by the gratuitous grace of God in regeneration; and that, by His secret yet righteous judgment—**because there is no unrighteousness with God—that some, who even after baptism will perish by evil living, are yet kept in this life until they perish, who would not have perished if bodily death had forestalled their lapse into sin, and so come to their help.** Because no dead man is judged by the good or evil things which he would have done if he had not died, otherwise the Tyrians and Sidonians would not have suffered the penalties according to what they did; but rather according to those things that they would have done, if those evangelical mighty works had been done in them, they would have obtained salvation by great repentance, and by the faith of Christ.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “For if we are asked why such miracles were done among those who, when they saw them, would not believe them, and were not done among those who would have believed them if they had seen them, what shall we answer? Shall we say what I have said in that book wherein I answered some six questions of the Pagans, yet without prejudice of other matters which the wise can inquire into? This indeed I said, as you know, when it was asked why Christ came after so long a time: “that at those times and in those places in which His gospel was not preached, He foreknew that all men would, in regard of His

preaching, be such as many were in His bodily presence,—people, namely, who would not believe on Him, even though the dead were raised by Him.”

It was prophesied that this would happen as we read in **Isaiah 53 (KJV)**:1 Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? 2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Isaiah is speaking for the Jews, for he was a Jew, an Israelite. But this was God’s plan for one who would be our Savior as we continue in **Isaiah 53 (KJV)**:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. 9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

This is exactly what happened to Jesus. And all of this was written more than 700 years before the cross of Christ, for Isaiah lived between 760 and 673 B.C. And this prophecy has convinced many of the truth of the Gospel.

Augustine continues, “Moreover, a little after in the same book, and on the same question, I say, “What wonder, if Christ knew in former ages that the world was so filled with unbelievers, that He was, with reason, unwilling for His gospel to be preached to them whom He foreknew to be such as would not believe either His words or His miracles”? Certainly we cannot say this of Tyre and Sidon; and in their case we recognize that those divine judgments had reference to those causes of predestination, without prejudice to which hidden causes I said that I was then answering such questions as those. Certainly it is easy to accuse the unbelief of the Jews, arising as it did from their free will, since they refused to believe in such great wonders done among themselves. And this the Lord, reproaching them, declares when He says, “Woe unto thee, Chorazin and Bethsaida, because if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they would long ago have repented in dust and ashes.” (Luke 10:13)”

He refers in context to **Luke 10 (KJV)**:13 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in

you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

He continues, “But can we say that even the Tyrians and Sidonians would have refused to believe such mighty works done among them, or would not have believed them if they had been done, when the Lord Himself bears witness to them that they would have repented with great humility if those signs of divine power had been done among them? And yet in the day of judgment they will be punished; although with a less punishment than those cities which would not believe the mighty works done in them. For the Lord goes on to say, “Nevertheless, I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.” (Matthew 11:22)”

He refers to **Matthew 11 (KJV):22** But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

He continues, “Therefore the former shall be punished with greater severity, the latter with less; but yet they shall be punished. Again, if the dead are judged even in respect of deeds which they would have done if they had lived, assuredly since these would have been believers if the gospel had been preached to them with so great miracles, they certainly ought not to be punished; but they will be punished. It is therefore false that the dead are judged in respect also of those things which they would have done if the gospel had reached them when they were alive. And if this is false, there is no ground for saying, concerning infants who perish because they die without baptism, that this happens in their case deservedly, because God foreknew that if they should live and the gospel should be preached to them, they would hear it with unbelief. It remains, therefore, that they are kept bound by original sin alone, and for this alone they go into condemnation; and we see that in others in the same case this is not remitted, except by the gratuitous grace of God in regeneration; and that, by His secret yet righteous judgment—  
because there is no unrighteousness with God—that some, who even after baptism will perish by evil living, are yet kept in this life until they perish, who would not have perished if bodily death had forestalled their lapse into sin, and so come to their help.”

Augustine asserts that one who has been baptized, and therefore, in his thinking, one who has been regenerated, that they could still “perish by evil living”.

He continues, “Because no dead man is judged by the good or evil things which he would have done if he had not died, otherwise the Tyrians and Sidonians would not have suffered the penalties according to what they did; but rather according to those things that they would have done, if those evangelical mighty works had been done in them, they would have obtained salvation by great repentance, and by the faith of Christ.”

And so we read in **Romans 11 (KJV):7** What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Gift of Perseverance, Chapters 25-26, page 534-535**

Chapter 25 [XI.]—God’s Ways, Both in Mercy and Judgment, Past Finding Out.

Accordingly, as says the apostle, “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy,” (Romans 9:16) who both comes to the help of such infants as

He will, although they neither will nor run, since He chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world as those to whom He intended to give His grace freely,—that is, with no merits of theirs, either of faith or of works, preceding; and does not come to the help of those who are more mature, although He foresaw that they would believe His miracles if they should be done among them, because He wills not to come to their help, since in His predestination He, secretly indeed, but yet righteously, has otherwise determined concerning them. For “there is no unrighteousness with God;” (Romans 9:14) but “His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways are past finding out; all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth.” (Psalm 25:10) Therefore the mercy is past finding out by which He has mercy on whom He will, no merits of his own preceding; and the truth is unsearchable by which He hardeneth whom He will, even although his merits may have preceded, but merits for the most part common to him with the man on whom He has mercy. As of two twins, of which one is taken and the other left, the end is unequal, while the deserts are common, yet in these the one is in such wise delivered by God’s great goodness, that the other is condemned by no injustice of God’s. **For is there unrighteousness with God? Away with the thought! but His ways are past finding out. Therefore let us believe in His mercy in the case of those who are delivered, and in His truth in the case of those who are punished, without any hesitation; and let us not endeavour to look into that which is inscrutable, nor to trace that which cannot be found out.** Because out of the mouth of babes and sucklings He perfects His praise, (Psalm 8:2) so that what we see in those whose deliverance is preceded by no good deservings of theirs, and in those whose condemnation is only preceded by original sin, common alike to both,—this we by no means shrink from as occurring in the case of grownup people, that is, because we do not think either that grace is given to any one according to his own merits, or that any one is punished except for his own merits, whether they are alike who are delivered and who are punished, or have unequal degrees of evil; so that he who thinketh he standeth may take heed lest he fall, and he who glorieth may glory not in himself, but in the Lord.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Accordingly, as says the apostle, “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy,” (Romans 9:16) who both comes to the help of such infants as He will, although they neither will nor run, since He chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world as those to whom He intended to give His grace freely,—that is, with no merits of theirs, either of faith or of works, preceding;”

Augustine is clear hear about his thinking on predestination. He refers in context to **Romans 9 (KJV):**8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. 9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. 10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; 11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. 14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.



He continues, “and does not come to the help of those who are more mature, although He foresaw that they would believe His miracles if they should be done among them, because He wills not to come to their help, since in His predestination He, secretly indeed, but yet righteously, has otherwise determined concerning them. For “there is no unrighteousness with God;” (Romans 9:14) but “His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways are past finding out; (Romans 11:33) all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth.” (Psalm 25:10)”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):33** O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

And to **Psalm 25 (KJV):10** All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

He continues, “Therefore the mercy is past finding out by which He has mercy on whom He will, no merits of his own preceding; and the truth is unsearchable by which He hardeneth whom He will, even although his merits may have preceded, but merits for the most part common to him with the man on whom He has mercy. As of two twins, of which one is taken and the other left, the end is unequal, while the deserts are common, yet in these the one is in such wise delivered by God’s great goodness, that the other is condemned by no injustice of God’s.”

He refers of course to **Romans 9 (KJV):11** (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) **12** It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. **13** As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. **14** What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

Augustine continues, “**For is there unrighteousness with God? Away with the thought! but His ways are past finding out. Therefore let us believe in His mercy in the case of those who are delivered, and in His truth in the case of those who are punished, without any hesitation; and let us not endeavour to look into that which is inscrutable, nor to trace that which cannot be found out.** Because out of the mouth of babes and sucklings He perfects His praise, (Psalm 8:2) so that what we see in those whose deliverance is preceded by no good deservings of theirs, and in those whose condemnation is only preceded by original sin, common alike to both,—this we by no means shrink from as occurring in the case of grownup people, that is, because we do not think either that grace is given to any one according to his own merits, or that any one is punished except for his own merits, whether they are alike who are delivered and who are punished, or have unequal degrees of evil; so that he who thinketh he standeth may take heed lest he fall, and he who glorieth may glory not in himself, but in the Lord.”

He refers to **Psalm 8 (Douay Rheims):3** Out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings thou hast perfected praise, because of thy enemies, that thou mayst destroy the enemy and the avenger.

Or to **Psalm 8 (KJV):2** Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

And to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):12** Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

And to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):17** But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

## Free Will

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Spirit and the Letter, Chapters 51-52, page 105-106

#### Chapter 51.—Faith the Ground of All Righteousness.

The righteousness of the law is proposed in these terms,—that whosoever shall do it shall live in it; and the purpose is, that when each has discovered his own weakness, he may not by his own strength, nor by the letter of the law (which cannot be done), but by faith, conciliating the Justifier, attain, and do, and live in it. **For the work in which he who does it shall live, is not done except by one who is justified. His justification, however, is obtained by faith; and concerning faith it is written, “Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring down Christ therefrom;) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is (says he), the word of faith which we preach: That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” (Romans 10:6-9)** As far as he is saved, so far is he righteous. For by this faith we believe that God will raise even us from the dead,—even now in the spirit, that we may in this present world live soberly, righteously, and godly in the renewal of His grace; and by and by in our flesh, which shall rise again to immortality, which indeed is the reward of the Spirit, who precedes it by a resurrection which is appropriate to Himself,—that is, by justification. “For we are buried with Christ by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:4) **By faith, therefore, in Jesus Christ we obtain salvation,—both in so far as it is begun within us in reality, and in so far as its perfection is waited for in hope; “for whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13)** “How abundant,” says the Psalmist, “is the multitude of Thy goodness, O Lord, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee, and hast perfected for them that hope in Thee!” (Psalm 31:19) By the law we fear God; by faith we hope in God: but from those who fear punishment grace is hidden. And the soul which labours under this fear, since it has not conquered its evil concupiscence, and from which this fear, like a harsh master, has not departed,—let it flee by faith for refuge to the mercy of God, that He may give it what He commands, and may, by inspiring into it the sweetness of His grace through His Holy Spirit, cause the soul to delight more in what He teaches it, than it delights in what opposes His instruction. **In this manner it is that the great abundance of His sweetness,—that is, the law of faith,—His love which is in our hearts, and shed abroad, is perfected in them that hope in Him, that good may be wrought by the soul, healed not by the fear of punishment, but by the love of righteousness.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “The righteousness of the law is proposed in these terms,—that whosoever shall do it shall live in it; and the purpose is, that when each has discovered his own weakness, he may not by his own strength, nor by the letter of the law (which cannot be done), but by faith, conciliating the Justifier, attain, and do, and live in it. **For the work in which he who does it shall live, is not done except by one who is justified. His**

justification, however, is obtained by faith; and concerning faith it is written, “Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring down Christ therefrom;) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is (says he), the word of faith which we preach: That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” (Romans 10:6-9)”

Augustine is preaching the Gospel here. He refers to **Romans 10 (KJV):6** But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) 7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

He continues, “As far as he is saved, so far is he righteous.”

This is a very interesting statement. One wonders why he did not include the following in his quote above, as the next verse would have been **Romans 10 (KJV):10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

When one believes that God has raised Jesus from the dead, and confesses with their mouth the Lord Jesus, they shall be saved, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”, as we read in Romans 10:10 above.

And they are then washed, sanctified, and justified as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (ESV):11** And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Our justification is made by God when we believe as we read in **Romans 5 (ESV):1** Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

We are also adopted into the family of God as we read in **Ephesians 1 (ESV):3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

We have a complete salvation when we believe. But we will then be rewarded for our obedience, as we walk in the light of His word.

Augustine continues, “For by this faith we believe that God will raise even us from the dead,—even now in the spirit, that we may in this present world live soberly, righteously, and godly in the renewal of His grace; and by and by in our flesh, which shall rise again to immortality, which indeed is the reward of the Spirit, who precedes it by a resurrection which is appropriate to Himself,—that is, by justification. “For we are buried with Christ by baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:4)”

He refers to **Romans 6 (KJV):4** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

He continues, “By faith, therefore, in Jesus Christ we obtain salvation,—both in so far as it is begun within us in reality, and in so far as its perfection is waited for in hope; “for whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13, Acts 2:21)”

He refers to **Romans 10 (KJV):13** For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

And to **Acts 2 (KJV):21** And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

And to **Joel 2 (KJV):32** And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

He continues, ““How abundant,” says the Psalmist, “is the multitude of Thy goodness, O Lord, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee, and hast perfected for them that hope in Thee!” (Psalm 31:19)”

He refers to **Psalm 31 (KJV):19** Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!

Augustine continues, “By the law we fear God; by faith we hope in God: but from those who fear punishment grace is hidden. And the soul which labours under this fear, since it has not conquered its evil concupiscence, and from which this fear, like a harsh master, has not departed,—let it flee by faith for refuge to the mercy of God, that He may give it what He commands, and may, by inspiring into it the sweetness of His grace through His Holy Spirit, cause the soul to delight more in what He teaches it, than it delights in what opposes His instruction. In this manner it is that the great abundance of His sweetness,—that is, the law of faith,—His love which is in our hearts, and shed abroad, is perfected in them that hope in Him, that good may be wrought by the soul, healed not by the fear of punishment, but by the love of righteousness.”

The “law of faith” is mentioned in context in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. 27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

So the “law of faith” in verse 27 relates to the justification which is done “freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,” in verse 24, “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God”, in verse 25.

And Paul concludes, as we continue in **Romans 3 (KJV):28** Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29 Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Jesus Christ is “a propitiation through faith in his blood... for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” in Romans 3:25 above. Thus the law is established because it has been kept through faith in the fulfillment of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

## Chapter 52 [XXX.]—Grace Establishes Free Will.

Do we then by grace make void free will? God forbid! Nay, rather we establish free will. For even as the law by faith, so free will by grace, is not made void, but established. (Romans 3:31) For neither is the law fulfilled except by free will; but by the law is the knowledge of sin, by faith the acquisition of grace against sin, by grace the healing of the soul from the disease of sin, by the health of the soul freedom of will, by free will the love of righteousness, by love of righteousness the accomplishment of the law. Accordingly, as the law is not made void, but is established through faith, since faith procures grace whereby the law is fulfilled; so free will is not made void through grace, but is established, since grace cures the will whereby righteousness is freely loved. Now all the stages which I have here connected together in their successive links, have severally their proper voices in the sacred Scriptures. The law says: “Thou shall not covet.” (Exodus 20:17) Faith says: “Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.” (Psalm 41:4) Grace says: “Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” (John 5:14) Health says: “O Lord my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me.” (Psalm 30:2) Free will says: “I will freely sacrifice unto Thee.” (Psalm 54:6) Love of righteousness says: “Transgressors told me pleasant tales, but not according to Thy law, O Lord.” (Psalm 119:85) How is it then that miserable men dare to be proud, either of their free will, before they are freed, or of their own strength, if they have been freed? They do not observe that in the very mention of free will they pronounce the name of liberty. But “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” (2 Corinthians 3:17) If, therefore, they are the slaves of sin, why do they boast of free will? For by what a man is overcome, to the same is he delivered as a slave. (2 Peter 2:19) But if they have been freed, why do they vaunt themselves as if it were by their own doing, and boast, as if they had not received? Or are they free in such sort that they do not choose to have Him for their Lord who says to them: “Without me ye can do nothing;” (John 15:5) and “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed?” (John 8:36)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Do we then by grace make void free will? God forbid! Nay, rather we establish free will. For even as the law by faith, so free will by grace, is not made void, but established. (Romans 3:31)”

He refers in context to **Romans 3 (KJV):28** Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. 29 Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the



circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

He then reasons, “For neither is the law fulfilled except by free will; but by the law is the knowledge of sin, by faith the acquisition of grace against sin, by grace the healing of the soul from the disease of sin, by the health of the soul freedom of will, by free will the love of righteousness, by love of righteousness the accomplishment of the law.”

We read in **Romans 13 (NASB):10** Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

We read also in **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Augustine then explains, “Accordingly, as the law is not made void, but is established through faith, since faith procures grace whereby the law is fulfilled; so free will is not made void through grace, but is established, since grace cures the will whereby righteousness is freely loved.”

The Scripture speaks of the righteousness of the law being fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

We are empowered by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which is now in our spirits that have been born again, to walk in a way that is pleasing to the Lord. We will experience more freedom in our will as we walk in the light of the word of God, as Jesus reveals in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Freedom is something that we grow in as we learn the truth. The Christian life is one of growth as Peter reveals in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Augustine emphasizes grace as he says, “by faith the acquisition of grace against sin, by grace the healing of the soul from the disease of sin”. While we are saved by grace through faith, the faith that saves us is something we received by God’s grace. And when we received this faith, we were born again by the Holy Spirit, and we received a new nature in our spirit. God’s grace still abounds toward us as we grow in grace and knowledge, and in a progressive sanctification of our soul. This will also free our soul from our past sinful ways. But Augustine seems to not understand the spiritual birth of the believer who has been born again.

Augustine continues, “Now all the stages which I have here connected together in their successive links, have severally their proper voices in the sacred Scriptures. The law says: “Thou shalt not covet.” (Exodus 20:17)”

He refers to **Exodus 20 (KJV):17** Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

He continues, “Faith says: “Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.” (Psalm 41:4)”

He refers to **Psalm 41 (KJV):4** I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.

He continues, “Grace says: “Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” (John 5:14) Health says: “O Lord my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me.” (Psalm 30:2) Free will says: “I will freely sacrifice unto Thee.” (Psalm 54:6) Love of righteousness says: “Transgressors told me pleasant tales, but not according to Thy law, O Lord.” (Psalm 119:85)”

He refers to **John 5 (KJV):14** Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

And to **Psalm 30 (KJV):2** O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

And to **Psalm 54 (KJV):6** I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O Lord; for it is good.

And to **Psalm 119 (Septuagint):85** Transgressors told me idle tales; but not according to thy law, O Lord.

He continues, “How is it then that miserable men dare to be proud, either of their free will, before they are freed, or of their own strength, if they have been freed? They do not observe that in the very mention of free will they pronounce the name of liberty. But “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” (2 Corinthians 3:17)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):17** Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

He continues, “If, therefore, they are the slaves of sin, why do they boast of free will? For by what a man is overcome, to the same is he delivered as a slave. (2 Peter 2:19)”

He refers to **John 8 (NASB):34** Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.

He refers to **2 Peter 2 (KJV):19** While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

He continues, “But if they have been freed, why do they vaunt themselves as if it were by their own doing, and boast, as if they had not received? Or are they free in such sort that they do not choose to have Him for their Lord who says to them: “Without me ye can do nothing;” (John 15:5) and “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed?” (John 8:36)”

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

And to **John 8 (KJV):36** If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

## **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Nature and Grace, Chapters 68-69, page 145**

Chapter 68 [LVIII.]—Despite the Devil, Man May, by God’s Help, Be Perfected.

If, therefore, we feel rightly on this matter, it is our duty at once to be thankful for what is already healed within us, and to pray for such further healing as shall enable us to enjoy full

liberty, in that most absolute state of health which is incapable of addition, the perfect pleasure of God. (Psalm 16:11) **For we do not deny that human nature can be without sin; nor ought we by any means to refuse to it the ability to become perfect, since we admit its capacity for progress,—by God’s grace, however, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By His assistance we aver that it becomes holy and happy, by whom it was created in order to be so.** There is accordingly an easy refutation of the objection which our author says is alleged by some against him: “The devil opposes us.” This objection we also meet in entirely identical language with that which he uses in reply: “We must resist him, and he will flee. ‘Resist the devil,’ says the blessed apostle, ‘and he will flee from you.’ (James 4:7) From which it may be observed, what his harming amounts to against those whom he flees; or what power he is to be understood as possessing, when he prevails only against those who do not resist him.” Such language is my own also; for it is impossible to employ truer words. There is, however, this difference between us and them, that we, whenever the devil has to be resisted, not only do not deny, but actually teach, that God’s help must be sought; whereas they attribute so much power to will as to take away prayer from religious duty. Now it is certainly with a view to resisting the devil and his fleeing from us that we say when we pray, “Lead us not into temptation;” (Matthew 6:13) to the same end also are we warned by our Captain, exhorting us as soldiers in the words: “Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.” (Mark 14:38)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “If, therefore, we feel rightly on this matter, it is our duty at once to be thankful for what is already healed within us, and to pray for such further healing as shall enable us to enjoy full liberty, in that most absolute state of health which is incapable of addition, the perfect pleasure of God. (Psalm 16:11)”

He could refer to **Psalm 16 (KJV):11** Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

He continues, **“For we do not deny that human nature can be without sin; nor ought we by any means to refuse to it the ability to become perfect, since we admit its capacity for progress,—by God’s grace, however, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By His assistance we aver that it becomes holy and happy, by whom it was created in order to be so.”**

However, our bodies are mortal. They are doomed to die. They are not gradually being made glorious. This is because of the sin nature in our flesh. This nature is revealed in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):1** And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; **2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: **3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Our spirit was dead in trespasses and sins. We had no relationship with God. In our flesh there was sin, as a nature. This is the law of sin that Paul speaks of in **Romans 7 (KJV):21** I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. **22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: **23** But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. **24** O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? **25** I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

But we are progressively sanctified in our soul area. As our minds are renewed by the word of God, we are transformed as we read again in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Our heart, the center of our emotions, is made new, and our conscience is given right standards by which to judge by. But the nature of our flesh does not change.

Augustine continues, “There is accordingly an easy refutation of the objection which our author says is alleged by some against him: “The devil opposes us.” This objection we also meet in entirely identical language with that which he uses in reply: “We must resist him, and he will flee. ‘Resist the devil,’ says the blessed apostle, ‘and he will flee from you.’ (James 4:7)”

He refers to **James 4 (KJV):7** Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

He continues, “From which it may be observed, what his harming amounts to against those whom he flees; or what power he is to be understood as possessing, when he prevails only against those who do not resist him.” Such language is my own also; for it is impossible to employ truer words. There is, however, this difference between us and them, that we, whenever the devil has to be resisted, not only do not deny, but actually teach, that God’s help must be sought; whereas they attribute so much power to will as to take away prayer from religious duty. Now it is certainly with a view to resisting the devil and his fleeing from us that we say when we pray, “Lead us not into temptation;” (Matthew 6:13) to the same end also are we warned by our Captain, exhorting us as soldiers in the words: “Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.” (Mark 14:38)”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

And to **Mark 14 (KJV):38** Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

Chapter 69 [LIX.]—Pelagius Puts Nature in the Place of Grace.

In opposition, however, to those who ask, “And who would be unwilling to be without sin, if it were put in the power of a man?” he rightly contends, saying “that by this very question they acknowledge that the thing is not impossible; because so much as this, many, if not all men, certainly desire.” Well then, let him only confess the means by which this is possible, and then our controversy is ended. Now the means is “the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ;” by which he nowhere has been willing to allow that we are assisted when we pray, for the avoidance of sin. If indeed he secretly allows this, he must forgive us if we suspect otherwise. For he himself works this result, who, though encountering so much obloquy on this subject, wishes to entertain the secret opinion, and yet is unwilling to confess or profess it. It would surely be no great matter were he to speak out, especially since he has undertaken to handle and open this point, as if it had been objected against him on the side of opponents. **Why on such occasions did he choose only to defend nature, and assert that man was so created as to**

have it in his power not to sin if he wished not to sin; and, from the fact that he was so created, definitely say that the power was owing to God's grace which enabled him to avoid sin, if he was unwilling to commit it; and yet refuse to say anything concerning the fact that even nature itself is either, because disordered, healed by God's grace through our Lord Jesus Christ or else assisted by it, because in itself it is so insufficient?

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, "In opposition, however, to those who ask, "And who would be unwilling to be without sin, if it were put in the power of a man?" he rightly contends, saying "that by this very question they acknowledge that the thing is not impossible; because so much as this, many, if not all men, certainly desire.'"

So the Pelagians believed that it was possible to be without sin.

Augustine continues, "Well then, let him only confess the means by which this is possible, and then our controversy is ended. Now the means is "the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ;"

In our standing this is true. We stand in grace as Paul reveals in **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

But our state is a different matter. Our state is the condition of our soul, that is, our mind, will, heart, emotions, and conscience, at any given moment in time.

Augustine continues, "by which he nowhere has been willing to allow that we are assisted when we pray, for the avoidance of sin."

He is referring to **Matthew 6 (KJV):13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

He continues, "If indeed he secretly allows this, he must forgive us if we suspect otherwise. For he himself works this result, who, though encountering so much obloquy on this subject, wishes to entertain the secret opinion, and yet is unwilling to confess or profess it. It would surely be no great matter were he to speak out, especially since he has undertaken to handle and open this point, as if it had been objected against him on the side of opponents."

The word "obloquy" means "a strongly condemnatory utterance : abusive language". (**Merriam Webster**)

So Augustine believed that the Pelagians secretly allowed one to pray for help to avoid sin.

He continues, "Why on such occasions did he choose only to defend nature, and assert that man was so created as to have it in his power not to sin if he wished not to sin; and, from the fact that he was so created, definitely say that the power was owing to God's grace which enabled him to avoid sin, if he was unwilling to commit it; and yet refuse to say anything concerning the fact that even nature itself is either, because disordered, healed by God's grace through our Lord Jesus Christ or else assisted by it, because in itself it is so insufficient?"

We could break this down as follows:

"Why on such occasions did he choose only to defend nature, and assert":

- 1.) "that man was so created as to have it in his power not to sin if he wished not to sin;
- 2.) and, from the fact that he was so created, definitely say that the power was owing to God's grace which enabled him to avoid sin, if he was unwilling to commit it;



3.) and yet refuse to say anything concerning the fact that even nature itself is either, because disordered, healed by God's grace through our Lord Jesus Christ or else assisted by it, because in itself it is so insufficient?"

Augustine did not understand that our spirit receives a new divine nature when we are born again of the Spirit of God. He attributed everything to God's grace which we could lose if we persisted in our sin, though he also believed we could not ultimately lose salvation if we were predestinated by God to be saved, for God would work all things for good for that one.

Because he believed that our soul was spirit, he did not see the boundary between soul and spirit. So in his thinking, God gives grace to our soul when we are born again. But if we persist in sin, we could ultimately lose that grace that saved us if we do not repent before we die. But according to Scripture, we stand in grace because we have been justified by God who imputes His righteousness to the account of the one who believes in Jesus Christ. If we then persist in sin, we could be guilty of the sin unto death, and still be saved, yet as by fire.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On Grace and Free Will, Chapter 4, page 444-445**

Chapter 4.—The Divine Commands Which are Most Suited to the Will Itself Illustrate Its Freedom.

What is the import of the fact that in so many passages God requires all His commandments to be kept and fulfilled? How does He make this requisition, if there is no free will? What means "the happy man," of whom the Psalmist says that "his will has been the law of the Lord"? (Psalm 1:2) Does he not clearly enough show that a man by his own will takes his stand in the law of God? Then again, there are so many commandments which in some way are expressly adapted to the human will; for instance, there is, "Be not overcome of evil," (Romans 12:21) and others of similar import, such as, "Be not like a horse or a mule, which have no understanding;" (Psalm 32:9) and, "Reject not the counsels of thy mother;" (Proverbs 1:8) and, "Be not wise in thine own conceit;" (Proverbs 3:7) and, "Despise not the chastening of the Lord;" (Proverbs 3:11) and, "Forget not my law;" (Proverbs 3:1) and, "Forbear not to do good to the poor;" (Proverbs 3:27) and, "Devise not evil against thy friend;" (Proverbs 3:29) and, "Give no heed to a worthless woman;" (Proverbs 5:2) and, "He is not inclined to understand how to do good;" (Psalm 36:3) and, "They refused to attend to my counsel;" (Proverbs 1:30) with numberless other passages of the inspired Scriptures of the Old Testament. And what do they all show us but the free choice of the human will? So, again, in the evangelical and apostolic books of the New Testament what other lesson is taught us? As when it is said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth;" (Matthew 6:19) and, "Fear not them which kill the body;" (Matthew 10:28) and, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself;" (Matthew 16:24) and again, "Peace on earth to men of good will." (Luke 2:14) So also that the Apostle Paul says: "Let him do what he willeth; he sinneth not if he marry. Nevertheless, he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well." (1 Corinthians 7:36-37), And so again, "If I do this willingly, I have a reward" (1 Corinthians 9:17) while in another passage he

says, "Be ye sober and righteous, and sin not;" (1 Corinthians 15:34) and again, "As ye have a readiness to will, so also let there be a prompt performance;" (2 Corinthians 8:11) then he remarks to Timothy about the younger widows, "When they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they choose to marry." So in another passage, "All that will to live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;" (2 Timothy 3:12) while to Timothy himself he says, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee." (1 Timothy 4:14) Then to Philemon he addresses this explanation: "That thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but of thine own will." (Philemon 14) Servants also he advises to obey their masters "with a good will." (Ephesians 6:7) In strict accordance with this, James says: "Do not err, my beloved brethren . . . and have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect to persons;" (James 1:16, 2:1) and, "Do not speak evil one of another." (James 4:11) So also John in his Epistle writes, "Do not love the world," (1 John 2:15) and other things of the same import. Now wherever it is said, "Do not do this," and "Do not do that," and wherever there is any requirement in the divine admonitions for the work of the will to do anything, or to refrain from doing anything, there is at once a sufficient proof of free will. No man, therefore, when he sins, can in his heart blame God for it, but every man must impute the fault to himself. Nor does it detract at all from a man's own will when he performs any act in accordance with God. Indeed, a work is then to be pronounced a good one when a person does it willingly; then, too, may the reward of a good work be hoped for from Him concerning whom it is written, "He shall reward every man according to his works." (Matthew 16:27)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "What is the import of the fact that in so many passages God requires all His commandments to be kept and fulfilled? How does He make this requisition, if there is no free will? What means "the happy man," of whom the Psalmist says that "his will has been the law of the Lord"? (Psalm 1:2)"

He refers **Psalms 1 (KJV):2** But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

He continues, "Does he not clearly enough show that a man by his own will takes his stand in the law of God? Then again, there are so many commandments which in some way are expressly adapted to the human will; for instance, there is, "Be not overcome of evil," (Romans 12:1)"

He refers to **Romans 12 (KJV):21** Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

He continues, "and others of similar import, such as, "Be not like a horse or a mule, which have no understanding;" (Psalm 32:9)"

He refers to **Psalms 32 (KJV):9** Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

He continues, "and, "Reject not the counsels of thy mother;" (Proverbs 1:8)"

He refers to **Proverbs 1 (KJV):8** My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

He continues, "and, "Be not wise in thine own conceit;" (Proverbs 3:7)"

He refers to **Proverbs 3 (KJV):7** Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.

He continues, "and, "Despise not the chastening of the Lord;" (Proverbs 3:11)"

He refers to **Proverbs 3 (KJV):11** My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction:

He continues, “and, “Forget not my law;” (Proverbs 3:1)”

He refers to **Proverbs 3 (KJV):1** My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:

He continues, “and, “Forbear not to do good to the poor;” (Proverbs 3:27)”

He refers to **Proverbs 3 (KJV):27** Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.

He continues, “and, “Devise not evil against thy friend;” (Proverbs 3:29)”

He refers **Proverbs 3 (Douay Rheims):19** Practise not evil against thy friend, when he hath confidence in thee.

And to **Proverbs 3 (KJV):29** Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm.

He continues, “and, “Give no heed to a worthless woman;” (Proverbs 5:2)”

He refers to **Proverbs 5 (Septuagint): 1** My son, attend to my wisdom, and apply thine ear to my words 2 that thou mayest keep good understanding, and the discretion of my lips gives thee a charge. Give no heed to a worthless woman;

He continues, “and, “He is not inclined to understand how to do good;” (Psalm 36:3)”

He refers to **Psalms 36 (KJV):3** The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good.

“and, “They refused to attend to my counsel;” (Proverbs 1:30) with numberless other passages of the inspired Scriptures of the Old Testament.”

He refers to **Proverbs 1 (KJV):30** They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

Augustine continues, “And what do they all show us but the free choice of the human will? So, again, in the evangelical and apostolic books of the New Testament what other lesson is taught us?”

The will is only free to do the will of God when one is born again. This was true even in the Old Testament as Jesus revealed when He taught Nicodemus in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? 11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

Jesus expected Nicodemus, as a master, or teacher, of Israel, to know these things. Nicodemus was born again after this talk with Jesus.

Augustine continues, “As when it is said, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth;” (Matthew 6:19)”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):19** Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

He continues, “and, “Fear not them which kill the body;” (Matthew 10:28)”

He refers to **Matthew 10 (KJV):28** And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

He continues, “and, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself;” (Matthew 16:24)”

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):24** Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

He continues, “and again, “Peace on earth to men of good will.” (Luke 2:14)”

He refers **Luke 2 (Douay Rheims):14** Glory to God in the highest: and on earth peace to men of good will.

And to **Luke 2 (KJV):14** Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Augustine continues, “So also that the Apostle Paul says: “Let him do what he willeth; he sinneth not if he marry. Nevertheless, he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.” (1 Corinthians 7:36-37).”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):36** But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. 37 Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.

He continues, “And so again, “If I do this willingly, I have a reward” (1 Corinthians 9:17)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 9 (KJV):17** For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

He continues, “while in another passage he says, “Be ye sober and righteous, and sin not;” (1 Corinthians 15:34)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):34** Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.

He continues, “and again, “As ye have a readiness to will, so also let there be a prompt performance;” (2 Corinthians 8:11)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 8 (KJV):11** Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.

He continues, “then he remarks to Timothy about the younger widows, “When they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they choose to marry.” So in another passage, “All that will to live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;” (2 Timothy 3:12)”

He refers to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV):11** But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

And to **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):12** Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

He continues, “while to Timothy himself he says, “Neglect not the gift that is in thee.” (1 Timothy 4:14)”

He refers to **1 Timothy 4 (KJV):14** Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

Augustine continues, “Then to Philemon he addresses this explanation: “That thy benefit

should not be as it were of necessity, but of thine own will.” (Philemon 14)”

He refers to **Philemon 1 (KJV):14** But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

He continues, “Servants also he advises to obey their masters “with a good will.” (Ephesians 6:7)”

He refers in context to **Ephesians 6 (KJV):5** Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; 6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; 7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

He continues, “In strict accordance with this, James says: “Do not err, my beloved brethren . . . and have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect to persons;” (James 1:16, 2:1) and, “Do not speak evil one of another.” (James 4:11)”

He refers to **James 1 (KJV):16** Do not err, my beloved brethren.

And to **James 2 (KJV):1** My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

And to **James 4 (KJV):11** Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

He continues, “So also John in his Epistle writes, “Do not love the world,” (1 John 2:15) and other things of the same import.”

He refers to **1 John 2 (KJV):15** Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

He continues, “Now wherever it is said, “Do not do this,” and “Do not do that,” and wherever there is any requirement in the divine admonitions for the work of the will to do anything, or to refrain from doing anything, there is at once a sufficient proof of free will. No man, therefore, when he sins, can in his heart blame God for it, but every man must impute the fault to himself. Nor does it detract at all from a man’s own will when he performs any act in accordance with God. Indeed, a work is then to be pronounced a good one when a person does it willingly; then, too, may the reward of a good work be hoped for from Him concerning whom it is written, “He shall reward every man according to his works.” (Matthew 16:27)

He refers to **Matthew 16 (KJV):27** For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

Before Christ we walked according to the course of this world as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):1** And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

This course was “according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience”, as in verse 2. Our condition before Christ was as in **Romans 3 (KJV):10** As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is



an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

We could not please God as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**5 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Then we read in **Romans 7 (KJV):**21 I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

If this is the condition of one who has been born again, then the one who is unsaved is without a way. In this condition before we were born again, we had no free will to do the will of God. We only had free will to please our flesh. But when we are saved, we are made free in our will, and we can please God by walking in obedience to His word.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Rebuke and Grace, Chapter 2, page 472**

#### **Chapter 2.—The Catholic Faith Concerning Law, Grace, and Free Will.**

Now the Lord Himself not only shows us what evil we should shun, and what good we should do, which is all that the letter of the law is able to effect; but He moreover helps us that we may shun evil and do good, (Psalm 37:27) which none can do without the Spirit of grace; and if this be wanting, the law comes in merely to make us guilty and to slay us. It is on this account that the apostle says, “The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.” (2 Corinthians 3:6) He, then, who lawfully uses the law learns therein evil and good, and, not trusting in his own strength, flees to grace, by the help of which he may shun evil and do good. But who is there who flees to grace except when “the steps of a man are ordered by the Lord, and He shall determine his way”? (Psalm 37:23) And thus also to desire the help of grace is the beginning of grace; of which, says he, “And I said, Now I have begun; this is the change of the right hand of the Most High.” (Psalm 77:10) **It is to be confessed, therefore, that we have free choice to do both evil and good; but in doing evil every one is free from righteousness and a servant of sin, while in doing good no one can be free, unless he have been made free by Him who said, “If the Son shall make you free, then you shall be free indeed.” (John 8:36) Neither is it thus, that when any one has been made free from the dominion of sin, he no longer needs the help of his Deliverer; but rather thus, that hearing from Him, “Without me ye can do nothing,” (John 15:5) he himself also says to Him, “Be thou my helper! Forsake me not.” (Psalm 27:9) I rejoice that I have found in our brother Florus also this faith, which without doubt is the true and prophetic and apostolic and Catholic faith; whence those are the rather to be corrected—whom indeed I now think to have been corrected by the favour of God—who did not understand him.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Now the Lord Himself not only shows us what evil we should shun, and what good we should do, which is all that the letter of the law is able to effect; but He moreover helps us that we may shun evil and do good, (Psalm 37:27) which none can do without the Spirit of grace;”

He refers to **Psalm 37 (KJV):27** Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.

He continues, “and if this be wanting, the law comes in merely to make us guilty and to slay us. It is on this account that the apostle says, “The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.” (2 Corinthians 3:6)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 3 (KJV):6** Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

And we read as in **Romans 7 (KJV):9** For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

He continues, “He, then, who lawfully uses the law learns therein evil and good, and, not trusting in his own strength, flees to grace, by the help of which he may shun evil and do good.

And by the law is the knowledge of sin as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

He continues, “But who is there who flees to grace except when “the steps of a man are ordered by the Lord, and He shall determine his way”? (Psalm 37:23)”

He refers to **Psalm 37 (KJV):23** The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.

He continues, “And thus also to desire the help of grace is the beginning of grace; of which, says he, “And I said, Now I have begun; this is the change of the right hand of the Most High.” (Psalm 77:10)”

He refers to **Psalm 77 (Septuagint):10** And I said, Now I have begun; this is the change of the right hand of the Most High.

And as we read in **Psalm 77 (KJV):10** And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.

He continues, “It is to be confessed, therefore, that we have free choice to do both evil and good; but in doing evil every one is free from righteousness and a servant of sin, while in doing good no one can be free, unless he have been made free by Him who said, “If the Son shall make you free, then you shall be free indeed.” (John 8:36)”

He refers to **John 8 (KJV):36** If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

He continues, “Neither is it thus, that when any one has been made free from the dominion of sin, he no longer needs the help of his Deliverer; but rather thus, that hearing from Him, “Without me ye can do nothing,” (John 15:5) he himself also says to Him, “Be thou my helper! Forsake me not.” (Psalm 27:9)”

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):5** I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

And to **Psalm 27 (Septuagint):9** Turn not thy face away from me, turn not thou away from thy servant in anger: be thou my helper, forsake me not; and, O God my Saviour, overlook me not.

And to **Psalm 27 (KJV):9** Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

He concludes, “I rejoice that I have found in our brother Florus also this faith, which without doubt is the true and prophetic and apostolic and Catholic faith; whence those are the rather to be corrected—whom indeed I now think to have been corrected by the favour of God—who did not understand him.”

Augustine is correct when he refers to **John 8 (KJV):36** If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

And Jesus spoke as in **John 8 (KJV):34** Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.

Before Christ we were slaves of sin as Paul reveals in **Romans 6 (NASB):5** For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for he who has died is freed from sin.

Our old self before Christ was a slave to sin. But we are made new in Christ as Paul reveals in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Being born of the Spirit we are made partakers of the divine nature, as Peter reveals in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):3** According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Now we have a choice, as Paul reveals in **Romans 6 (KJV):11** Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? 17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

To be the “servants of righteousness” is God’s will for us now. Let us remember that Christ has set us free as we read in **Galatians 5 (NASB):1** It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

And His grace abounds toward us as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):5** Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

His grace is not subtracted from us little by little because of sin. Before we were born again, we were slaves of sin. But when we are born again, our will is truly free. But we experience freedom when we walk in the light of His word of truth.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings  
On the Spirit and the Letter, Chapter 60, page 110-111**

Chapter 60 [XXXIV.]—The Will to Believe is from God.

Let this discussion suffice, if it satisfactorily meets the question we had to solve. It may be, however, objected in reply, that we must take heed lest some one should suppose that the sin would have to be imputed to God which is committed by free will, if in the passage where it is asked, “What hast thou which thou didst not receive?” (1 Corinthians 4:7) **The very will by which we believe is reckoned as a gift of God, because it arises out of the free will which we received at our creation. Let the objector, however, attentively observe that this will is to be ascribed to the divine gift, not merely because it arises from our free will, which was created naturally with us; but also because God acts upon us by the incentives of our perceptions, to will and to believe, either externally by evangelical exhortations, where even the commands of the law also do something, if they so far admonish a man of his infirmity that he betakes himself to the grace that justifies by believing; or internally, where no man has in his own control what shall enter into his thoughts, although it appertains to his own will to consent or to dissent. Since God, therefore, in such ways acts upon the reasonable soul in order that it may believe in Him (and certainly there is no ability whatever in free will to believe, unless there be persuasion or summons towards some one in whom to believe), it surely follows that it is God who both works in man the willing to believe, and in all things prevents us with His mercy. To yield our consent, indeed, to God’s summons, or to withhold it, is (as I have said) the function of our own will. And this not only does not invalidate what is said, “For what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” (1 Corinthians 4:7) but it really confirms it. For the soul cannot receive and possess these gifts, which are here referred to, except by yielding its consent. And thus whatever it possesses, and whatever it receives, is from God; and yet the act of receiving and having belongs, of course, to the receiver and possessor. Now, should any man be for constraining us to examine into this profound mystery, why this person is so persuaded as to yield, and that person is not, there are only two things occurring to me, which I should like to advance as my answer: “O the depth of the riches!” (Romans 11:33) and “Is there unrighteousness with God?” (Romans 9:14) If the man is displeased with such an answer, he must seek more learned disputants; but let him beware lest he find presumptuous ones.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Let this discussion suffice, if it satisfactorily meets the question we had to solve. It may be, however, objected in reply, that we must take heed lest some one should suppose that the sin would have to be imputed to God which is committed by free will, if in the passage where it is asked, “What hast thou which thou didst not receive?” (1 Corinthians 4:7)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):7** For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

He continues, “The very will by which we believe is reckoned as a gift of God, because it arises out of the free will which we received at our creation.”

The Scripture says it is with the heart that we believe as we read in **Romans 10 (KJV):10** For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

It is the Lord who opens the heart to believe as we read in **Acts 16 (KJV):14** And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

Before this happens we must repent, but it is the Lord who grants repentance as we read in **Acts 11 (KJV):18** When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Our minds are enlightened by the truth of the Gospel, as it is preached. God then grants us repentance, opens our hearts to believe, and we confess with our mouth willingly that Jesus Christ is Lord. And so faith is the gift of God as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Our will was not free before we were saved, when we were slaves to sin. But God, by His Spirit, enlightened our minds with the Gospel message, and opened our hearts to believe, and all this was by His grace.

Augustine continues, “Let the objector, however, attentively observe that this will is to be ascribed to the divine gift, not merely because it arises from our free will, which was created naturally with us; but also because God acts upon us by the incentives of our perceptions, to will and to believe, either externally by evangelical exhortations, where even the commands of the law also do something, if they so far admonish a man of his infirmity that he betakes himself to the grace that justifies by believing; or internally, where no man has in his own control what shall enter into his thoughts, although it appertains to his own will to consent or to dissent. Since God, therefore, in such ways acts upon the reasonable soul in order that it may believe in Him (and certainly there is no ability whatever in free will to believe, unless there be persuasion or summons towards some one in whom to believe), it surely follows that it is God who both works in man the willing to believe, and in all things prevents us with His mercy. To yield our consent, indeed, to God’s summons, or to withhold it, is (as I have said) the function of our own will. And this not only does not invalidate what is said, “For what hast thou that thou didst not receive?” (1 Corinthians 4:7) but it really confirms it. For the soul cannot receive and possess these gifts, which are here referred to, except by yielding its consent. And thus whatever it possesses, and whatever it receives, is from God; and yet the act of receiving and having belongs, of course, to the receiver and possessor. Now, should any man be for constraining us to examine into this profound mystery, why this person is so persuaded as to yield, and that person is not, there are only two things occurring to me, which I should like to advance as my answer: “O the depth of the riches!” (Romans 11:33) and “Is there unrighteousness with God?” (Romans 9:14) If the man is displeased with such an answer, he must seek more learned disputants; but let him beware lest he find presumptuous ones.”



He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):33** O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!  
And to **Romans 9 (KJV):14** What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

So Augustine thought that man had some free will, but not free will to believe. He believed that God “**works in man the willing to believe**”. And this agrees with the Scripture.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermon LXXXI. [CXXXI. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel, John 6:53, “Except ye eat the flesh,” etc., and on the words of the apostles. And the Psalms. Against the Pelagians. Delivered at the Table of the Martyr St. Cyprian, the 9th of the Calends of October,—23 Sept., on the Lord’s day., paragraph 6, page 502-503**

6. Peradventure ye are saying, “What does he mean, that he is so often saying this? A second and a third time he says it; and scarcely ever speaks, but when he says it.” Would that I may not say it in vain! For men there are unthankful to grace, attributing much to poor and disabled nature. **True it is, when man was created he received great power of free will; but he lost it by sin.** He fell into death, became infirm, was left in the way by the robbers half dead; the Samaritan, which is by interpretation keeper, passing by lifted him up on his own beast; (Luke 10:30) he is still being brought to the inn. Why is he lifted up? He is still in process of curing. “But,” he will say, “it is enough for me that in baptism I received remission of all sins.” Because iniquity was blotted out, was therefore infirmity brought to an end? “I received,” says he, “remission of all sins.” It is quite true. All sins were blotted out in the Sacrament of Baptism, all entirely, of words, deeds, thoughts, all were blotted out. But this is the “oil and wine” which was poured in by the way. Ye remember, beloved Brethren, that man who was wounded by the robbers, and half dead by the way, how he was strengthened, by receiving oil and wine for his wounds. His error indeed was already pardoned, and yet his weakness is in process of healing in the inn. The inn, if ye recognise it, is the Church. In the time present, an inn, because in life we are passing by: it will be a home, whence we shall never remove, when we shall have got in perfect health unto the kingdom of heaven. Meanwhile receive we gladly our treatment in the inn, and weak as we still are, glory we not of sound health: lest through our pride we gain nothing else, but never for all our treatment to be cured.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Peradventure ye are saying, “What does he mean, that he is so often saying this? A second and a third time he says it; and scarcely ever speaks, but when he says it.” Would that I may not say it in vain! For men there are unthankful to grace, attributing much to poor and disabled nature. **True it is, when man was created he received great power of free will; but he lost it by sin.**”

And this is proven by Scripture. They that are in the flesh cannot please God as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):5** For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Without Christ, we are totally under the power of our sinful nature as Paul reveals in **Romans 7 (KJV)**: 14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Without Christ, there is no deliverance. Before Christ, we were as in **Romans 3 (KJV)**: 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

And in **Ephesians 4 (KJV)**: 17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

We were dead in sin as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (KJV)**: 1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

We were dead in sin, and by nature children of wrath. What free will could we have had in such a state?

Augustine continues, “He fell into death, became infirm, was left in the way by the robbers half dead; the Samaritan, which is by interpretation keeper, passing by lifted him up on his own beast; (Luke 10:30)”

He refers to **Luke 10 (KJV)**: 30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, 34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the

morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

Augustine continues, “he is still being brought to the inn. Why is he lifted up? He is still in process of curing. “But,” he will say, “it is enough for me that in baptism I received remission of all sins.” Because iniquity was blotted out, was therefore infirmity brought to an end? “I received,” says he, “remission of all sins.” It is quite true. All sins were blotted out in the Sacrament of Baptism, all entirely, of words, deeds, thoughts, all were blotted out. But this is the “oil and wine” which was poured in by the way. Ye remember, beloved Brethren, that man who was wounded by the robbers, and half dead by the way, how he was strengthened, by receiving oil and wine for his wounds. His error indeed was already pardoned, and yet his weakness is in process of healing in the inn. The inn, if ye recognise it, is the Church. In the time present, an inn, because in life we are passing by: it will be a home, whence we shall never remove, when we shall have got in perfect health unto the kingdom of heaven. Meanwhile receive we gladly our treatment in the inn, and weak as we still are, glory we not of sound health: lest through our pride we gain nothing else, but never for all our treatment to be cured.”

We must be careful when we allegorize the Scripture. Augustine freely does so in many instances in his writings. But the main point of the parable was what Jesus said when He finished, as we continue in **Luke 10 (KJV):36** Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? 37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

But Augustine is correct according to the Scripture. Man was created with free will, but he lost it when he sinned. Now man is free to sin, but to do good in relationship with his Creator he cannot do unless he repents and receives Christ.

## **The Greatest Gift**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermon XCIV. [CXLIV. Ben.] On the same words of the Gospel, John 16:8, “He will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”, paragraph 1, page 538**

1. When our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was speaking at length of the coming of the Holy Ghost, He said among the rest, “He shall convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” (John 16:8) Nor when He had said this, did He pass on to another subject; but vouchsafed to convey a somewhat more explicit notice of this same truth. “Of sin,” said He, “because they believed not on Me. Of righteousness, because I go to the Father. Of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged already.” (John 16:9-11) There arises therefore within us a desire of understanding, why as if it were men’s only sin, not to believe on Christ, He said it of this alone, that the Holy Ghost should convince the world; but if it is plain that besides this unbelief there are manifold other sins of men, why of this alone should the Holy Ghost convince the world? Is it because all sins are by unbelief retained, by faith remitted; that therefore God imputeth this one above all the rest, by which it comes to pass that the rest are not loosed, so long as proud man believes not in an Humbled God? For so it is written;

“God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” (Proverbs 3:34, James 4:6) Now this grace of God is a gift of God. But the greatest gift is the Holy Ghost Himself; and therefore is it called grace. For forasmuch “as all had sinned, and needed the glory of God; because by one man sin entered into the world, and death by his sin in whom all have sinned;” (Romans 3:23, 5:12) therefore is it grace because given gratuitously. And therefore is it given gratuitously, because it is not rendered as a reward after a strict scrutiny of deserts, but given as a gift after the pardon of sins.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “When our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was speaking at length of the coming of the Holy Ghost, He said among the rest, “He shall convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” (John 16:8)”

He refers to **John 16 (KJV):8** And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

He continues, “Nor when He had said this, did He pass on to another subject; but vouchsafed to convey a somewhat more explicit notice of this same truth. “Of sin,” said He, “because they believed not on Me. Of righteousness, because I go to the Father. Of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged already.” (John 16:9-11)”

He refers to **John 16 (KJV):9** Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

He continues, “There arises therefore within us a desire of understanding, why as if it were men’s only sin, not to believe on Christ, He said it of this alone, that the Holy Ghost should convince the world; but if it is plain that besides this unbelief there are manifold other sins of men, why of this alone should the Holy Ghost convince the world? Is it because all sins are by unbelief retained, by faith remitted; that therefore God imputeth this one above all the rest, by which it comes to pass that the rest are not loosed, so long as proud man believes not in an Humbled God? For so it is written; “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” (Proverbs 3:34, James 4:6)”

He refers to **Proverbs 3 (Septuagint):34** The Lord resists the proud; but he gives grace to the humble.

And to **Proverbs 3 (KJV):34** Surely he scorneth the scorners: but he giveth grace unto the lowly.

And to **James 4 (KJV):6** But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

He continues, “Now this grace of God is a gift of God. But the greatest gift is the Holy Ghost Himself; and therefore is it called grace.”

But the Holy Spirit is a person, and not grace. He dwells in believers as we read in **John 14 (KJV):17** Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

God gives believers the Holy Spirit as a gift, and the gift is given by the grace of God.

He continues, “For forasmuch “as all had sinned, and needed the glory of God; because by one man sin entered into the world, and death by his sin in whom all have sinned;” (Romans 3:23, 5:12) therefore is it grace because given gratuitously.”

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

And to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

He concludes, “And therefore is it given gratuitously, because it is not rendered as a reward after a strict scrutiny of deserts, but given as a gift after the pardon of sins.”

He, the Holy Spirit, is given as a gift, but the Holy Spirit is not grace, but is given in God’s grace. Thinking of the Holy Spirit as grace leaves it open for one to lose the Holy Spirit if we lose grace when we sin. If the Holy Spirit is grace, then He is something that we don’t really have relationship with. Thinking of the Holy Spirit in this way makes a distance between God and the believer. God wants relationship with us. The Holy Spirit is a person. He is God, as we read in **Acts 5 (KJV):3** But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

And He is the greatest gift that we read of also in **Acts 2 (KJV):38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

## Foreknowledge

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate LXXXVI. Chapter XV. 15, 16, paragraph 2, page 353**

2. “Ye have not chosen me,” He says, “but I have chosen you.” Grace such as that is ineffable. For what were we so long as Christ had not yet chosen us, and we were therefore still destitute of love? For he who hath chosen Him, how can he love Him? Were we, think you, in that condition which is sung of in the psalm: “I had rather be an abject in the house of the Lord, than dwell in the tents of wickedness”? (Psalm 84:10) Certainly not. What were we then, but sinful and lost? We had not yet come to believe on Him, in order to lead to His choosing us; for if it were those who already believed that He chose, then was He chosen Himself, prior to His choosing. **But how could He say, “Ye have not chosen me,” save only because His mercy anticipated us? (Psalm 59:10) Here surely is at fault the vain reasoning of those who defend the foreknowledge of God in opposition to His grace, and with this view declare that we were chosen before the foundation of the world, (Ephesians 1:4) because God foreknew that we should be good, but not that He Himself would make us good.** So says not He, who declares, “Ye have not chosen me.” For had He chosen us on the ground that He foreknew that we should be good, then would He also have foreknown that we would not be the first to make choice of Him. For in no other way could we possibly be good: unless, forsooth, one could be called good who has never made good his choice. What was it then that He chose in those who were not good? For they were not chosen because of their goodness, inasmuch as they could not be good without being chosen. Otherwise grace is no more grace, if we maintain the priority of merit.



Such, certainly, is the election of grace, whereof the apostle says: “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant saved according to the election of grace.” To which he adds: “And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace.” (Romans 11:5-6) Listen, thou ungrateful one, listen: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” Not that thou mayest say, I am chosen because I already believed. For if thou wert believing in Him, then hadst thou already chosen Him. But listen: “Ye have not chosen me.” Not that thou mayest say, Before I believed I was already doing good works, and therefore was I chosen. For what good work can be prior to faith, when the apostle says, “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin”? (Romans 14:23) What, then, are we to say on hearing such words, “Ye have not chosen me,” but that we were evil, and were chosen in order that we might be good through the grace of Him who chose us? For it is not by grace, if merit preceded: but it is of grace: and therefore that grace did not find, but effected the merit.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Ye have not chosen me,” He says, “but I have chosen you.” Grace such as that is ineffable.”

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):16** Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

And the word “ineffable” means indescribable.

He continues, “For what were we so long as Christ had not yet chosen us, and we were therefore still destitute of love? For he who hath chosen Him, how can he love Him? Were we, think you, in that condition which is sung of in the psalm: “I had rather be an abject in the house of the Lord, than dwell in the tents of wickedness”? (Psalm 84:10)”

He refers to **Psalm 84 (KJV):10** For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

He continues, “Certainly not. What were we then, but sinful and lost? We had not yet come to believe on Him, in order to lead to His choosing us; for if it were those who already believed that He chose, then was He chosen Himself, prior to His choosing. **But how could He say, “Ye have not chosen me,” save only because His mercy anticipated us? (Psalm 59:10)”**

He refers to **Psalm 59 (KJV):10** The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.

Or as in **Psalm 59 (Septuagint):10** As for my God, his mercy shall go before me: my God will shew me vengeance on mine enemies.

He continues, **“Here surely is at fault the vain reasoning of those who defend the foreknowledge of God in opposition to His grace, and with this view declare that we were chosen before the foundation of the world, (Ephesians 1:4) because God foreknew that we should be good, but not that He Himself would make us good.”**

He refers to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):4** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

He continues, “So says not He, who declares, “Ye have not chosen me.” For had He chosen us on the ground that He foreknew that we should be good, then would He also have foreknown that we would not be the first to make choice of Him. For in no other way could we possibly be good: unless, forsooth, one could be called good who has never made good his choice.”

And Augustine agrees with the Scripture as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):12** They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

He continues, “What was it then that He chose in those who were not good? For they were not chosen because of their goodness, inasmuch as they could not be good without being chosen. Otherwise grace is no more grace, if we maintain the priority of merit. Such, certainly, is the election of grace, whereof the apostle says: “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant saved according to the election of grace.” To which he adds: “And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace.” (Romans 11:5-6)”

He refers to **Romans 11 (KJV):5** Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

He continues, “Listen, thou ungrateful one, listen: “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” Not that thou mayest say, I am chosen because I already believed. For if thou wert believing in Him, then hadst thou already chosen Him. But listen: “Ye have not chosen me.” Not that thou mayest say, Before I believed I was already doing good works, and therefore was I chosen. For what good work can be prior to faith, when the apostle says, “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin”? (Romans 14:23)”

He refers to **Romans 14 (KJV):23** And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

He concludes, “What, then, are we to say on hearing such words, “Ye have not chosen me,” but that we were evil, and were chosen in order that we might be good through the grace of Him who chose us? For it is not by grace, if merit preceded: but it is of grace: and therefore that grace did not find, but effected the merit.”

We can agree here with Augustine, and the Scriptures, for we read in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):8** For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

And in **1 John 4 (KJV):19** We love him, because he first loved us.

And “**we were chosen before the foundation of the world**”, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):29** For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

## Our Being Made One

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine**

**Tractate CX. Chapter XVII. 21–23, paragraphs 1-2, page 408-409**

1. After the Lord Jesus had prayed for His disciples whom He had with Him at the time,

and had conjoined with them others who were also His own, by saying, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word,” as if we were inquiring what or wherefore He prayed for them, He straightway subjoined, “That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us.” And a little above, while still praying for the disciples alone who were then with Him, He said, “Holy Father, keep in Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are” (John 17:11). It is the same thing, therefore, that He now also prayed for in our behalf, as He did at that time in theirs, namely, that all—to wit, both we and they—may be one. And here we must take particular notice that the Lord did not say that we all may be one, but, “that they all may be one; as Thou Father, in me, and I in Thee” (where is to be understood are one, as is more clearly expressed afterwards); because He had also said before of the disciples who were with Him, “That they may be one, as we are.” The Father, therefore, is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, in such a way as to be one, because they are of one substance; but while we may indeed be in them, we cannot be one with them; for they and we are not of one substance, in as far as the Son is God along with the Father. But in as far as He is man, He is of the same substance as we are. But at present He wished rather to call attention to that other statement which He made use of in another place, “I and the Father are one,” (John 10:30) where He intimated that His own nature was the same with that of the Father. And accordingly, though the Father and Son, or even the Holy Spirit, are in us, we must not suppose that they are of one nature with ourselves. And hence they are in us, or we are in them, in this sense, that they are one in their own nature, and we are one in ours. For they are in us, as God in His temple; but we are in them, as the creature in its Creator.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “After the Lord Jesus had prayed for His disciples whom He had with Him at the time, and had conjoined with them others who were also His own, by saying, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word,” as if we were inquiring what or wherefore He prayed for them, He straightway subjoined, “That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us.””

He refers in context to **John 17 (KJV):20** Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

He continues, “And a little above, while still praying for the disciples alone who were then with Him, He said, “Holy Father, keep in Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are” (John 17:11)”.

He refers to **John 17 (KJV):11** And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

He continues, “It is the same thing, therefore, that He now also prayed for in our behalf, as He did at that time in theirs, namely, that all—to wit, both we and they—may be one. And here we must take particular notice that the Lord did not say that we all may be one, but, “that they all may be one; as Thou Father, in me, and I in Thee” (where is to be understood are one,

as is more clearly expressed afterwards); because He had also said before of the disciples who were with Him, “That they may be one, as we are.””

He refers again to **John 17 (KJV):11** And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

He continues, “The Father, therefore, is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, in such a way as to be one, because they are of one substance; but while we may indeed be in them, we cannot be one with them; for they and we are not of one substance, in as far as the Son is God along with the Father. But in as far as He is man, He is of the same substance as we are. But at present He wished rather to call attention to that other statement which He made use of in another place, “I and the Father are one,” (John 10:30) where He intimated that His own nature was the same with that of the Father. And accordingly, though the Father and Son, or even the Holy Spirit, are in us, we must not suppose that they are of one nature with ourselves. And hence they are in us, or we are in them, in this sense, that they are one in their own nature, and we are one in ours. For they are in us, as God in His temple; but we are in them, as the creature in its Creator.”

He refers to **John 10 (KJV):30** I and my Father are one.

But Jesus spoke as in **John 17 (KJV):22** And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

Augustine did not understand that, by the new birth, those who believe in Jesus Christ are given a new nature as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):3** According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

He also did not understand that we have peace with God as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

The word for “peace” in the Greek is **εἰρήνη** (pronounced ā-rā'-nā) and means “probably from a primary verb εἶρω eirō (to join); peace (literally or figuratively); by implication, prosperity:—one, peace, quietness, rest, + set at one again.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3724.**

We have been “set at one again” with God. That is, we have been joined in an intimacy with our creator that we never had before. Let us continue to read his next paragraph.

2. But then after saying, “That they also may be one in us,” He added, “That the world may believe that Thou hast sent me.” What does He mean by this? Is it that the world will then be brought to the faith, when we shall all be one in the Father and Son? Is not such a state the everlasting peace, and the reward of faith, rather than faith itself? For we shall be one not in order to our believing, but because we have believed. But although in this life, because of the common faith itself, all who believe in one are one according to the words of the apostle, “For ye are all one in Christ Jesus;” (Galatians 3:28) even thus we are one, not in order to our believing, but because we do believe. What, then, is meant by the words, “That they all may be

one, that the world may believe”? This, doubtless, that the “all” are themselves the believing world. For those who shall be one are not of one class, and the world that is thereafter to believe on this very ground that these shall be one, of another; since it is perfectly certain that He says, “That they all may be one,” of those of whom He had said before, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for those also who shall believe on me through their word,” immediately adding as He does, “That they all may be one.” And this “all,” what is it but the world; not certainly that which is hostile, but that which is believing? For you see here that He who had said, “I pray not for the world,” now prayeth for the world that it may believe. For there is a world whereof it is written, “That we might not be condemned with this world.” (1 Corinthians 11:32) For that world He prayeth not, for He is fully aware to what it is predestinated. And there is a world whereof it is written, “For the Son of man came not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved;” (John 3:17) and hence the apostle also says, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.” (2 Corinthians 5:19) For this world it is that He prayeth, in saying, “That the world may believe that Thou hast sent me.” For through this faith the world is reconciled unto God when it believes in the Christ whom God has sent. How, then, are we to understand Him when He says, “That they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me,” but just in this way, that He did not assign the cause of the world believing to the fact that those others are one, as if it believed on the ground that it saw them to be one; for the world itself here consisteth of all who by their own believing become one; but in His prayer He said, “That the world may believe,” just as in His prayer He also said, “That they all may be one;” and still further in the same prayer, “That they also may be one in us.” For the words, “they all may be one,” are equivalent to “the world may believe,” since it is by believing that they become one, perfectly one; that is, those who, although one by nature, had ceased to be so by their mutual dissensions. In fine, if the verb which He uses, “I pray,” be understood in the third clause, or rather, to make the whole fuller, be everywhere supplied, the explanation of this sentence will be all the clearer: I pray “that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, in me, and I in Thee;” I pray “that they also may be one in us;” I pray “that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me.” **And, mark, He added the words “in us” in order that we may know that our being made one in that love of unchanging faithfulness is to be attributed to the grace of God, and not to ourselves: just as the apostle, after saying, “For ye were at one time darkness, but now are ye light,” that none might attribute the doing of this to themselves, added, “in the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:8)**

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “But then after saying, “That they also may be one in us,” He added, “That the world may believe that Thou hast sent me.””

He refers to **John 17 (KJV):21** That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

He continues, “What does He mean by this? Is it that the world will then be brought to the faith, when we shall all be one in the Father and Son? Is not such a state the everlasting peace, and the reward of faith, rather than faith itself? For we shall be one not in order to our believing, but because we have believed. But although in this life, because of the common faith itself, all who believe in one are one according to the words of the apostle, “For ye are all one in Christ Jesus;” (Galatians 3:28) even thus we are one, not in order to our believing, but because we do believe.”



He refers to **Galatians 3 (KJV):28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

He continues, "What, then, is meant by the words, "That they all may be one, that the world may believe"? This, doubtless, that the "all" are themselves the believing world. For those who shall be one are not of one class, and the world that is thereafter to believe on this very ground that these shall be one, of another; since it is perfectly certain that He says, "That they all may be one," of those of whom He had said before, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for those also who shall believe on me through their word," immediately adding as He does, "That they all may be one.""

He refers to **John 17 (KJV):20** Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

He continues, "And this "all," what is it but the world; not certainly that which is hostile, but that which is believing? For you see here that He who had said, "I pray not for the world," now prayeth for the world that it may believe. For there is a world whereof it is written, "That we might not be condemned with this world." (1 Corinthians 11:32)"

He refers to **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):32** But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

He continues, "For that world He prayeth not, for He is fully aware to what it is predestinated. And there is a world whereof it is written, "For the Son of man came not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved;" (John 3:17) and hence the apostle also says, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." (2 Corinthians 5:19)"

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):17** For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

And to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):19** To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

He continues, "For this world it is that He prayeth, in saying, "That the world may believe that Thou hast sent me."

He refers again to **John 17 (KJV):21** That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

He continues, "For through this faith the world is reconciled unto God when it believes in the Christ whom God has sent. How, then, are we to understand Him when He says, "That they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me," but just in this way, that He did not assign the cause of the world believing to the fact that those others are one, as if it believed on the ground that it saw them to be one; for the world itself here consisteth of all who by their own believing become one; but in His prayer He said, "That the world may believe," just as in His prayer He also said, "That they all may be one;" and still further in the same prayer, "That they also may be one in us." For the words, "they all may be one," are equivalent to "the world may believe," since it is by believing that they become one, perfectly one; that is, those who, although one by nature, had ceased to be so by their mutual dissensions."

So Augustine is saying that Jesus was praying that those in the world might believe, who had not yet believed.

He continues, “In fine, if the verb which He uses, “I pray,” be understood in the third clause, or rather, to make the whole fuller, be everywhere supplied, the explanation of this sentence will be all the clearer: I pray “that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, in me, and I in Thee;” I pray “that they also may be one in us;” I pray “that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me.” **And, mark, He added the words “in us” in order that we may know that our being made one in that love of unchanging faithfulness is to be attributed to the grace of God, and not to ourselves: just as the apostle, after saying, “For ye were at one time darkness, but now are ye light,” that none might attribute the doing of this to themselves, added, “in the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:8)**”

He refers to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):8** For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

We believers are children of light. And Jesus spoke as in **Matthew 5 (KJV):14** Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

When we believe in Jesus Christ, He lights our candle as it were, as in **Proverbs 20 (KJV):27** The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

In Him was life as we read in **John 1 (KJV):4** In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

It is His life in us that makes us a candle of the Lord, because we are born of God as we read in **John 1 (KJV):9** That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Being born of God, our spirit now has eternal life. This life makes us children of light. And we are made one in Him when we believe. We now have an intimacy that is joined by our new life in Him, and by our standing as righteous ones in Him, and by our adoption into the family of God.

## Summary

Augustine acknowledged that we are destined to die, and can only be delivered by the grace of Jesus Christ. He quotes “What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” (1 Corinthians 4:7) frequently. He acknowledges that we may receive a crown, but it is “recompensed to our merits”, and our “merits are the gifts of God!” It is a gift to believe “in Christ, and that each suffers for His sake”. He also quotes frequently “what the Lord Himself says: “No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me shall draw him.” (John 6:44)”

Man is assisted “by the grace of God” even “to the point of being willing” he says. The “belief in the Mediator who shed His blood for the remission of their sins” is what saved the saints in the Old Testament, and in the New.

According to Augustine, “The grace of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”, as it reads in **Romans 6 (Douay Rheims):23**. He says that “This grace” is “hiddenly bestowed in human hearts by the Divine gift”, and he argues, “but because faith itself is grace, life eternal also is grace for grace”.

He also says that, “God’s grace is not given according to the deserts of the recipients, but according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise and glory of His own grace”. And he says, “For if thou dost build on thine own work; then is a reward rendered unto thee, not grace freely bestowed. But if it be grace, it is gratuitously given”.

In regards to **Losing Grace**, Augustine did believe one could lose grace, as he says, “If, however, being already regenerate and justified, he relapses of his own will into an evil life, assuredly he cannot say, “I have not received,” because of his own free choice to evil he has lost the grace of God, that he had received.” However, he did not correctly understand the Biblical truth about regeneration. When we understand that truth, as I have shown in the course of this chapter, we understand that one cannot lose the grace of God.

Augustine also thought that “life eternal itself, which, it is certain, is given as due to good works, is called by so great an apostle the grace of God, although grace is not rendered to works, but is given freely”. And he then reasons, “it must be confessed without any doubt, that eternal life is called grace for the reason that it is rendered to those merits which grace has conferred upon man. Because that saying is rightly understood which in the gospel is read, “grace for grace,” (John 1:16)—that is, for those merits which grace has conferred.” So you are given grace to do good works which then merit eternal life. But his thinking is based on a mistranslation of Romans 6:23 in the **Latin Vulgate**, which caused him to believe that eternal life is called grace. And so we read in **Romans 6 (Douay Rheims):23** For the wages of sin is death. But the grace of God, life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord.

But a more correct translation is as in **Romans 6 (KV):23** For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In regards to **Participation** in grace, he wrote, “For if we think well, we are in God; and if we live well, God is in us: believers, by participating in His grace, and being illuminated by Himself, are in Him, and He in us.” He also said, “that we on our part are sons, not by nature, but by grace; while the Only begotten is so by nature and not by grace?” However, Jesus describes our entrance into the Kingdom of God as a birth in **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Jesus says it is literally a birth from above, that is, of the Spirit of God. A birth imparts life, and this life, being eternal, has a divine nature, as Peter reveals in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

In regards to **Perseverance**, he said, “To this, indeed, we are not able to deny, that perseverance in good, progressing even to the end, is also a great gift of God; and that it exists not save it come from Him of whom it is written, “Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.” (James 1:17)” To Augustine, perseverance to

the end was a requirement to be saved, and was given as “a great gift of God”. But Augustine did not understand the discipline of the Lord who is our good Father. If after we are born again of the Spirit of God, we persist in sin, God deals with us as sons and daughters. If we persist in sin, God will discipline us. His discipline is described in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):28** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

In regards to **Free Will**, he said, “True it is, when man was created he received great power of free will; but he lost it by sin.” And he said, “it surely follows that it is God who both works in man the willing to believe”. He knew that, ultimately, it was God’s free choice to save us by grace through faith, which is His gift.

In regards to **Foreknowledge**, again he understood the sovereignty of God, as he says, “Here surely is at fault the vain reasoning of those who defend the foreknowledge of God in opposition to His grace, and with this view declare that we were chosen before the foundation of the world, (Ephesians 1:4) because God foreknew that we should be good, but not that He Himself would make us good.”

Augustine understood that God foreknew those whom He had chosen, and it is these He would predestinate to be good.

In regards to **Our Being Made One**, he says, “our being made one in that love of unchanging faithfulness is to be attributed to the grace of God, and not to ourselves”.

In his thinking about grace, Augustine was pivotal in the development of the thinking of the Church. His strength was in his belief that the grace of God is given gratuitously, that is, not preceded by our merits. And he was strong in his belief that the grace of God was given to those whom God had chosen beforehand, and that this grace would triumph in them.

But Augustine’s weakness was in that he did not understand the change in the nature of the believer when they are born again. He attributed everything to grace, which the believer theoretically could lose if they wandered. But ultimately he believed that it is God’s sovereign choice to give us grace to believe, to persevere, and to rise again to be forever with the Lord.

With the resources the Church has today, we are able to correct his errors in his thinking on grace, and continue to press on to the upward call of God in Christ Jesus, as we read in **Philippians 3 (KJV):13** Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

# Losing Salvation

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Soul and Its Origin, Chapter 15, page 321

Here is an excerpt from the following section of his writing.

Chapter 15 [XII.]—God Does Not Judge Any One for What He Might Have Done If His Life Had Been Prolonged, But Simply for the Deeds He Actually Commits.

15...Nor will any man possibly be safe who dies after baptism, because even after baptism men may, I will not say sin in some way or other, but actually go so far as to commit apostasy...

**Commentary:** This is only an excerpt from Chapter 15. He is saying, in other words, one could lose their salvation, even after baptism, which was when one was regenerated in Augustine's thinking.

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine Sermon VI, On the Lord's Prayer in St. Matthew's Gospel Chapter VI, 9. Etc, to the Competentes, Paragraphs 11-13, page 277-278

11. **"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."** (Matthew 6:12) Touching this petition again we need no explanation, that it is for ourselves that we pray. For we beg that our debts may be forgiven us. For debtors are we, not in money, but in sins. Thou art saying perchance at this moment, And you too. We answer, Yes, we too. What, ye Holy Bishops, are ye debtors? Yes, we are debtors too. What you! My Lord. Be it far from thee, do not thyself this wrong. I do myself no wrong, but I say the truth; we are debtors: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John 1:8) We have been baptized, and yet are we debtors. Not that anything then remained, which was not remitted to us in Baptism, but because in our lives we are contracting ever what needs daily forgiveness. **They who are baptized, and forthwith depart out of this life, come up from the font without any debt; without any debt they leave the world. But they who are baptized and are still kept in this life, contract defilements by reason of their mortal frailty, by which though the ship be not sunk, yet have they need of recourse to the pump. For otherwise by little and little will that enter in by which the whole ship will be sunk. And to offer this prayer, is to have recourse to the pump.** But we ought not only to pray, but to do alms also, because when the pump is used to prevent the ship from sinking, both the voices and hands are at work. Now we are at work with our voices, when we say, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." And we are at work with our hands when we do this, "Break thy bread to the hungry, and bring the houseless poor into thine house. (Isaiah 58:7) Shut up alms in the heart of a poor man, and it shall intercede for thee unto the Lord." (Ecclesiasticus 29:12)



**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

He continues, “Touching this petition again we need no explanation, that it is for ourselves that we pray. For we beg that our debts may be forgiven us. For debtors are we, not in money, but in sins. Thou art saying perchance at this moment, And you too. We answer, Yes, we too. What, ye Holy Bishops, are ye debtors? Yes, we are debtors too. What you! My Lord. Be it far from thee, do not thyself this wrong. I do myself no wrong, but I say the truth; we are debtors: “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8)”

He refers to **1 John 1 (KJV):8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

He continues, “We have been baptized, and yet are we debtors. Not that anything then remained, which was not remitted to us in Baptism, but because in our lives we are contracting ever what needs daily forgiveness. **They who are baptized, and forthwith depart out of this life, come up from the font without any debt; without any debt they leave the world. But they who are baptized and are still kept in this life, contract defilements by reason of their mortal frailty, by which though the ship be not sunk, yet have they need of recourse to the pump. For otherwise by little and little will that enter in by which the whole ship will be sunk.**”

Augustine in effect has codified a way for one to lose their salvation. What he is saying is that the grace one receives at regeneration, that is when one is baptized in his thinking, erases all debt of sin, but any sin after regeneration by baptism must be forgiven by the prayer, as in the Lord’s prayer in Matthew 6:12, “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors”.

He continues, “**And to offer this prayer, is to have recourse to the pump.** But we ought not only to pray, but to do alms also, because when the pump is used to prevent the ship from sinking, both the voices and hands are at work. Now we are at work with our voices, when we say, “Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.” And we are at work with our hands when we do this, “Break thy bread to the hungry, and bring the houseless poor into thine house. (Isaiah 58:7)”

He refers to **Isaiah 58 (KJV):7** Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

He continues, ““Shut up alms in the heart of a poor man, and it shall intercede for thee unto the Lord.” (Ecclesiasticus 29:12)”

He refers to **Ecclesiasticus 29 (Douay Rheims):15** Shut up alms in the heart of the poor, and it shall obtain help for thee against all evil.

And to **Ecclesiasticus 29 (KJV):12** Shut up alms in thy storehouses: and it shall deliver thee from all affliction.

It should be understood that the book of Ecclesiasticus is not a canonical book of the Bible, but is part of the Apocrypha.

So in Augustine’s thinking here, one is saved by grace at baptism, but one maintains their salvation by prayer and the giving of alms after baptism, which giving would still be a provision of grace in Augustine’s thinking.

12. Although therefore all our sins were forgiven in the “laver of regeneration,” we should be driven into great straits, if there were not given to us the daily cleansing of the Holy Prayer. Alms and prayers purge away sins; only let not such sins be committed, for which we must necessarily be separated from our daily Bread; avoid we all such debts to which a severe and certain condemnation is due. Call not yourselves righteous, as though ye had no cause to say, “Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.” Though ye abstain from idolatry, from the consolations of astrologers, from the cures of enchanters, though ye abstain from the seductions of heretics, from the divisions of schismatics; though ye abstain from murders, from adulteries and fornications, from thefts and plunderings, from false witnessings, and all such other sins which I do not name, as have a ruinous consequence, for which it is necessary that the sinner be cut off from the altar, and be so bound in earth, as to be bound in heaven, to his great and deadly danger, unless again he be so loosed in earth, as to be loosed in heaven; yet after all these are excepted, still there is no want of occasions whereby a man may sin. A man sins in seeing with pleasure what he ought not to see. Yet who can hold in the quickness of the eye? For from this the eye is said to have received its very name, from its quickness. Who can restrain the ear or eye? The eyes may be shut when thou wilt, and are shut in a moment, but the ears thou canst only with an effort close: thou must raise the hand and reach them, and if any one hold thy hand, they are kept open, nor canst thou close them against reviling, impure, or flattering, and seducing words. And when thou hearest any things thou oughtest not to hear, though thou do it not, dost thou not sin with the ear? For thou hearest something that is bad with pleasure? How great sins doth the deadly tongue commit! Yea, sometimes sins of such a nature, that a man is separated from the altar for them. To the tongue pertains the whole matter of blasphemies, and many idle words again are spoken, which are not convenient. But let the hand do nothing wrong, let the feet run not to any evil, nor the eye be directed to immodesty; let not the ear be open with pleasure to filthy talk; nor the tongue move to indecent speech; yet tell me, who can restrain the thoughts? How often do we pray, my brethren, and our thoughts are elsewhere, as though we forgot before whom we are standing, or before whom we are prostrating ourselves! If all these things be collected together against us, will they not therefore not overwhelm us, because they are small faults? What matter is it whether lead or sand overwhelm us? The lead is all one mass, the sand is small grains, but by their great number they overwhelm thee. So thy sins are small. Seest thou not how the rivers are filled, and the lands are wasted by small drops? They are small, but they are many.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Although therefore all our sins were forgiven in the “laver of regeneration,” we should be driven into great straits, if there were not given to us the daily cleansing of the Holy Prayer. Alms and prayers purge away sins; only let not such sins be committed, for which we must necessarily be separated from our daily Bread; avoid we all such debts to which a severe and certain condemnation is due.”

We see the emphasis of the Church on ritual here. The “laver of regeneration”, the “Holy Prayer”, “Alms”, “our daily Bread” referring to the Eucharist, are all rituals. But the Scripture says we are to walk in the light, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):5** This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:  
7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

God is all about relationship with us, and not about ritual. As we fill ourselves with the word of God, light will be given to us. As we respond and do according to that light, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. As we do this, we stay in fellowship with the Lord, for, in verse 5, God is light. It is not about ritual but about our fellowship with the Lord.

He continues, “Call not yourselves righteous, as though ye had no cause to say, “Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.””

He refers again to **Matthew 6 (KJV):12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And then he lists damnable, or mortal sins, or sins by which one could lose their salvation:

- 1.) “Though ye abstain from idolatry,
- 2.) from the consolations of astrologers,
- 3.) from the cures of enchanters,
- 4.) though ye abstain from the seductions of heretics,
- 5.) from the divisions of schismatics;
- 6.) though ye abstain from murders,
- 7.) from adulteries and fornications,
- 8.) from thefts and plunderings,
- 9.) from false witnessings,”

He continues, “and all such other sins which I do not name, as have a ruinous consequence, for which it is necessary that the sinner be cut off from the altar, and be so bound in earth, as to be bound in heaven, to his great and deadly danger, unless again he be so loosed in earth, as to be loosed in heaven;”

So he says it is possible to recover from these and “all such other sins” which “have a ruinous consequence”, such “that the sinner be cut off from the altar” and be in “great and deadly danger”, “unless again he be so loosed in earth, as to be loosed in heaven;”

What could he be referring to but Jesus words in **Matthew 16 (KJV):18** And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

In other words, Augustine is saying that it is in the power of the Catholic Church to loose these sins, that is, to forgive such sins.

Augustine continues, “yet after all these are excepted, still there is no want of occasions whereby a man may sin. A man sins in seeing with pleasure what he ought not to see. Yet who can hold in the quickness of the eye? For from this the eye is said to have received its very name, from its quickness. Who can restrain the ear or eye? The eyes may be shut when thou

wilt, and are shut in a moment, but the ears thou canst only with an effort close: thou must raise the hand and reach them, and if any one hold thy hand, they are kept open, nor canst thou close them against reviling, impure, or flattering, and seducing words. And when thou hearest any things thou oughtest not to hear, though thou do it not, dost thou not sin with the ear? For thou hearest something that is bad with pleasure? How great sins doth the deadly tongue commit! Yea, sometimes sins of such a nature, that a man is separated from the altar for them.”

To be “separated from the altar” was in effect to be in damnable or mortal sin, and without salvation unless “loosed in earth”, that is, forgiven by the Church.

He continues, “To the tongue pertains the whole matter of blasphemies, and many idle words again are spoken, which are not convenient. But let the hand do nothing wrong, let the feet run not to any evil, nor the eye be directed to immodesty; let not the ear be open with pleasure to filthy talk; nor the tongue move to indecent speech; yet tell me, who can restrain the thoughts? How often do we pray, my brethren, and our thoughts are elsewhere, as though we forgot before whom we are standing, or before whom we are prostrating ourselves! If all these things be collected together against us, will they not therefore not overwhelm us, because they are small faults? What matter is it whether lead or sand overwhelm us? The lead is all one mass, the sand is small grains, but by their great number they overwhelm thee. So thy sins are small. Seest thou not how the rivers are filled, and the lands are wasted by small drops? They are small, but they are many.”

But our fellowship with the Lord is maintained by walking in the light. And when we realize that we have His righteousness put down to our account when He justified us because of our faith, and that we have a standing before Him as sons and daughters, and that we are accepted in the beloved, and that we have been set at one with Him, it is easier to fix our eyes on Him. And if our eyes or ears should wander, it is but a moment to return, and fix our eyes on Him again. And because of our standing, there is no sin that shall be able to separate us from the love of God, as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):**38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

13. Let us therefore say every day; and say it in sincerity of heart, and do what we say, “Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.” It is an engagement, a covenant, an agreement that we make with God. The Lord thy God saith to thee, Forgive, and I will forgive. Thou hast not forgiven; thou retainest thy sins against thyself, not I. I pray thee, my dearly beloved children, since I know what is expedient for you in the Lord’s Prayer, and most of all in that sentence of it, “Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors;” hear me. Ye are about to be baptized, forgive everything; whatsoever any man have in his heart against any other, let him from his heart forgive it. So enter in, and be sure, that all your sins which ye have contracted, whether from your birth or of your parents after Adam with original sin, for which sins’ sake ye run with babes to the Saviour’s grace, or whatever after sins ye have contracted in your lives, by word, or deed, or thought, all are forgiven; and you will go out of the water as from before the presence of your Lord, with the sure discharge of all debts.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine encourages us to walk in forgiveness and to forgive.

But the blood of Jesus is the only propitiation for sin. So even if we sin, our standing as sons and daughters of God is not affected. But our fellowship with the Lord is maintained by confession of our sin.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermon VII, Again, on Matthew 6. on the Lord's Prayer. To the Competentes, Paragraph 9, page 283**

9. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." (Matthew 6:13) Will this again be necessary in the life to come? "Lead us not into temptation," will not be said, except where there can be temptation. We read in the book of holy Job, "Is not the life of man upon earth a temptation?" (Job 7:1) What then do we pray for? Hear what. The Apostle James saith, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God." (James 1:13) He spoke of those evil temptations, whereby men are deceived, and brought under the yoke of the devil. This is the kind of temptation he spoke of. For there is another sort of temptation which is called a proving; of this kind of temptation it is written, "The Lord your God tempteth (proveth) you to know whether ye love Him." (Deuteronomy 13:3) What means "to know"? "To make you know," for He knoweth already. With that kind of temptation, whereby we are deceived and seduced, God tempteth no man. **But undoubtedly in His deep and hidden judgment He abandons some. And when He hath abandoned them, the tempter finds his opportunity. For he finds in him no resistance against his power, but forthwith presents himself to him as his possessor, if God abandon him. Therefore that He may not abandon us, do we say, "Lead us not into temptation."** "For every one is tempted," says the same Apostle James, "when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1:14-15) What then has he hereby taught us? To fight against our lusts. For ye are about to put away your sins in Holy Baptism; but lusts will still remain, wherewith ye must fight after that ye are regenerate. For a conflict with your own selves still remains. Let no enemy from without be feared: conquer thine own self, and the whole world is conquered. What can any tempter from without, whether the devil or the devil's minister, do against thee? Whosoever sets the hope of gain before thee to seduce thee, let him only find no covetousness in thee; and what can he who would tempt thee by gain effect? Whereas if covetousness be found in thee, thou takest fire at the sight of gain, and art taken by the bait of this corrupt food. But if he find no covetousness in thee, the trap remains spread in vain. Or should the tempter set before thee some woman of surpassing beauty; if chastity be within, iniquity from without is overcome. Therefore that he may not take thee with the bait of a strange woman's beauty, fight with thine own lust within; thou hast no sensible perception of thine enemy, but of thine own concupiscence thou hast. Thou dost not see the devil, but the object that engageth thee thou dost see. Get the mastery then over that of which thou art sensible within. Fight valiantly, for He who hath regenerated thee is thy Judge; He hath arranged the lists, He is making ready the crown. **But because thou wilt without doubt be conquered, if thou have not Him to aid thee, if He abandon thee: therefore dost thou say in the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation."** The Judge's wrath hath given over some to their own lusts; and the Apostle says, "God gave them over to the lusts of their hearts." (Romans 1:24) How did He give them up? Not by forcing, but by forsaking them.



**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” (Matthew 6:13)”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

He continues, “Will this again be necessary in the life to come? “Lead us not into temptation,” will not be said, except where there can be temptation. We read in the book of holy Job, “Is not the life of man upon earth a temptation?” (Job 7:1)”

He refers to **Job 7 (Septuagint):1** Is not the life of man upon earth a state of trial? And his existence as that of a hireling by the day?

He continues, “What then do we pray for? Hear what. The Apostle James saith, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God.” (James 1:13)”

He refers to **James 1 (KJV):13** Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

He continues, “He spoke of those evil temptations, whereby men are deceived, and brought under the yoke of the devil. This is the kind of temptation he spoke of. For there is another sort of temptation which is called a proving; of this kind of temptation it is written, “The Lord your God tempteth (proveth) you to know whether ye love Him.” (Deuteronomy 13:3)”

He refers to **Deuteronomy 13 (KJV):3** Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

He continues, “What means “to know”? “To make you know,” for He knoweth already. With that kind of temptation, whereby we are deceived and seduced, God tempteth no man. **But undoubtedly in His deep and hidden judgment He abandons some. And when He hath abandoned them, the tempter finds his opportunity. For he finds in him no resistance against his power, but forthwith presents himself to him as his possessor, if God abandon him. Therefore that He may not abandon us, do we say, “Lead us not into temptation.” “For every one is tempted,” says the same Apostle James, “when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” (James 1:14-15)”**

He refers to **James 1 (KJV):14** But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. **15** Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

He continues, **“What then has he hereby taught us? To fight against our lusts. For ye are about to put away your sins in Holy Baptism; but lusts will still remain, wherewith ye must fight after that ye are regenerate. For a conflict with your own selves still remains. Let no enemy from without be feared: conquer thine own self, and the whole world is conquered.** What can any tempter from without, whether the devil or the devil’s minister, do against thee? Whosoever sets the hope of gain before thee to seduce thee, let him only find no covetousness in thee; and what can he who would tempt thee by gain effect? Whereas if covetousness be found in thee, thou takest fire at the sight of gain, and art taken by the bait of this corrupt food. But if he find no covetousness in thee, the trap remains spread in vain. Or should the tempter set before thee some woman of surpassing beauty; if chastity be within, iniquity from without is

overcome. Therefore that he may not take thee with the bait of a strange woman's beauty, fight with thine own lust within; thou hast no sensible perception of thine enemy, but of thine own concupiscence thou hast. Thou dost not see the devil, but the object that engageth thee thou dost see. Get the mastery then over that of which thou art sensible within. Fight valiantly, for He who hath regenerated thee is thy Judge; He hath arranged the lists, He is making ready the crown. **But because thou wilt without doubt be conquered, if thou have not Him to aid thee, if He abandon thee: therefore dost thou say in the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." The Judge's wrath hath given over some to their own lusts; and the Apostle says, "God gave them over to the lusts of their hearts." (Romans 1:24) How did He give them up? Not by forcing, but by forsaking them."**

He refers to **Romans 1 (KJV) 24** Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

Augustine makes it seem as though God is speaking of the regenerate in these verses, as he says above, **"Therefore that He may not abandon us, do we say, "Lead us not into temptation.""**

But let us read this verse, Romans 1:24, in context as in **Romans 1 (KJV):18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Paul is saying that God has shown man about Himself through the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, which "are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead", in verse 20. He is speaking to the unregenerate man here, who are without excuse.

Paul continues as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV):21** Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

We see the downward spiral of unregenerate man here as we continue to read in **Romans 1 (KJV):26** For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that

they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

And we see that all the world is under sin as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):9** What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

The word “unprofitable” in verse 12 speaks of fruit spoiled rotten. This is the condition of the unregenerate. This is why we need a savior. But when we are saved, God will not abandon us as we read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):5** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

There is a triple negative in the Greek in verse 5 so that the verse could be translated, “I will never, no never, not under any circumstances, leave thee or forsake thee”. God will not abandon us. If we choose to build wood, hay, or stubble, He will discipline us, but He will not utterly forsake or abandon us. We are not our own, but we are bought with a price. And so we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):32** He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If all we build is wood, hay, and stubble after we are saved, we will go through the fire of the consequences of our bad choices here on earth, but we will still be saved as we read again in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):15** If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. 16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. 18 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. 20 And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. 21 Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are your's; 22 Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's; 23 And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

11. And truly it is a great temptation, dearly beloved, it is a great temptation in this life, when that in us is the subject of temptation, whereby we attain pardon, if in any of our temptations we have fallen. **It is a frightful temptation, when that is taken from us, whereby we may be healed from the wounds of other temptations.** I know that ye have not yet understood me. Give me your attention, that ye may understand. Suppose avarice tempts a man, and he is conquered in any single temptation (for sometimes even a good wrestler and fighter may get roughly handled): avarice then has got the better of a man, good wrestler though he be, and he has done some avaricious act. Or there has been a passing lust; it has not brought the man to fornication, nor reached unto adultery, for when this does take place, the man must at all events be kept back from the criminal act. But he "hath seen a woman to lust after her;" (Matthew 5:28) he has let his thoughts dwell on her with more pleasure than was right; he has admitted the attack; excellent combatant though he be, he has been wounded, but he has not consented to it; he has beaten back the motion of his lust, has chastised it with the bitterness of grief, he has beaten it back; and has prevailed. Still in the very fact that he had slipped, has he ground for saying, "Forgive us our debts." And so of all other temptations, it is a hard matter that in them all there should not be occasion for saying, "Forgive us our debts." **What then is that frightful temptation which I have mentioned, that grievous, that tremendous temptation, which must be avoided with all our strength, with all our resolution; what is it? When we go about to avenge ourselves. Anger is kindled, and the man burns to be avenged. O frightful temptation! Thou art losing that, whereby thou hadst to attain pardon for other faults. If thou hadst committed any sin as to other senses, and other lusts, hence mightest thou have had thy cure, in that thou mightest say, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." But whoso instigateth thee to take vengeance, will lose for thee the power thou hadst to say, "As we also forgive our debtors." When that power is lost, all sins will be retained; nothing at all is remitted.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "And truly it is a great temptation, dearly beloved, it is a great temptation in this life, when that in us is the subject of temptation, whereby we attain pardon, if in any of our temptations we have fallen. **It is a frightful temptation, when that is taken from us, whereby we may be healed from the wounds of other temptations.** I know that ye have not yet understood me. Give me your attention, that ye may understand. Suppose avarice tempts a man, and he is conquered in any single temptation (for sometimes even a good wrestler and fighter may get roughly handled): avarice then has got the better of a man, good wrestler though he be, and he has done some avaricious act. Or there has been a passing lust; it has not brought the man to fornication, nor reached unto adultery, for when this does take place, the man must at all events be kept back from the criminal act. But he "hath seen a woman to lust after her;" (Matthew 5:28) he has let his thoughts dwell on her with more pleasure than was right; he has admitted the attack; excellent combatant though he be, he has been wounded, but he has not consented to it; he has beaten back the motion of his lust, has chastised it with the bitterness of grief, he has beaten it back; and has prevailed."

He has referred in context to **Matthew 5 (KJV):27** Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

He continues, “Still in the very fact that he had slipped, has he ground for saying, “Forgive us our debts.” And so of all other temptations, it is a hard matter that in them all there should not be occasion for saying, “Forgive us our debts.” **What then is that frightful temptation which I have mentioned, that grievous, that tremendous temptation, which must be avoided with all our strength, with all our resolution; what is it? When we go about to avenge ourselves. Anger is kindled, and the man burns to be avenged. O frightful temptation! Thou art losing that, whereby thou hadst to attain pardon for other faults.”**

He refers to the simple prayer, “Forgive us our debts”, which is **“that, whereby thou hadst to attain pardon for other faults.”**

Augustine continues, **“If thou hadst committed any sin as to other senses, and other lusts, hence mightest thou have had thy cure, in that thou mightest say, “Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.” But whoso instigateth thee to take vengeance, will lose for thee the power thou hadst to say, “As we also forgive our debtors.” When that power is lost, all sins will be retained; nothing at all is remitted.”**

The sin that Augustine describes is not possible for one who has been born again. A brother or a sister in the Lord may reach the point of a sin unto death, but that is only physical death. Once we have been born again, the Holy Spirit has given life to our spirit, which is eternal life. We then have a standing as righteous before the Lord.

If we have truly believed in Jesus Christ, we have been justified by God. He has imputed His righteousness to our account. If we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

And in **Romans 8 (KJV):34** Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

And in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):25** Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

If we take vengeance, we sin. If we confess our sins, he is faithful as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we do not confess our sin, God deals with us as a son or daughter, and He will discipline us accordingly. He is a good Father, and will not disown His own.

Jesus taught as in **John 20 (KJV):23** Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.

The only time we can tell someone their sins have been retained is when they have not believed in Jesus Christ, as we read in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.



2. Thou hast heard an insult, it is the wind; thou art angry, it is a wave. When therefore the wind blows, and the wave swells, the ship is endangered, the heart is in jeopardy, the heart is tossed to and fro. When thou hast heard an insult, thou longest to be avenged; and, lo, avenged thou hast been, and so rejoicing in another's harm thou hast suffered shipwreck. And why is this? Because Christ is asleep in thee. What does this mean, Christ is asleep in thee? Thou hast forgotten Christ. Rouse Him up then, call Christ to mind, let Christ awake in thee, give heed to Him. What didst thou wish? To be avenged. Hast thou forgotten, that when He was being crucified, He said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?” (Luke 23:34) He who was asleep in thy heart did not wish to be avenged. Awake Him up then, call Him to remembrance. The remembrance of Him is His word; the remembrance of Him is His command. And then wilt thou say if Christ, awake in thee, What manner of man am I, who wish to be avenged! Who am I, who deal out threatenings against another man? I may die perhaps before I am avenged. **And when at my last breath, inflamed with rage, and thirsting for vengeance, I shall depart out of this body, He will not receive me, who did not wish to be avenged; He will not receive me, who said, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; forgive, and it shall be forgiven you.” (Luke 6:37-38)** Therefore will I refrain myself from my wrath, and return to the repose of my heart. Christ hath commanded the sea, tranquility is restored.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Thou hast heard an insult, it is the wind; thou art angry, it is a wave. When therefore the wind blows, and the wave swells, the ship is endangered, the heart is in jeopardy, the heart is tossed to and fro. When thou hast heard an insult, thou longest to be avenged; and, lo, avenged thou hast been, and so rejoicing in another's harm thou hast suffered shipwreck. And why is this? Because Christ is asleep in thee. What does this mean, Christ is asleep in thee? Thou hast forgotten Christ. Rouse Him up then, call Christ to mind, let Christ awake in thee, give heed to Him. What didst thou wish? To be avenged. Hast thou forgotten, that when He was being crucified, He said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?” (Luke 23:34)”

He refers to **Luke 23 (KJV):34** Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

He continues, “He who was asleep in thy heart did not wish to be avenged. Awake Him up then, call Him to remembrance. The remembrance of Him is His word; the remembrance of Him is His command. And then wilt thou say if Christ, awake in thee, What manner of man am I, who wish to be avenged! Who am I, who deal out threatenings against another man? I may die perhaps before I am avenged. **And when at my last breath, inflamed with rage, and thirsting for vengeance, I shall depart out of this body, He will not receive me, who did not wish to be avenged; He will not receive me, who said, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; forgive, and it shall be forgiven you.” (Luke 6:37-38)**”

He refers to **Luke 6 (KJV):37** Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: **38** Give, and it shall be given unto

you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

But Jesus also spoke as in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

We must remember that Jesus was speaking to crowds of Jews who were still under the law, for Jesus had not died on the cross or risen from the dead yet. Before He died, he spoke as in **John 16 (KJV):12** I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

The disciples could not bear the things Jesus still had to say to them because He was not risen from the dead yet. They would not understand these things until He had died on the cross and risen from the dead. This is why we have the epistles of Paul, Peter, John, James, and Jude. These epistles are the things Jesus wants us to hear now, in addition to what He taught in the Gospels.

So now we can understand that when we as believers are judged, we are not condemned as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):31** For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

When Jesus spoke to the Jews, there were many who needed to be born again. They were like Nicodemus. However, Nicodemus did receive the Lord.

Augustine concludes, “Therefore will I refrain myself from my wrath, and return to the repose of my heart. Christ hath commanded the sea, tranquility is restored.”

It is good for us not to take vengeance, or to desire to take vengeance. But if we have been born again, we will not lose life or the Holy Spirit if we sin, and have not asked for forgiveness, or forgiven others. But we will be “chastened of the Lord”, that we “should not be condemned with the world”.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate XII. Chapter III. 6–21, paragraph 14, page 86**

14. Run, my brethren, lest the darkness lay hold of you. Awake to your salvation, awake while there is time; let none be kept back from the temple of God, none kept back from the work of the Lord, none called away from continual prayer, none be defrauded of wonted devotion. Awake, then, while it is day: the day shines, Christ is the day. He is ready to forgive sins, but to them that acknowledge them; ready to punish the self-defenders, who boast that they are righteous, and think themselves to be something when they are nothing. **But he that walks in His love and mercy, even being free from those great and deadly sins, such crimes as murder, theft, adultery; still, because of those which seem to be minute sins, of tongue, or of thought, or of intemperance in things permitted, he doeth the truth in confession, and cometh to the light in good works: since many minute sins, if they be neglected, kill. Minute are the drops that swell the rivers; minute are the grains of sand; but if much sand is put together, the heap presses and crushes. Bilge-water neglected in the hold does the same thing as a rushing wave. Gradually it**

leaks in through the hold; and by long leaking in and no pumping out, it sinks the ship. Now what is this pumping out, but by good works, by sighing, fasting, giving, forgiving, so to effect that sins may not overwhelm us? The path of this life, however, is troublesome, full of temptations: in prosperity, let it not lift us up; in adversity, let it not crush us. He who gave the happiness of this world gave it for thy comfort, not for thy ruin. Again, He who scourgeth thee in this life, doeth it for thy improvement, not for thy condemnation. Bear the Father that corrects thee for thy training, lest thou feel the judge in punishing thee. These things we tell you every day, and they must be often said, because they are good and wholesome.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Run, my brethren, lest the darkness lay hold of you. Awake to your salvation, awake while there is time; let none be kept back from the temple of God, none kept back from the work of the Lord, none called away from continual prayer, none be defrauded of wonted devotion. Awake, then, while it is day: the day shines, Christ is the day.”

In context, he could refer to **Romans 13 (KJV):**10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. 11 And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

And to **Ephesians 5 (KJV):**14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. 15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

And we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):**19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

Augustine continues, “He is ready to forgive sins, but to them that acknowledge them; ready to punish the self-defenders, who boast that they are righteous, and think themselves to be something when they are nothing. But he that walks in His love and mercy, even being free from those great and deadly sins, such crimes as murder, theft, adultery; still, because of those which seem to be minute sins, of tongue, or of thought, or of intemperance in things permitted, he doeth the truth in confession, and cometh to the light in good works: since many minute sins, if they be neglected, kill.”

What are “great and deadly sins” but sins that “kill”. And here he says, “since many minute sins, if they be neglected, kill”. To Augustine, this meant losing one’s salvation.

He continues, as he explains, “Minute are the drops that swell the rivers; minute are the grains of sand; but if much sand is put together, the heap presses and crushes. Bilge-water neglected in the hold does the same thing as a rushing wave. Gradually it leaks in through the hold; and by long leaking in and no pumping out, it sinks the ship. Now what is this pumping out, but by good works, by sighing, fasting, giving, forgiving, so to effect that sins may not overwhelm us?”

By “overwhelm us”, he means we would lose our salvation.

He concludes, “The path of this life, however, is troublesome, full of temptations: in prosperity, let it not lift us up; in adversity, let it not crush us. He who gave the happiness of this world gave it for thy comfort, not for thy ruin. Again, He who scourgeth thee in this life, doeth it for thy improvement, not for thy condemnation. Bear the Father that corrects thee for thy training, lest thou feel the judge in punishing thee. These things we tell you every day, and they

must be often said, because they are good and wholesome.”

And he agrees here with **Hebrews 12 (KJV):**6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. 14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XIV. Chapter III. 29–36, paragraphs 2-3, page 94-95**

2. Accordingly John confessed Him: as you have heard that when Jesus was making many disciples, and they reported to John as if to excite him to jealousy,—for they told the matter as if moved by envy, “Lo, he is making more disciples than thou,”—John confessed what he was, and thereby merited to belong to Him, because he dared not affirm himself to be that which Jesus is. Now this is what John said: “A man cannot receive anything, except it be given him from heaven.” Therefore Christ gives, man receives. “Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom; but the friend of the Bridegroom, who standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom’s voice.” Not of himself did he give himself joy. He that will have joy of himself shall be sad; but he that will have his joy of God will ever rejoice, because God is everlasting. Dost thou desire to have everlasting joy? Cleave to Him who is everlasting. Such an one John declared himself to be. “Because of the Bridegroom’s voice, the friend of the Bridegroom rejoiceth,” not because of his own voice, and “standeth and heareth.” Therefore, if he falls, he heareth Him not: for of a certain one who fell it is said, “And he stood not in the truth;” (John 8:44) this is said of the devil. It behoves the Bridegroom’s friend, then, “to stand and to hear.” **What is it to stand? It is to abide in His grace, which he received.** And he hears a voice at which he rejoices. Such was John: he knew whereof he rejoiced; he did not arrogate to himself to be what he was not; he knew himself as one enlightened, not the enlightener. “But that was the true Light,” saith the evangelist, “that lighteneth every man coming into this world.” If “every man,” then also John himself; for he too is of men. Moreover, although none hath arisen among them that are born of women greater than John, yet he was himself one of those that are born of women. Is he to be compared with Him who, because He willed it, was born by a singular and extraordinary birth? For both generations of the Lord are unexampled, both the divine and the human: by the divine He has no mother; by the human, no father. Therefore John was but one of the rest: of greater grace, however, so that of those born of women none arose greater than he; so great a testimony he gave to our Lord Jesus Christ as to

call Him the Bridegroom, and himself the Bridegroom's friend, not worthy however to loose the latchet of the Bridegroom's shoe. You have already heard much on this point, beloved: let us look to what follows; for it is somewhat hard to understand. But as John himself says, that "no man can receive anything, except it be given him from heaven," whatever we shall not have understood, let us ask Him who gives from heaven: for we are men, and cannot receive anything, except He, who is not man, give it us.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "Accordingly John confessed Him: as you have heard that when Jesus was making many disciples, and they reported to John as if to excite him to jealousy,—for they told the matter as if moved by envy, "Lo, he is making more disciples than thou,"—John confessed what he was, and thereby merited to belong to Him, because he dared not affirm himself to be that which Jesus is. Now this is what John said: "A man cannot receive anything, except it be given him from heaven.""

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):25** Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. 26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. 27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

He continues, "Therefore Christ gives, man receives. "Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom; but the friend of the Bridegroom, who standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice."

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):28** Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. 29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

He continues, "Not of himself did he give himself joy. He that will have joy of himself shall be sad; but he that will have his joy of God will ever rejoice, because God is everlasting. Dost thou desire to have everlasting joy? Cleave to Him who is everlasting. Such an one John declared himself to be. "Because of the Bridegroom's voice, the friend of the Bridegroom rejoiceth," not because of his own voice, and "standeth and heareth." Therefore, if he falls, he heareth Him not: for of a certain one who fell it is said, "And he stood not in the truth," (John 8:44) this is said of the devil."

He refers to **John 8 (KJV):44** Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

He continues, "It behoves the Bridegroom's friend, then, "to stand and to hear." **What is it to stand? It is to abide in His grace, which he received."**

Augustine seems to imply that if we don't abide in His grace which we have received, we will not stand. But we stand in grace through faith as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.



We we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and stand in grace because of our justification.

Augustine continues, “And he hears a voice at which he rejoices. Such was John: he knew whereof he rejoiced; he did not arrogate to himself to be what he was not; he knew himself as one enlightened, not the enlightener. “But that was the true Light,” saith the evangelist, “that lighteneth every man coming into this world.””

He refers in context to **John 1 (KJV):7** The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

He continues, “If “every man,” then also John himself; for he too is of men. Moreover, although none hath arisen among them that are born of women greater than John, yet he was himself one of those that are born of women. Is he to be compared with Him who, because He willed it, was born by a singular and extraordinary birth? For both generations of the Lord are unexampled, both the divine and the human: by the divine He has no mother; by the human, no father. Therefore John was but one of the rest: of greater grace, however, so that of those born of women none arose greater than he; so great a testimony he gave to our Lord Jesus Christ as to call Him the Bridegroom, and himself the Bridegroom’s friend, not worthy however to loose the latchet of the Bridegroom’s shoe.”

He refers to **Matthew 3 (NASB):11** “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

He continues, “You have already heard much on this point, beloved: let us look to what follows; for it is somewhat hard to understand. But as John himself says, that “no man can receive anything, except it be given him from heaven,” whatever we shall not have understood, let us ask Him who gives from heaven: for we are men, and cannot receive anything, except He, who is not man, give it us.”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):27** John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

3. Now this is what follows: and John says, “This my joy therefore is fulfilled.” What is his joy? To rejoice at the Bridegroom’s voice. It is fulfilled in me, I have my grace; more I do not assume to myself, lest also I lose what I have received. What is this joy? “With joy rejoiceth for the Bridegroom’s voice.” A man may understand, then, that he ought not to rejoice of his own wisdom, but of the wisdom which he has received from God. Let him ask nothing more, and he loses not what he found. For many, in that they affirmed themselves to be wise, became fools. The apostle convicts them, and says of them, “Because that which is known of God is manifest to them; for God has showed it unto them.” Hear ye what he says of certain unthankful, ungodly men: “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are seen, being understood by the things that are made, His eternal power likewise, and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” Why without excuse? “Because, knowing God” (he said not, “because they knew Him not”), “they glorified Him not as God, nor were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened: professing themselves to be

wise, they became fools.” (Romans 1:19-22) If they had known God, they had known at the same time that God, and none other, had made them wise; and they would not then attribute to themselves that which they did not have from themselves, but to Him from whom they had received it. But by their unthankfulness they became fools. Therefore, what God gave freely, He took from the unthankful. John would not be this; he would be thankful: he confessed to have received, and declared that he rejoiced for the Bridegroom’s voice, saying, “Therefore this my joy is fulfilled.”

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Now this is what follows: and John says, “This my joy therefore is fulfilled.””

He refers in context to **John 3 (KJV):**27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. 29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

He continues, “What is his joy? To rejoice at the Bridegroom’s voice. It is fulfilled in me, I have my grace; more I do not assume to myself, lest also I lose what I have received.”

Here Augustine confirms his thinking, in that he said, if we do not abide in his grace, we will not stand, or we will lose what we have received, as he says here.

He continues, “What is this joy? “With joy rejoiceth for the Bridegroom’s voice.” A man may understand, then, that he ought not to rejoice of his own wisdom, but of the wisdom which he has received from God. Let him ask nothing more, and he loses not what he found.”

Again he implies that we can lose God’s grace, by which we are saved.

He continues, “For many, in that they affirmed themselves to be wise, became fools. The apostle convicts them, and says of them, “Because that which is known of God is manifest to them; for God has showed it unto them.” Hear ye what he says of certain unthankful, ungodly men: “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are seen, being understood by the things that are made, His eternal power likewise, and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” Why without excuse? “Because, knowing God” (he said not, “because they knew Him not”), “they glorified Him not as God, nor were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened: professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” (Romans 1:19-22)”

He refers in context to **Romans 1 (KJV):**17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Paul is not talking about believers who have lost grace here. The truth about God is “clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse”, as in verse 20 above. In verse 18 above we read that they “hold the truth in unrighteousness”. That is, the truth about God is clearly seen in the creation, but they refuse to acknowledge it.

Paul continues in **Romans 1 (KJV)**: 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

This is an indictment of the human race.

Augustine continues, “If they had known God, they had known at the same time that God, and none other, had made them wise; and they would not then attribute to themselves that which they did not have from themselves, but to Him from whom they had received it. But by their unthankfulness they became fools. Therefore, what God gave freely, He took from the unthankful. John would not be this; he would be thankful: he confessed to have received, and declared that he rejoiced for the Bridegroom’s voice, saying, “Therefore this my joy is fulfilled.””

Augustine misunderstood what Paul was saying in Romans. Paul is describing the general condition of the unsaved. He is not describing someone who has lost the grace that he has received when he accepts Christ.

## **Forsaking the Church**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine**

**First Epistle of John, Homily I. 1 John I. 1–II. 11, paragraph 12, page 466-467**

12. “He that loveth his brother abideth (*manet*) in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.” (1 John 2:10) —I beseech you by Christ: God is feeding us, we are about to refresh our bodies in the name of Christ; they both are in some good measure refreshed, and are to be refreshed: let the mind be fed. Not that I am going to speak for a long time, do I say this; for behold, the lesson is now coming to an end: but lest haply of weariness we should hear less attentively than we ought that which is most necessary.—“He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no scandal,” or “none occasion of stumbling, in him.” Who are they that

take scandal or make scandal? They that are offended in Christ, and in the Church. They that are offended in Christ, are as if burnt by the sun, those in the Church as by the moon. **But the Psalm saith, “The sun shall not burn thee by day, neither the moon by night: (Psalm 121:6) i.e., if thou hold fast charity, neither in Christ shalt thou have occasion of falling, nor in the Church; neither Christ shalt thou forsake, nor the Church. For he that forsakes the Church, how is he in Christ who is not in the members of Christ? How is he in Christ who is not in the body of Christ? Those therefore take scandal, or, occasion of falling, who forsake Christ or the Church.** Whence do we understand that the Psalm in saying, “By day shall the sun not burn thee, nor the moon by night,” saith it of this, that the burning means scandal, or occasion of stumbling? In the first place mark the similitude itself. Just as the person whom something is burning saith, I cannot bear it, I cannot away with it, and draws back; so those persons who cannot bear some things in the Church, and withdraw themselves either from the name of Christ or from the Church, are taking scandal. For see how those took scandal as from the sun, those carnal ones to whom Christ preached of His flesh, saying, “He that eateth not the flesh of the Son of Man and drinketh His blood, shall have no life in him.” (John 6:54-69) Some seventy persons said, “This is an hard saying,” and went back from Him, and there remained the twelve. All those the sun burnt, and they went back, not being able to bear the force of the Word. There remained therefore the twelve. And lest haply men should imagine that they confer a benefit upon Christ by believing on Christ, and not that the benefit is conferred by Him upon them; when the twelve were left, the Lord said to them, “Will ye also go?” That ye may know that I am necessary to you, not ye to me. But those whom the sun had not burnt, answered by the voice of Peter: “Lord, Thou hast the word of eternal life; whither shall we go?” But who are they that the Church as the moon burneth by night? They that have made schisms. Hear the very word used in the apostle: “Who is offended, and I burn not?” (2 Corinthians 11:29) In what sense then is it, that there is no scandal or occasion of stumbling in him that loveth his brother? Because he that loveth his brother, beareth all things for unity’s sake; because it is in the unity of charity that brotherly love exists. Some one, I know not who, offendeth thee: whether it be a bad man, or as thou supposest a bad man, or as thou pretendest a bad man: and dost thou desert so many good men? What sort of brotherly love is that which hath appeared in these (Donatist) persons? While they accuse the Africans, they have deserted the whole world! What, were there no saints in the whole world? Or was it possible they should be condemned by you unheard? But oh! if ye loved your brethren, there would be none occasion of stumbling in you. Hear thou the Psalm, what it saith: “Great peace have they that love Thy law, and there is to them none occasion of stumbling.” (Psalm 119:165) Great peace it saith there is for them that love the law of God, and that is why there is to them none occasion of stumbling. Those then who take scandal, or, occasion of stumbling, destroy peace. And of whom saith he that they take not and make not occasion of stumbling? They that love God’s law. Consequently they are in charity. But some man will say, “He said it of them that love God’s law, not of the brethren.” Hear thou what the Lord saith: “A new commandment give I unto you that ye love one another.” (John 13:34) What is the Law but commandment? Moreover, how is it they do not take occasion of stumbling, but because they forbear one another? As Paul saith, “Forbearing one another in love, studying to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4:2-3) And to show that this is the law of Christ, hear the same apostle commending this very law. “Bear ye one another’s burdens,” saith he, “and so shall ye fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““He that loveth his brother abideth (*manet*) in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.” (1 John 2:10)”

He refers to **1 John 2 (KJV):10** He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

The word “stumbling” in the Greek is **σκάνδαλον** (pronounced skan'-dal-on); ("scandal"); probably from a derivative of G2578; a trap-stick (bent sapling), i.e. snare (figuratively, cause of displeasure or sin):—occasion to fall (of stumbling), offence, thing that offends, stumblingblock.

He continues, “—I beseech you by Christ: God is feeding us, we are about to refresh our bodies in the name of Christ; they both are in some good measure refreshed, and are to be refreshed: let the mind be fed. Not that I am going to speak for a long time, do I say this; for behold, the lesson is now coming to an end: but lest haply of weariness we should hear less attentively than we ought that which is most necessary.—“He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no scandal,” or “none occasion of stumbling, in him.” Who are they that take scandal or make scandal? They that are offended in Christ, and in the Church. They that are offended in Christ, are as if burnt by the sun, those in the Church as by the moon. **But the Psalm saith, “The sun shall not burn thee by day, neither the moon by night: (Psalm 121:6)”**

He refers to **Psalm 121 (KJV):6** The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

He continues, “i.e., if thou hold fast charity, neither in Christ shalt thou have occasion of falling, nor in the Church; neither Christ shalt thou forsake, nor the Church. For he that forsakes the Church, how is he in Christ who is not in the members of Christ? How is he in Christ who is not in the body of Christ? Those therefore take scandal, or, occasion of falling, who forsake Christ or the Church.”

However, Augustine did not understand that when we accept Christ and we are born again, we are sovereignly baptized “by one Spirit” into the body of Christ as we read in context in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):12** For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many.

Not only so, but we are set in a particular place by God as we read in context in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):15** If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where were the body? 20 But now are they many members, yet but one body.

So the body is made up of ears, eyes, noses, and so forth, relating to our function in the body. But God has set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. That is, God has sovereignly decided where each member will be in the body of Christ, and where He sets us is related to our individuality and the function that we will perform.

We read also in **Romans 12 (KJV):3** For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to



think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

God has given each member the measure of faith. And the word office relates to our function as it is so translated in **Romans 12 (NASB)**:4 For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function...

We continue to read in **Romans 12 (KJV)**:5 So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

We each have different gifts “according to the grace that is given to us”, as in verse 6 above. These relate to our function in the body of Christ, that is, our ministry gift.

These ministry gifts are also mentioned in **Ephesians 4 (KJV)**:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; 15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

The body makes increase “unto the edifying of itself in love”, which is “according to the effectual working in the measure of every part”. If we do not perform our function, which we have been given by God, we will be disciplined by our Father. But He will not sever us from His body. Discipline could include physical death as with the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV)**:28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Augustine continues, “Whence do we understand that the Psalm in saying, “By day shall the sun not burn thee, nor the moon by night,” saith it of this, that the burning means scandal, or occasion of stumbling? In the first place mark the similitude itself. Just as the person whom something is burning saith, I cannot bear it, I cannot away with it, and draws back; so those persons who cannot bear some things in the Church, and withdraw themselves either from the name of Christ or from the Church, are taking scandal.”

Remember, his definition of one taking scandal was defined when, as he said above,

“Who are they that take scandal or make scandal? They that are offended in Christ, and in the Church. They that are offended in Christ, are as if burnt by the sun, those in the Church as by the moon.”

His reference is to **Psalms 121 (KJV):6** The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

He continues, “For see how those took scandal as from the sun, those carnal ones to whom Christ preached of His flesh, saying, “He that eateth not the flesh of the Son of Man and drinketh His blood, shall have no life in him.” (John 6:54-69) Some seventy persons said, “This is an hard saying,” and went back from Him, and there remained the twelve.”

He refers in context to **John 6 (KJV):54** Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. 59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. 60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. 64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. 66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

The number “seventy” is not found in this Scripture. But there were some that did not believe, as in verse 64, and there were many of His disciples that “went back, and walked no more with him”, in verse 66. Augustine is referring to verse 61 above when he speaks of those “offended in Christ”.

Augustine continues, “All those the sun burnt, and they went back, not being able to bear the force of the Word. There remained therefore the twelve. And lest haply men should imagine that they confer a benefit upon Christ by believing on Christ, and not that the benefit is conferred by Him upon them; when the twelve were left, the Lord said to them, “Will ye also go?” That ye may know that I am necessary to you, not ye to me. But those whom the sun had not burnt, answered by the voice of Peter: “Lord, Thou hast the word of eternal life; whither shall we go?””

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):67** Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. 69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. 70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 71 He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

He continues, “But who are they that the Church as the moon burneth by night? They that have made schisms. Hear the very word used in the apostle: “Who is offended, and I burn not?” (2 Corinthians 11:29)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):29** Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is

offended, and I burn not?

He continues, "In what sense then is it, that there is no scandal or occasion of stumbling in him that loveth his brother? Because he that loveth his brother, beareth all things for unity's sake; because it is in the unity of charity that brotherly love exists. Some one, I know not who, offendeth thee: whether it be a bad man, or as thou supposest a bad man, or as thou pretendest a bad man: and dost thou desert so many good men? What sort of brotherly love is that which hath appeared in these (Donatist) persons? While they accuse the Africans, they have deserted the whole world! What, were there no saints in the whole world? Or was it possible they should be condemned by you unheard? But oh! if ye loved your brethren, there would be none occasion of stumbling in you. Hear thou the Psalm, what it saith: "Great peace have they that love Thy law, and there is to them none occasion of stumbling." (Psalm 119:165)"

He refers to **Psalm 118 (Doauy Rheims):165** Much peace have they that love thy law, and to them there is no stumbling block.

And to **Psalm 119 (KJV):165** Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

He continues, "Great peace it saith there is for them that love the law of God, and that is why there is to them none occasion of stumbling. Those then who take scandal, or, occasion of stumbling, destroy peace. And of whom saith he that they take not and make not occasion of stumbling? They that love God's law. Consequently they are in charity. But some man will say, "He said it of them that love God's law, not of the brethren." Hear thou what the Lord saith: "A new commandment give I unto you that ye love one another." (John 13:34)"

He refers in context to **John 13 (KJV):34** A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

He continues, "What is the Law but commandment? Moreover, how is it they do not take occasion of stumbling, but because they forbear one another? As Paul saith, "Forbearing one another in love, studying to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:2-3)"

He refers in context to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):1** I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

He continues, "And to show that this is the law of Christ, hear the same apostle commending this very law. "Bear ye one another's burdens," saith he, "and so shall ye fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)"

He refers in context to **Galatians 6 (KJV):1** Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

His encouragement to love one another is good, but he exceeds the Scripture when he says that one who does not fellowship with a particular church, or even any church, loses his place in Christ which, in his mind, is equivalent to losing one's salvation.

11. “Beloved, believe not every spirit.” (1 John 4:1) Because he had said, “In this we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.” But how this same Spirit is known, mark this: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they be from God.” And who is he that proves the spirits? A hard matter has he put to us, my brethren! It is well for us that he should tell us himself how we are to discern them. He is about to tell us: fear not: but first see; mark: see that hereby is expressed the very thing that vain heretics (Donatists) taunt us withal. Mark, see what he says, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they be from God.” The Holy Spirit is spoken of in the Gospel by the name of water; where the Lord “cried and said, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:37-39) But the evangelist has expounded of what He said this: for he goes on to say, “But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him should receive.” Wherefore did not the Lord baptize many? But what saith he? “For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” Then seeing those had baptism, and had not yet received the Holy Ghost, whom on the day of Pentecost the Lord sent from heaven, the glorifying of the Lord was first waited for, so that the Spirit might be given. Even before He was glorified, and before He sent the Spirit, He yet invited men to prepare themselves for the receiving of the water of which He said, “Whoso thirsteth, let him come and drink;” and, “He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” What meaneth, “Rivers of living water”? What is that water? Let no man ask me; ask the Gospel. “But this,” saith it, “He said of the Spirit, which they should receive that should believe on Him.” Consequently, the water of the sacrament is one thing: another, the water which betokens the Spirit of God. The water of the sacrament is visible: the water of the Spirit invisible. That washes the body, and betokens that which is done in the soul. By this Spirit the soul itself is cleansed and fed. **This is the Spirit of God, which heretics and all that cut themselves off from the Church, cannot have. And whosoever do not openly cut themselves off, but by iniquity are cut off, and being within, whirl about as chaff and are not grain; these have not this Spirit.** This Spirit is denoted by the Lord under the name of water: and we have heard from this epistle, “Believe not every spirit;” and those words of Solomon bear witness, “From strange water keep thee far.” (Proverbs 9:18) What meaneth, “water”? Spirit. Does water always signify spirit? Not always: but in some places it signifies the Spirit, in some places it signifies baptism, in some places signifies peoples, (Revelation 17:15) in some places signifies counsel: thus thou findest it said in a certain place, “Counsel is a fountain of life to them that possess it.” (Proverbs 16:22) So then, in divers places of the Scriptures, the term “water” signifies divers things. Now however by the term water ye have heard the Holy Spirit spoken of, not by an interpretation of ours but by witness of the Gospel, where it saith, “But this said He of the Spirit, which they should receive that should believe on Him.” If then by the name of water is signified the Holy Spirit, and this epistle saith to us, “Believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they be of God;” let us understand that of this it is said, “From strange water keep thee far, and from a strange fountain drink thou not.” (Proverbs 9:18 Septuagint) What meaneth, “From a strange fountain drink thou not”? A strange spirit believe thou not.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Beloved, believe not every spirit.” (1 John 4:1) Because he had said, “In this we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.” But how this same Spirit is known, mark this: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they be from God.””

He refers to **1 John 4 (KJV):1** Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

He continues, “And who is he that proves the spirits? A hard matter has he put to us, my brethren! It is well for us that he should tell us himself how we are to discern them. He is about to tell us: fear not: but first see; mark: see that hereby is expressed the very thing that vain heretics (Donatists) taunt us withal. Mark, see what he says, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they be from God.” The Holy Spirit is spoken of in the Gospel by the name of water; where the Lord “cried and said, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:37-39)”

He refers in context to **John 7 (KJV):37** In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

He continues, “But the evangelist has expounded of what He said this: for he goes on to say, “But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him should receive.” Wherefore did not the Lord baptize many? But what saith he? “For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” Then seeing those had baptism, and had not yet received the Holy Ghost, whom on the day of Pentecost the Lord sent from heaven, the glorifying of the Lord was first waited for, so that the Spirit might be given. Even before He was glorified, and before He sent the Spirit, He yet invited men to prepare themselves for the receiving of the water of which He said, “Whoso thirsteth, let him come and drink;” and, “He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” What meaneth, “Rivers of living water”? What is that water? Let no man ask me; ask the Gospel. “But this,” saith it, “He said of the Spirit, which they should receive that should believe on Him.” Consequently, the water of the sacrament is one thing: another, the water which betokens the Spirit of God. The water of the sacrament is visible: the water of the Spirit invisible.”

By sacrament, he is referring to water baptism.

He continues, “That washes the body, and betokens that which is done in the soul. By this Spirit the soul itself is cleansed and fed. **This is the Spirit of God, which heretics and all that cut themselves off from the Church, cannot have. And whosoever do not openly cut themselves off, but by iniquity are cut off, and being within, whirl about as chaff and are not grain; these have not this Spirit.**”

Augustine is making it a requirement to belong to the Catholic Church in order to be saved, for if you do not have the Spirit of God, you are none of His as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):9** But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

According to Augustine, if you are cut off from the Church, you cannot have the Spirit of



God. But fellowship with any particular church does not save us. It is our faith in Jesus Christ that saves us, and that is also how we are born again. The Spirit of God is then the life of our spirit because we are born of the Spirit of God. So we have the Spirit then, who also makes us a member of the body of Christ, the Church, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Augustine continues, “This Spirit is denoted by the Lord under the name of water: and we have heard from this epistle, “Believe not every spirit;” and those words of Solomon bear witness, “From strange water keep thee far.” (Proverbs 9:18)”

He refers in context to **Proverbs 9 (Septuagint):13** A foolish and bold woman, who knows not modesty, comes to want a morsel. 14 She sits at the doors of her house, on a seat openly in the streets, 15 calling to passers by, and to those that are going right on their ways; 16 saying, Whoso is most senseless of you, let him turn aside to me; and I exhort those that want prudence, saying, 17 Take and enjoy secret bread, and the sweet water of theft. 18 But he knows that mighty men die by her, and he falls in with a snare of hell. But hasten away, delay not in the place, neither fix thine eye upon her: for thus shalt thou go through strange water; but do thou abstain from strange water, and drink not of a strange fountain, that thou mayest live long, and years of life may be added to thee.

He continues, “What meaneth, “water”? Spirit. Does water always signify spirit? Not always: but in some places it signifies the Spirit, in some places it signifies baptism, in some places signifies peoples, (Revelation 17:15) in some places signifies counsel: thus thou findest it said in a certain place, “Counsel is a fountain of life to them that possess it.” (Proverbs 16:22)”

He refers to **Revelation 17 (KJV):15** And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

And to **Proverbs 16 (KJV):22** Understanding is a wellspring of life unto him that hath it: but the instruction of fools is folly.

He continues, “So then, in divers places of the Scriptures, the term “water” signifies divers things. Now however by the term water ye have heard the Holy Spirit spoken of, not by an interpretation of ours but by witness of the Gospel, where it saith, “But this said He of the Spirit, which they should receive that should believe on Him.” If then by the name of water is signified the Holy Spirit, and this epistle saith to us, “Believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they be of God;” let us understand that of this it is said, “From strange water keep thee far, and from a strange fountain drink thou not.” (Proverbs 9:18 Septuagint) What meaneth, “From a strange fountain drink thou not”? A strange spirit believe thou not.”

He continues in the next paragraph.

12. There remains then the test by which it is to be proved to be the Spirit of God. He has indeed set down a sign, and this, belike, difficult: let us see, however. We are to recur to that charity; it is that which teacheth us, because it is the unction. However, what saith he here? “Prove the spirits, whether they be from God: because many false prophets have gone out into this world.” Now there are all heretics and all schismatics. How then am I to prove the spirit? He goes on: “In this is known (1 John 4:2) the Spirit of God.” Wake up the ears of your heart. We were at a loss; we were saying, Who knows? Who discerns? Behold, he is about to tell the sign. “Hereby is known the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come

in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the antichrist, of whom ye have heard that he should come; and even now already is he in this world.” (1 John 4:2-3) Our ears, so to say, are on the alert for discerning of the spirits; and we have been told something, such that thereby we discern not a whit the more. For what saith he? “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ came in the flesh, is of God.” Then is the spirit that is among the heretics, of God, seeing they “confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh”? Aye, here perchance they lift themselves up against us, and say: Ye have not the Spirit from God; but we confess “that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.” but the apostle here hath said that those have not the Spirit of God, who confess not “that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.” Ask the Arians: they confess “that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.” ask the Eunomians; they confess “that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.” ask the Macedonians; they confess “that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.” put the question to the Cataphryges; they confess “that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.” put it to the Novatians; they confess “that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.” Then have all these heresies the Spirit of God? Are they then no false prophets? Is there then no deception there, no seduction there? Assuredly they are antichrists; for “they went out from us, but were not of us.”

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “There remains then the test by which it is to be proved to be the Spirit of God. He has indeed set down a sign, and this, belike, difficult: let us see, however. We are to recur to that charity; it is that which teacheth us, because it is the unction.”

He refers to **1 John 2 (KJV):27** But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

He continues, “However, what saith he here? “Prove the spirits, whether they be from God: because many false prophets have gone out into this world.” Now there are all heretics and all schismatics. How then am I to prove the spirit? He goes on: “In this is known (1 John 4:2) the Spirit of God.”

He refers to **1 John 4 (KJV):2** Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

He continues, “Wake up the ears of your heart. We were at a loss; we were saying, Who knows? Who discerns? Behold, he is about to tell the sign. “Hereby is known the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the antichrist, of whom ye have heard that he should come; and even now already is he in this world.” (1 John 4:2-3)”

He refers to **1 John 4 (KJV):2** Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

He continues, “Our ears, so to say, are on the alert for discerning of the spirits; and we have been told something, such that thereby we discern not a whit the more. For what saith he? “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ came in the flesh, is of God.” Then is the spirit that is among the heretics, of God, seeing they “confess that Jesus Christ came in the flesh”?

Aye, here perchance they lift themselves up against us, and say: Ye have not the Spirit from God; but we confess “that Jesus Christ came in the flesh:” but the apostle here hath said that those have not the Spirit of God, who confess not “that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.” Ask the Arians: they confess “that Jesus Christ came in the flesh:” ask the Eunomians; they confess “that Jesus Christ came in the flesh:” ask the Macedonians; they confess “that Jesus Christ came in the flesh:” put the question to the Cataphryges; they confess “that Jesus Christ came in the flesh:” put it to the Novatians; they confess “that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.” Then have all these heresies the Spirit of God? Are they then no false prophets? Is there then no deception there, no seduction there? Assuredly they are antichrists; for “they went out from us, but were not of us.”

He continues in the next paragraph.

13. What are we to do then? By what to discern them? Be very attentive; let us go together in heart, and knock. Charity herself keeps watch; for it is none other than she that shall knock, she also that shall open: anon ye shall understand in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Already ye have heard that it was said above, “Whoso denieth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, the same is an antichrist.” There also we asked, Who denies? because neither do we deny, nor do those deny. And we found that some do in their deeds deny; and we brought testimony from the apostle, who saith, “For they confess that they know God, but in their deeds deny Him.” (Titus 1:16) Thus then let us now also make the enquiry in the deeds not in the tongue. What is the spirit that is not from God? That “which denieth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.” And what is the spirit that is from God? That “which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.” Who is he that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh? Now, brethren, to the mark! Let us look to the works, not stop at the noise of the tongue. Let us ask why Christ came in the flesh, so we get at the persons who deny that He is come in the flesh. If thou stop at tongues, why, thou shalt hear many a heresy confessing that Christ is come in the flesh: but the truth convicteth those men. Wherefore came Christ in the flesh? Was He not God? Is it not written of Him, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God?” (John 1:1) Was it not He that did feed angels, is it not He that doth feed angels? Did He not in such sort come hither, that He departed not thence? Did He not in such sort ascend, that He forsook not us? Wherefore then came He in the flesh? Because it behooved us to have the hope of resurrection shown unto us. God He was, and in flesh He came; for God could not die, flesh could die; He came then in the flesh, that He might die for us. But how died He for us? “Greater charity than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13) Charity therefore brought Him to the flesh. Whoever therefore has not charity denies that Christ is come in the flesh. Here then do thou now question all heretics. Did Christ come in the flesh? “He did come; this I believe, this I confess.” Nay, this thou deniest. “How do I deny? Thou hearest that I say it!” Nay, I convict thee of denying it. Thou sayest with the voice, deniest with the heart; sayest in words, deniest in deeds. “How,” sayest thou, “do I deny in deeds?” Because the end for which Christ came in the flesh, was, that He might die for us. He died for us, because therein He taught much charity. “Greater charity than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Thou hast not charity, seeing thou for thine own honor dividest unity. Therefore by this understand ye the spirit that is from God. Give the earthen vessels a tap, put them to the proof, whether haply they be cracked and give a dull sound: see

whether they ring full and clear, see whether charity be there. Thou takest thyself away from the unity of the whole earth, thou dividest the Church by schisms, thou rendest the Body of Christ. He came in the flesh, to gather in one, thou makest an outcry to scatter abroad. This then is the Spirit of God, which saith that Jesus is come in the flesh, which saith, not in tongue but in deeds, which saith, not by making a noise but by loving. And that spirit is not of God, which denies that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; denies, here also, not in tongue but in life; not in words but in deeds. It is manifest therefore by what we may know the brethren. Many within are in a sort within; but none without except he be indeed without.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “What are we to do then? By what to discern them? Be very attentive; let us go together in heart, and knock. Charity herself keeps watch; for it is none other than she that shall knock, she also that shall open: anon ye shall understand in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Already ye have heard that it was said above, “Whoso denieth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, the same is an antichrist.” There also we asked, Who denies? Because neither do we deny, nor do those deny. And we found that some do in their deeds deny; and we brought testimony from the apostle, who saith, “For they confess that they know God, but in their deeds deny Him.” (Titus 1:16)”

He refers to **Titus 1 (KJV):16** They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

He continues, “Thus then let us now also make the enquiry in the deeds not in the tongue. What is the spirit that is not from God? That “which denieth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.” And what is the spirit that is from God? That “which confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.” Who is he that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh? Now, brethren, to the mark! Let us look to the works, not stop at the noise of the tongue. Let us ask why Christ came in the flesh, so we get at the persons who deny that He is come in the flesh. If thou stop at tongues, why, thou shalt hear many a heresy confessing that Christ is come in the flesh: but the truth convicteth those men. Wherefore came Christ in the flesh? Was He not God? Is it not written of Him, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God?” (John 1:1)”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He continues, “Was it not He that did feed angels, is it not He that doth feed angels? Did He not in such sort come hither, that He departed not thence? Did He not in such sort ascend, that He forsook not us? Wherefore then came He in the flesh? Because it behooved us to have the hope of resurrection shown unto us. God He was, and in flesh He came; for God could not die, flesh could die; He came then in the flesh, that He might die for us. But how died He for us? “Greater charity than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)”

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):13** Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

He continues, “Charity therefore brought Him to the flesh. Whoever therefore has not charity denies that Christ is come in the flesh. Here then do thou now question all heretics. Did Christ come in the flesh? “He did come; this I believe, this I confess.” Nay, this thou deniest. “How do I deny? Thou hearest that I say it!” Nay, I convict thee of denying it. Thou sayest with

the voice, deniest with the heart; sayest in words, deniest in deeds. “How,” sayest thou, “do I deny in deeds?” Because the end for which Christ came in the flesh, was, that He might die for us. He died for us, because therein He taught much charity. “Greater charity than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Thou hast not charity, seeing thou for thine own honor dividest unity. Therefore by this understand ye the spirit that is from God. Give the earthen vessels a tap, put them to the proof, whether haply they be cracked and give a dull sound: see whether they ring full and clear, see whether charity be there. Thou takest thyself away from the unity of the whole earth, thou dividest the Church by schisms, thou rendest the Body of Christ. He came in the flesh, to gather in one, thou makest an outcry to scatter abroad. This then is the Spirit of God, which saith that Jesus is come in the flesh, which saith, not in tongue but in deeds, which saith, not by making a noise but by loving. And that spirit is not of God, which denies that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; denies, here also, not in tongue but in life; not in words but in deeds. It is manifest therefore by what we may know the brethren. Many within are in a sort within; but none without except he be indeed without.”

So when one leaves the Catholic Church, they are causing a schism, and they are dividing unity, and they have no charity. Let us continue to read Augustine in the next paragraph.

14. Nay, and that ye may know that he has referred the matter to deeds, he saith, “And every spirit, *qui solvit Christum*, which does away with Christ that He came in the flesh, is not of God.” A doing away in deeds is meant. What has he shown thee? “That denieth.” in that he saith, “doeth away” (or, “unmaketh”). He came to gather in one, thou comest to unmake. Thou wouldest pull Christ’s members asunder. How can it be said that thou deniest not that Christ is come in the flesh, who rendest assunder the Church of God which He hath gathered together? Therefore thou goest against Christ; thou art an antichrist. Be thou within, or be thou without, thou art an antichrist: only, when thou art within, thou art hidden; when thou art without, thou art made manifest. Thou unmakest Jesus and deniest that He came in the flesh; thou art not of God. Therefore He saith in the Gospel: “Whoso shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:19) What is this breaking? What this teaching? A breaking in the deeds and a teaching as it were in words. “Thou that preachest men should not steal, dost thou steal?” (Romans 2:21) Therefore he that steals breaks or undoes the commandment in his deed, and as it were teaches so: “he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven,” i.e. in the Church of this present time. Of him it is said, “What they say do ye; but what they do, that do not ye. (Matthew 23:3) But he that shall do, and shall teach so, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” From this, that He has here said, *fecerit*, “shall do,” while in opposition to this He has there said *solverit*, meaning *non fecerit*, “shall not do, and shall teach so”—to break, then, is, not to do—what doth He teach us, but that we should interrogate men’s deeds, not take their words upon trust? The obscurity of the things compels us to speak much at length, chiefly that that which the Lord deigns to reveal may be brought within reach even of the brethren of slower understanding, because all were bought by the blood of Christ. And I am afraid the epistle itself will not be finished during these days as I promised: but as the Lord will, it is better to reserve the remainder, than to overload your hearts with too much food.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Nay, and that ye may know that he has



referred the matter to deeds, he saith, “And every spirit, *qui solvit Christum*, which does away with Christ that He came in the flesh, is not of God.” A doing away in deeds is meant. What has he shown thee? “That denieth:” in that he saith, “doeth away” (or, “unmaketh”). He came to gather in one, thou comest to unmake. Thou wouldest pull Christ’s members asunder. How can it be said that thou deniest not that Christ is come in the flesh, who rendest assunder the Church of God which He hath gathered together? Therefore thou goest against Christ; thou art an antichrist. Be thou within, or be thou without, thou art an antichrist: only, when thou art within, thou art hidden; when thou art without, thou art made manifest. Thou unmakest Jesus and deniest that He came in the flesh; thou art not of God. Therefore He saith in the Gospel: “Whoso shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:19)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):19** Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

He continues, “What is this breaking? What this teaching? A breaking in the deeds and a teaching as it were in words. “Thou that preachest men should not steal, dost thou steal?” (Romans 2:21)”

He refers to **Romans 2 (KJV):21** Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

He continues, “Therefore he that steals breaks or undoes the commandment in his deed, and as it were teaches so: “he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven,” i.e. in the Church of this present time. Of him it is said, “What they say do ye; but what they do, that do not ye. (Matthew 23:3)”

He refers to **Matthew 23 (KJV):3** All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

He continues, “But he that shall do, and shall teach so, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):19** Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

He continues, “From this, that He has here said, *fecerit*, “shall do,” while in opposition to this He has there said *solverit*, meaning *non fecerit*, “shall not do, and shall teach so”—to break, then, is, not to do—what doth He teach us, but that we should interrogate men’s deeds, not take their words upon trust? The obscurity of the things compels us to speak much at length, chiefly that that which the Lord deigns to reveal may be brought within reach even of the brethren of slower understanding, because all were bought by the blood of Christ. And I am afraid the epistle itself will not be finished during these days as I promised: but as the Lord will, it is better to reserve the remainder, than to overload your hearts with too much food.”

There were many heresies in Augustine’s time. But the Catholic Church itself in the time of Augustine was not free from tradition, and error. The most potent defense against heresy is the inspired word of God as we read in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):16** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

There is no need for us to rely on a church for the truth, for each believer has the Holy Spirit as his or her anointing as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):27** But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

To get good doctrine, that is, Biblical truth, we must study as Paul encourages in **2 Timothy 2 (KJV):15** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

We must walk in the light as Jesus taught in **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

We must be doers of the word and not hearers only. If we continue in His word, we will know the truth. We must seek the wisdom that is from above as James encourages in **James 3 (KJV):17** But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

And we must let the peace of God reign in our hearts as we read in **Philippians 4 (KJV):6** And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine**

#### **First Epistle of John, Homily X. 1 John V. 1–3, paragraph 8, page 524-525**

8. Let us run then, my brethren, let us run, and love Christ. What Christ? Jesus Christ. Who is He? The Word of God. And how came He to the sick? “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt in us.” (John 1:14) It is complete then, which the Scripture foretold, “Christ must suffer, and rise again the third day from the dead.” (Luke 24:46) His body, where is it? His members, where toil they? Where must thou be, that thou mayest be under thine Head? “And that repentance and remission of sins be preached in His name through all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:47) There let thy charity be spread abroad. Christ saith, and the Psalm, *i.e.* the Spirit of God, “Thy commandment is exceeding broad:” and forsooth some man will have charity to be confined to Africa! Extend thy charity over the whole earth if thou wilt love Christ, for Christ’s members are over all the earth. If thou lovest but a part, thou art divided: if thou art divided, thou art not in the body; if thou art not in the body, thou art not under the Head. What profiteth it thee that thou believest and blasphemest? Thou adorest Him in the Head, blasphemest Him in the Body. He loves His Body. If thou hast cut thyself off from His Body, the Head hath not cut itself off from its Body. To no purpose dost thou honor me, cries thine Head to thee from on high, to no purpose dost thou honor me. It is all one as if a man would kiss thine head and tread upon thy feet: perchance with nailed boots he would crush thy feet, while he will clasp thy head and kiss it: wouldest thou not cry out in the midst of the words with which he honors thee, and say, What art thou doing, man? Thou treadest on me. Thou wouldest not mean, Thou treadest on my head; for the head he honored; but more would the head cry out for the members trodden upon, than for itself because it was honored. Does not the head itself cry out, I will none of thine honor; do not tread on me? Now say if thou canst, How

have I trodden upon thee? Say that to the head: I wanted to kiss thee, I wanted to embrace thee. But seest thou not, O fool, that what thou wouldest embrace does in virtue of a certain unity, which knits the whole frame together, reach to that which thou treadest upon? Above thou honorest me, beneath thou treadest upon me. That on which thou treadest pains more than that which thou honorest rejoiceth. In what sort does the tongue cry out? "It hurts me." It saith not, "It hurts my foot," but, "It hurts me," saith it. O tongue, who has touched thee? Who has struck? Who has goaded? Who has pricked? No man, but I am knit together with the parts that are trodden upon. How wouldest thou have me not be pained, when I am not separate?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "Let us run then, my brethren, let us run, and love Christ. What Christ? Jesus Christ. Who is He? The Word of God. And how came He to the sick? "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt in us." (John 1:14)"

He refers to John 1 (KJV):14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

He continues, "It is complete then, which the Scripture foretold, "Christ must suffer, and rise again the third day from the dead." (Luke 24:46)"

He refers to Luke 24 (KJV):46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

He continues, "His body, where is it? His members, where toil they? Where must thou be, that thou mayest be under thine Head? "And that repentance and remission of sins be preached in His name through all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:47)"

He refers to Luke 24 (KJV):47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

He continues, "There let thy charity be spread abroad. Christ saith, and the Psalm, i.e. the Spirit of God, "Thy commandment is exceeding broad:" and forsooth some man will have charity to be confined to Africa!"

He refers to Psalm 119 (KJV):96 I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad.

He continues, "Extend thy charity over the whole earth if thou wilt love Christ, for Christ's members are over all the earth. If thou lovest but a part, thou art divided: if thou art divided, thou art not in the body; if thou art not in the body, thou art not under the Head. What profiteth it thee that thou believest and blasphemest? Thou adorest Him in the Head, blasphemest Him in the Body. He loves His Body. If thou hast cut thyself off from His Body, the Head hath not cut itself off from its Body."

Augustine is very logical here, but there is no basis in Scripture for his assertions. We are made a part of the body of Christ when we believe, and we are born again. We are then justified by God, as we read in Romans 5 (NASB):1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

And we have been adopted into the family of God as we read in Galatians 4 (KJV):5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

And we have been baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit, as we read in 1

**Corinthians 12 (NASB):**13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

My standing and my sonship does not depend on anyone else's faith. I am a part of the body of Christ because God made me a member when I believed in Jesus Christ. It is by my faith that I was born again, and that makes me a member of the body of Christ.

He continues, "To no purpose dost thou honor me, cries thine Head to thee from on high, to no purpose dost thou honor me. It is all one as if a man would kiss thine head and tread upon thy feet: perchance with nailed boots he would crush thy feet, while he will clasp thy head and kiss it: wouldest thou not cry out in the midst of the words with which he honors thee, and say, What art thou doing, man? Thou treadest on me. Thou wouldest not mean, Thou treadest on my head; for the head he honored; but more would the head cry out for the members trodden upon, than for itself because it was honored. Does not the head itself cry out, I will none of thine honor; do not tread on me? Now say if thou canst, How have I trodden upon thee? Say that to the head: I wanted to kiss thee, I wanted to embrace thee. But seest thou not, O fool, that what thou wouldest embrace does in virtue of a certain unity, which knits the whole frame together, reach to that which thou treadest upon? Above thou honorest me, beneath thou treadest upon me. That on which thou treadest pains more than that which thou honorest rejoiceth. In what sort does the tongue cry out? "It hurts me." It saith not, "It hurts my foot," but, "It hurts me," saith it. O tongue, who has touched thee? Who has struck? Who has goaded? Who has pricked? No man, but I am knit together with the parts that are trodden upon. How wouldest thou have me not be pained, when I am not separate?"

And we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):**26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.

But this is an imaginary conversation with the Head that Augustine has made up. We are to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Let us not judge one another as we read in **Romans 14 (KJV):**11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. 12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. 14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

Let us not count him a heretic either, unless he teaches something that is contrary to the word of God. Then let us speak the truth to him in love.

## The Unpardonable Sin

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume VI, Augustine**

**Sermon XXI. [LXXI. Ben.] On the words of the Gospel, Matthew 12:32, "Whosoever shall**

**speaking a word against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.” Or, “on the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.”, paragraphs 5, and 19-23, page 324-326**

5. But these words of the Gospel, though they had some obscurity, which I think by the Lord's assistance I have explained, were yet not so difficult, as that which follows would seem to be. “Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” (Matthew 12:31-32) What then will become of those whom the Church desires to gain? When they have been reformed and come into the Church from whatsoever error, is the hope in the remission of all sins that is promised them a false hope? For who is not convicted of having spoken a word against the Holy Ghost, before he became a Christian or a Catholic? In the first place, are not they who are called Pagans, the worshippers of many and false gods, and the adorers of idols, forasmuch as they say that the Lord Christ wrought miracles by magical arts, are not they like these who said that He cast out devils through the prince of the devils? And again, when day by day they blaspheme our sanctification, what else blaspheme they but the Holy Ghost? What? Do not the Jews—they who spoke concerning our Lord what gave occasion to this very discourse—do they not even to the present day speak a word against the Holy Ghost, by denying that He is now in Christians, just as the others denied Him to be in Christ? For not even did they revile the Holy Ghost, by asserting either that He existed not, or that though He existed, yet that He was not God, but a creature; or that He had no power to cast out devils; they did not speak thus unworthily, or anything like it, of the Holy Ghost. For the Sadducees indeed denied the Holy Ghost; but the Pharisees maintained His existence against their heresy, (Acts 23:8) but they denied that He was in the Lord Jesus Christ, who they thought cast out devils through the prince of the devils, whereas He did cast them out through the Holy Ghost. **And hence, both Jews and whatsoever heretics there are who confess the Holy Ghost, but deny that He is in the Body of Christ, which is His One Only Church, none other than the One Catholic Church, are without doubt like the Pharisees who at that time although they confessed the existence of the Holy Ghost, yet denied that He was in Christ, whose works in casting out devils they attributed to the prince of devils.** I say nothing of the fact that some heretics either boldly maintain that the Holy Ghost is not the Creator but a creature, as the Arians, and Eunomians, and Macedonians, or so entirely deny His existence, as to deny that God is Trinity, but assert that He is God the Father only, and that He is sometimes called the Son, and sometimes the Holy Ghost; as the Sabellians, whom some call Patripassians, because they hold that the Father suffered; and forasmuch as they deny that He has any Son, without doubt they deny His Holy Spirit also. The Photinians again who say that the Father only is God, and the Son a mere man, deny altogether that there is any third Person of the Holy Ghost.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But these words of the Gospel, though they had some obscurity, which I think by the Lord's assistance I have explained, were yet not so difficult, as that which follows would seem to be. “Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be



forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” (Matthew 12:31-32)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 12 (KJV):22** Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? 24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. 25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: 26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? 27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. 29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then he will spoil his house. 30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. 31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. 32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

Augustine continues, “What then will become of those whom the Church desires to gain? When they have been reformed and come into the Church from whatsoever error, is the hope in the remission of all sins that is promised them a false hope? For who is not convicted of having spoken a word against the Holy Ghost, before he became a Christian or a Catholic? In the first place, are not they who are called Pagans, the worshippers of many and false gods, and the adorers of idols, forasmuch as they say that the Lord Christ wrought miracles by magical arts, are not they like these who said that He cast out devils through the prince of the devils? And again, when day by day they blaspheme our sanctification, what else blaspheme they but the Holy Ghost? What? Do not the Jews—they who spoke concerning our Lord what gave occasion to this very discourse—do they not even to the present day speak a word against the Holy Ghost, by denying that He is now in Christians, just as the others denied Him to be in Christ? For not even did they revile the Holy Ghost, by asserting either that He existed not, or that though He existed, yet that He was not God, but a creature; or that He had no power to cast out devils; they did not speak thus unworthily, or anything like it, of the Holy Ghost. For the Sadducees indeed denied the Holy Ghost; but the Pharisees maintained His existence against their heresy, (Acts 23:8) but they denied that He was in the Lord Jesus Christ, who they thought cast out devils through the prince of the devils, whereas He did cast them out through the Holy Ghost.”

He refers to **Acts 23 (KJV):8** For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

Augustine continues, “**And hence, both Jews and whatsoever heretics there are who confess the Holy Ghost, but deny that He is in the Body of Christ, which is His One Only Church, none other than the One Catholic Church, are without doubt like the Pharisees who at that time although they confessed the existence of the Holy Ghost, yet denied that He was in**

Christ, whose works in casting out devils they attributed to the prince of devils.”

Augustine identifies “the Body of Christ, which is His One Only Church”, with “none other than the One Catholic Church”. He thus assumes that all of the doctrine of the “One Catholic Church” is perfectly in accordance with Scripture. By his words, he would not allow for any other church to be in the body of Christ which was outside of the Catholic Church.

He also mentions Jews and heretics as those who “are without doubt like the Pharisees who at that time although they confessed the existence of the Holy Ghost, yet denied that He was in Christ, whose works in casting out devils they attributed to the prince of devils.”

But one can be a Jew, or guilty of false doctrine, but not necessarily guilty of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit as the Pharisees in Jesus’ time were. We must consider the gravity of their sin, which was in front of the Son of God who had just worked a miracle in their presence by the Holy Spirit. Only God knows the one who commits this sin.

Augustine then lists several heresies, as he continues, “I say nothing of the fact that some heretics either boldly maintain”:

- 1.) “that the Holy Ghost is not the Creator but a creature, as the Arians, and Eunomians, and Macedonians,”
- 2.) “or so entirely deny His existence, as to deny that God is Trinity, but assert that He is God the Father only, and that He is sometimes called the Son, and sometimes the Holy Ghost;”
- 3.) “as the Sabellians, whom some call Patripassians, because they hold that the Father suffered; and forasmuch as they deny that He has any Son, without doubt they deny His Holy Spirit also.”
- 4.) “The Photinians again who say that the Father only is God, and the Son a mere man, deny altogether that there is any third Person of the Holy Ghost.”

We now skip to **paragraph 19 of Sermon XXI.**

19. First then in order to our receiving eternal life which shall be given at the last, there comes to us a gift from God’s goodness from the beginning of our faith, to wit, the remission of sins. For while they remain, there remains in some sort enmity against God, and alienation from Him, which comes from what is evil in us; since Scripture does not speak falsely, which says, “Your sins separate between you and God.” (Isaiah 59:2) He does not then bestow on us His good things, except He take away our evil things. And the former increase in proportion as the latter are diminished; nor will the one be perfected, till the other be brought to an end. But now that the Lord Jesus forgives sins by the Holy Ghost, just as by the Holy Ghost He casts out devils, may be understood by this, that after His Resurrection from the dead, when He had said to His disciples, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” He immediately subjoined, “Whosoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they shall be retained.” (John 20:22-23) For that regeneration also, in which there is a remission of all past sins, is wrought by the Holy Ghost, as the Lord saith, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5) But it is one thing to be born of the Spirit, another to be nourished by the Spirit; just as it is one thing to be born of the flesh, which happens when the mother is delivered of her child; another to be nourished by the flesh, which happens when she gives suck to her infant, who turns himself that he may drink with pleasure

thither whence he was born, to have life; that he may receive the support of life from thence, whence he received the beginning of his birth. We must believe then that the first blessing of God's goodness in the Holy Ghost is the remission of sins. Whence the preaching of John the Baptist, who was sent as the forerunner of the Lord, also begins with it. For thus it is written, "In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:1-2) Hence too the beginning of our Lord's preaching, as we read, "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17) Now John, amongst the other things which he spake to those who came to be baptized by him, said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Matthew 3:11) The Lord also said, "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence," (Acts 1:5) even at Pentecost. Now as to John's expression, "with fire," though tribulation also might be understood, which believers were to suffer for the name of Christ; yet may we reasonably think that the same Holy Spirit is signified also under the name of "fire." Wherefore when He came it is said, "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." (Acts 2:3) Hence also the Lord Himself said, "I am come to send fire on the earth." (Luke 12:49) Hence also the Apostle saith, "Fervent in the spirit;" (Romans 12:11) for from Him comes the fervour of love. "For it is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Romans 5:5) And the contrary to this fervour is what the Lord said, "The love of many shall wax cold." (Matthew 24:12) Now perfect love is the perfect gift of the Holy Spirit. But the first "gift" is that which is concerned with the remission of sins; by which blessing "we are delivered from the power of darkness;" (Colossians 1:13) and the prince of this world, (John 12:31) who worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2) by no other power than the fellowship and the bond of sin, is "cast out" by our faith. For by the Holy Spirit, by whom the people of God are gathered together into one, is the unclean spirit who is divided against himself cast out.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "First then in order to our receiving eternal life which shall be given at the last, there comes to us a gift from God's goodness from the beginning of our faith, to wit, the remission of sins."

He appears to believe that eternal life is "given at the last", and preceding that "there comes to us a gift from God's goodness from the beginning of our faith, to wit, the remission of sins".

Did he never read in **1 John 5 (KJV):12** He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

And **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

When we believe in Jesus Christ, we have remission of sins, and we have eternal life, because we have been born again by the Spirit of God.

Augustine continues, "For while they remain, there remains in some sort enmity against

God, and alienation from Him, which comes from what is evil in us; since Scripture does not speak falsely, which says, “Your sins separate between you and God.” (Isaiah 59:2)”

He refers to **Isaiah 59 (KJV):2** But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

So sin means separation from God. But when we are born again, sin does not remain in our standing. Having believed, we have been justified as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

The word “peace” in the Greek in verse 1 means “to be set at one with”, as we saw in the chapter, **The Dogmas of the Early Church\Heresy\The Donatist Controversy**. There is now no separation between the believer and God. As for the enmity, it has been slain as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):16** And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

And it has been abolished as in **Romans 2 (KJV):15** Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;

But there may be much in our soul that we need to deal with. This happens as we are progressively sanctified as we walk in the light of His word.

He continues, “He does not then bestow on us His good things, except He take away our evil things. And the former increase in proportion as the latter are diminished; nor will the one be perfected, till the other be brought to an end.”

We are not perfect yet, but in standing we are sons of God as the apostle John says in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

He continues, “But now that the Lord Jesus forgives sins by the Holy Ghost, just as by the Holy Ghost He casts out devils, may be understood by this, that after His Resurrection from the dead, when He had said to His disciples, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” He immediately subjoined, “Whosoever sins ye remit, they shall be remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they shall be retained.” (John 20:22-23)”

He refers to **John 20 (KJV):22** And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

He continues, “For that regeneration also, in which there is a remission of all past sins, is wrought by the Holy Ghost, as the Lord saith, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5)”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

And when we are regenerated, there is a remission of all past, present, and future sins as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

And in **1 John 2 (KJV):2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

And in **1 John 4 (KJV):10** Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

That this relates to all our sins is revealed by Paul in **Colossians 3 (KJV):13** And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

Augustine continues, as he then explains, “But it is one thing to be born of the Spirit, another to be nourished by the Spirit; just as it is one thing to be born of the flesh, which happens when the mother is delivered of her child; another to be nourished by the flesh, which happens when she gives suck to her infant, who turns himself that he may drink with pleasure thither whence he was born, to have life; that he may receive the support of life from thence, whence he received the beginning of his birth. We must believe then that the first blessing of God’s goodness in the Holy Ghost is the remission of sins.”

So he says that the “first blessing of God’s goodness in the Holy Ghost is the remission of sins”, and after we have been “born of the Spirit”, we must be “nourished by the Spirit”.

He continues, “Whence the preaching of John the Baptist, who was sent as the forerunner of the Lord, also begins with it. For thus it is written, “In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 3:1-2)”

He refers to **Matthew 3 (KJV):1** In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

He continues, “Hence too the beginning of our Lord’s preaching, as we read, “From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 4:17)”

He refers to **Matthew 4 (KJV):17** From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

He continues, “Now John, amongst the other things which he spake to those who came to be baptized by him, said, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” (Matthew 3:11)”

He refers to **Matthew 3 (KJV):11** I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

He continues, “The Lord also said, “John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence,” (Acts 1:5) even at Pentecost.”

And he refers to **Acts 1 (KJV):5** For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

He then explains, “Now as to John’s expression, “with fire,” though tribulation also might be understood, which believers were to suffer for the name of Christ; yet may we reasonably think that the same Holy Spirit is signified also under the name of “fire.” Wherefore when He came it is said, “And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.” (Acts 2:3)”



He refers to **Acts 2 (KJV):3** And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

He continues, “Hence also the Lord Himself said, “I am come to send fire on the earth.” (Luke 12:49)”

He refers to **Luke 12 (KJV):49** I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?

He continues, “Hence also the Apostle saith, “Fervent in the spirit;” (Romans 12:11) for from Him comes the fervour of love.”

He refers to **Romans 12 (KJV):11** Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

He continues, ““For it is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” (Romans 5:5)”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):5** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

He continues, “And the contrary to this fervour is what the Lord said, “The love of many shall wax cold.” (Matthew 24:12)”

He refers to **Matthew 24 (KJV):12** And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

He continues, “Now perfect love is the perfect gift of the Holy Spirit. But the first “gift” is that which is concerned with the remission of sins; by which blessing “we are delivered from the power of darkness;” (Colossians 1:13)”

He refers to **Colossians 1 (KJV):13** Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

So when we are regenerated, according to Augustine, the first gift we receive is the “remission of sins”. The second gift is “perfect love” which “is the perfect gift of the Holy Spirit”.

He continues, “and the prince of this world, (John 12:31) who worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2) by no other power than the fellowship and the bond of sin, is “cast out” by our faith.”

He refers to **John 12 (KJV):31** Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

And to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

He continues, “For by the Holy Spirit, by whom the people of God are gathered together into one, is the unclean spirit who is divided against himself cast out.”

Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

20. Against this gratuitous gift, against this grace of God, does the impenitent heart speak. This impenitence then is “the blasphemy of the Spirit, which shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” For against the Holy Spirit, by whom they whose sins are all forgiven are baptized, and whom the Church hath received, that “whosoever sins she remits, they may be remitted,” does he speak, whether in the thought only, or also in the tongue, a very heinous and exceedingly ungodly word, who “when the

patience of God leadeth him to repentance, after his hardness and impenitent heart treasureth up unto himself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds.” (Romans 2:4-6) This impenitence then, for so by some one general name may we call both this blasphemy and the word against the Holy Ghost which hath no forgiveness for ever; this impenitence, I say, against which both the herald and the Judge cried out, saying, “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;” (Matthew 3:2, 4:17) against which the Lord first opened the mouth of the Gospel preaching, and against which He foretold that the same Gospel was to be preached in all the world, when He said to His disciples after His resurrection from the dead, “it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem:” (Luke 24:46-47) this impenitence, in one word, hath no forgiveness “neither in this world, nor in the world to come;” for that repentance only obtaineth forgiveness in this world, that it may have its effect in the world to come.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Against this gratuitous gift, against this grace of God, does the impenitent heart speak. This impenitence then is “the blasphemy of the Spirit, which shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.””

He is referring in context to **Matthew 12 (KJV):31** Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. 32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

And a similar instance is recorded in **Mark 3 (KJV):22** And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. 23 And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. 27 No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. 28 Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: 29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. 30 Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

In verse 29 we read that they who “blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation”. The reason they are in this danger is then stated in verse 30, “Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit”. They attributed the workings of the Holy Spirit to Satan. But Augustine has correctly stated that it is the “impenitent heart” that is in danger of this sin.

He continues, “For against the Holy Spirit, by whom they whose sins are all forgiven are baptized, and whom the Church hath received, that “whosoever sins she remits, they may be remitted,” does he speak, whether in the thought only, or also in the tongue, a very heinous and exceedingly ungodly word, who “when the patience of God leadeth him to repentance, after his hardness and impenitent heart treasureth up unto himself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his

deeds.” (Romans 2:4-6)”

He refers to **Romans 2 (KJV):4** Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? 5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

But we must remember that the Church is the body of Christ, composed of only believers. Putting the name, Catholic, on a church does not make it infallible. The Lord is the Head of the Church, that is, the body of all the believers. And He must be acknowledged no matter what church or denomination we are in. The only reason that sins would not be remitted to someone is because they will not accept Christ. But if they repent and accept Christ, their sins will be remitted. It is God who forgives sins.

He continues, “This impenitence then, for so by some one general name may we call both this blasphemy and the word against the Holy Ghost which hath no forgiveness for ever; this impenitence, I say, against which both the herald and the Judge cried out, saying, “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;” (Matthew 3:2, 4:17)”

He refers to **Matthew 3 (KJV):1** In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And to **Matthew 4 (KJV):17** From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

He continues, “against which the Lord first opened the mouth of the Gospel preaching, and against which He foretold that the same Gospel was to be preached in all the world, when He said to His disciples after His resurrection from the dead, “it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:46-47)”

He refers to **Luke 24 (KJV):46** And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

He concludes, “this impenitence, in one word, hath no forgiveness “neither in this world, nor in the world to come;” for that repentance only obtaineth forgiveness in this world, that it may have its effect in the world to come.”

There are no second chances in the world to come as Jesus revealed in **Luke 16 (KJV):25** But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

Now let us read in context in **Matthew 12 (KJV):22** Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? 24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. 25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: 26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? 27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your

children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. 29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? And then he will spoil his house. 30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. 31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. 32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

In verse 22, we read that Jesus healed a man possessed with a devil, who was blind and dumb. The man spoke and saw after he was healed. All that Jesus was doing and speaking was in agreement with the word of God. Yet the Pharisees still did not see it as the works of God. Their impenitence was leading them to the unpardonable sin.

Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

21. But this impenitence or impenitent heart may not be pronounced upon, as long as a man lives in the flesh. For we are not to despair of any so long as “the patience of God leadeth the ungodly to repentance,” and doth not hurry him out of this life; “God, who willeth not the death of a sinner, but that he should return from his ways and live.” (Ezekiel 18:23) He is a heathen today; but how knowest thou whether he may not be a Christian tomorrow? He is a heretic today; but what if tomorrow he follow the Catholic truth? He is a schismatic today; but what if tomorrow he embrace Catholic peace? What if they, whom thou observest now in any kind of error that can be, and whom thou condemnest as in most desperate case, what if before they end this life, they repent and find the true life in that which is to come? Wherefore, Brethren, let also what the Apostle says urge you to this. “Judge nothing before the time.” (1 Corinthians 4:5) For this blasphemy of the Spirit, for which there is no forgiveness (which I have understood to be not every kind of blasphemy, but a particular sort, and that as I have said or discovered, or even as I think clearly shown to be the case, the persevering hardness of an impenitent heart), cannot be taken hold of in any one, I repeat it, as long as he is still in this life.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “But this impenitence or impenitent heart may not be pronounced upon, as long as a man lives in the flesh. For we are not to despair of any so long as “the patience of God leadeth the ungodly to repentance,” and doth not hurry him out of this life; “God, who willeth not the death of a sinner, but that he should return from his ways and live.” (Ezekiel 18:23)”

He refers first to **Romans 2 (KJV):4** Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

And then to **Ezekiel 18 (KJV):23** Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

He continues, “He is a heathen today; but how knowest thou whether he may not be a Christian tomorrow? He is a heretic today; but what if tomorrow he follow the Catholic truth? He is a schismatic today; but what if tomorrow he embrace Catholic peace?”

The Catholic identity was increasing in Augustine’s time. Being a Christian was now to follow in “the Catholic truth”, and to “embrace Catholic peace”. But we can agree with

Augustine that “this impenitence or impenitent heart may not be pronounced upon, as long as a man lives in the flesh”.

He continues, “What if they, whom thou observest now in any kind of error that can be, and whom thou condemnest as in most desperate case, what if before they end this life, they repent and find the true life in that which is to come? Wherefore, Brethren, let also what the Apostle says urge you to this. “Judge nothing before the time.” (1 Corinthians 4:5)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 4 (KJV):5** Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

Augustine gives some wise counsel here.

He continues, “For this blasphemy of the Spirit, for which there is no forgiveness (which I have understood to be not every kind of blasphemy, but a particular sort, and that as I have said or discovered, or even as I think clearly shown to be the case, the persevering hardness of an impenitent heart), cannot be taken hold of in any one, I repeat it, as long as he is still in this life.”

He did not understand, nor did the Catholic Church in his time, that this sin cannot be committed by a believer. Once we are born again, we have eternal life because the life of our spirit is now born of God. But we can still yield to sin in our soul. This is why we must put off and put on.

22. And let it not seem absurd, that whereas a man who perseveres in hardened impenitence even to the end of this life, speaks long and much against this grace of the Holy Spirit; yet the Gospel has called this so long contradiction of an impenitent heart, as though it were something of short duration, “a word,” saying, “Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” For though this blasphemy be long continued, and made up of, and drawn out at length in very many words, yet it is the manner of Scripture to call even many words “a word.” For no prophet ever spoke one word only; yet we read, “the word which came to such and such a prophet.” And the Apostle says, “Let the elders be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.” (1 Timothy 5:17) He does not say, “in words,” but, “in the word.” And St. James, “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.” (James 1:22) He again does not say, “of the words,” but, “of the word;” although so many words out of the Holy Scriptures are read, and spoken, and heard in the Church at her celebrations and solemnities. As therefore, how long a time soever any of us have laboured in preaching the Gospel, he is not called a preacher of the words, but of the word; and how long time soever any of you may have attentively and diligently listened to our preaching, he is called a most earnest “hearer” not of the words, but “of the word;” so after the style of the Scripture and the custom of the Church, whoso throughout his whole life in the flesh, to whatever length it may be extended, shall have spoken no matter how many words, whether by mouth, or the thought only with an impenitent heart, against that remission of sins which is granted in the Church, he speaks “a word” against the Holy Ghost.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “And let it not seem absurd, that whereas a

man who perseveres in hardened impenitence even to the end of this life, speaks long and much against this grace of the Holy Spirit; yet the Gospel has called this so long contradiction of an impenitent heart, as though it were something of short duration, “a word,” saying, “Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” For though this blasphemy be long continued, and made up of, and drawn out at length in very many words, yet it is the manner of Scripture to call even many words “a word.” For no prophet ever spoke one word only; yet we read, “the word which came to such and such a prophet.” And the Apostle says, “Let the elders be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.” (1 Timothy 5:17)”

Abram, that is, Abraham, was a prophet to whom the word of the Lord came in **Genesis 15 (NASB)**:1 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.”

And he refers to **1 Timothy 5 (KJV)**:17 Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

But it is clear that “the word” here refers to the word of God, from which doctrine is derived.

He continues, “He does not say, “in words,” but, “in the word.” And St. James, “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only.” (James 1:22)”

He refers to **James 1 (KJV)**:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Again, “the word” refers to the word of God, which we are to be doers of, and not hearers only.

He concludes, “He again does not say, “of the words,” but, “of the word;” although so many words out of the Holy Scriptures are read, and spoken, and heard in the Church at her celebrations and solemnities. As therefore, how long a time soever any of us have laboured in preaching the Gospel, he is not called a preacher of the words, but of the word; and how long time soever any of you may have attentively and diligently listened to our preaching, he is called a most earnest “hearer” not of the words, but “of the word;” so after the style of the Scripture and the custom of the Church, whoso throughout his whole life in the flesh, to whatever length it may be extended, shall have spoken no matter how many words, whether by mouth, or the thought only with an impenitent heart, against that remission of sins which is granted in the Church, he speaks “a word” against the Holy Ghost.”

An impenitent heart is referred to in **Luke 13 (KJV)**:1 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Without repentance, there is no salvation. Without repentance, we all perish. We must repent to be born again. After this birth of the Spirit, we are saved, having passed from death in sin to life in Christ. But our walk is a continual returning to the Lord as we read in **Isaiah 30**



**(KJV):15** For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

This returning is speaking of walking in the light of the word of God. In doing so, we will be doers of the word and not hearers only, and we will continue to grow in grace and knowledge, and our rest in Him will increase.

Augustine continues in the next paragraph.

23. Therefore not only every word spoken against the Son of Man, but, in fact, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; because where there is not this sin of an impenitent heart against the Holy Ghost, by whom sins are remitted in the Church, all other sins are forgiven. But how shall that sin be forgiven, which hinders the forgiveness of other sins also? All sins then are forgiven to them in whom is not this sin, which shall never be forgiven; but to him in whom it is, since this sin is never forgiven, neither are other sins forgiven; because the remission of all is hindered by the bond of this one. It is not then that “whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man shall be forgiven,” but “whoso speaketh against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven,” for that in the Trinity the Holy Ghost is greater than the Son, which no heretic even has ever maintained; but since whosoever he be that resisteth the truth and blasphemeth the Truth, which is Christ, even after such a manifestation of Himself among men, as that the Word who is the Son of Man and very Christ, “became flesh and dwelt among us;” if he have not also spoken that word of the impenitent heart against the Holy Ghost, of whom it is said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit;” (John 3:5) and again, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them;” (John 20:22-23) that is, if he shall repent, he shall thereby receive the gift of the remission of all his sins, and of this also, that he “hath spoken a word against the Son of Man,” because to the sin of ignorance, or obstinacy, or blasphemy of whatever kind, he hath not added the sin of impenitence against the gift of God, and the grace of regeneration or reconciliation, which is conferred in the Church by the Holy Spirit.

**Commentary:** Augustine concludes as he says, “Therefore not only every word spoken against the Son of Man, but, in fact, every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; because where there is not this sin of an impenitent heart against the Holy Ghost, by whom sins are remitted in the Church, all other sins are forgiven.”

The authority to remit sins was given by Jesus to the disciples in **John 20 (KJV):21** Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

The blood of the new testament is shed for many for the remission of sins as we read in **Matthew 26 (KJV):26** And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

It is by His blood that there is remission of sins. And remission of sins is something that Jesus commanded to be preached as we read in **Luke 24 (KJV):45** Then opened he their

understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And ye are witnesses of these things. 49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

This remission is granted to all who believe in Jesus as we read in **Acts 10 (KJV):43** To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

The Church only has the authority to confirm that sins are remitted to one who has repented, and believed in Jesus. Remission of sin has nothing to do with belonging to a certain Church, or denomination. Remission of sin comes with faith in Jesus Christ. Once this faith has been exercised, we who are born again are not dependent on man or a Church to maintain our salvation. We are saved. But let us not forsake the fellowship of fellow believers as we read in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):24** And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Augustine continues, “But how shall that sin be forgiven, which hinders the forgiveness of other sins also? All sins then are forgiven to them in whom is not this sin, which shall never be forgiven; but to him in whom it is, since this sin is never forgiven, neither are other sins forgiven; because the remission of all is hindered by the bond of this one.”

We can agree with Augustine here. Unless one repents, they never have forgiveness.

He then explains, “It is not then that “whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man shall be forgiven,” but “whoso speaketh against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven,” for that in the Trinity the Holy Ghost is greater than the Son, which no heretic even has ever maintained;”

Augustine is saying this is not so, that is, that “in the Trinity the Holy Ghost is greater than the Son”. He then affirms that we must repent, as he concludes, “but since whosoever he be that resisteth the truth and blasphemeth the Truth, which is Christ, even after such a manifestation of Himself among men, as that the Word who is the Son of Man and very Christ, “became flesh and dwelt among us;” if he have not also spoken that word of the impenitent heart against the Holy Ghost, of whom it is said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit;” (John 3:5) and again, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them;” (John 20:22-23) that is, if he shall repent, he shall thereby receive the gift of the remission of all his sins, and of this also, that he “hath spoken a word against the Son of Man,” because to the sin of ignorance, or obstinacy, or blasphemy of whatever kind, he hath not added the sin of impenitence against the gift of God, and the grace of regeneration or reconciliation, which is conferred in the Church by the Holy Spirit.”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

And to **John 20 (KJV):22** And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

He is simply saying here that, “if he shall repent, he shall thereby receive the gift of the

remission of all his sins. The one who has been born again will not commit this sin. And this agrees with the Scripture.

But “the gift of God, and the grace of regeneration or reconciliation,” is not “conferred in the Church by the Holy Spirit”. The Gospel is preached and all those who are ordained to eternal life believe as we read in **Acts 13 (KJV):48** And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

It is not about being a member of any specific church, but about believing in Jesus Christ. When we believe in Jesus Christ, the Lord adds us to the Church as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):47** Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Any believer can preach the Gospel by which any unbeliever can repent and believe in Jesus Christ and be saved. As many as receive Him are born of God, as the apostle John reveals in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Augustine and the Catholic Church in his time believed that the ritual of baptism was how someone was regenerated. But faith is given by God as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

It is not conferred by God through the Church. This gift is given when God decides to give it as we read in **John 3 (KJV):8** The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

The Catholic Church in Augustine’s time wanted to make sure a person truly believed before they would baptize them. This is why someone would spend considerable time as a Catechumen before being baptized.

## **A Lamp Extinguished**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XXIII. Chapter V. 19–40, paragraph 3, page 151**

3. For, indeed, all men are lamps, since they can be both lighted and extinguished. Moreover, when the lamps are wise, they shine and glow with the Spirit; yet also, if they did burn and are put out, they even stink. The servants of God remain good lamps by the oil of His mercy, not by their own strength. The free grace of God, truly, is the oil of the lamps. “For I have labored more than they all,” saith a certain lamp; and lest he should seem to burn by his own strength, he added, “But not I, but the grace of God that was with me.” (1 Corinthians 15:10) All prophecy, therefore, before the coming of the Lord, is a lamp. Of this lamp the Apostle Peter says: “We have a more sure word of prophecy, to which ye do well giving heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.” (2 Peter 1:19) Accordingly the prophets are lamps, and all prophecy one great lamp. What of the apostles? Are not they, too, lamps? They are, clearly. He alone is not a lamp. For He is not lighted and put out; because “even as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the

Son to have life in Himself.” The apostles also, I say, are lamps; and they give thanks because they were both lighted by the light of truth, and are burning with the spirit of charity, and supplied with the oil of God’s grace. If they were not lamps, the Lord would not say to them, “Ye are the light of the world.” For after He said, “Ye are the light of the world,” He shows that they should not think themselves such a light as that of which it is said, “That was the true light, that enlighteneth every man coming into this world.” But this was said of the Lord at that time when He was distinguished from John (the Baptist). Of John the Baptist, indeed, it had been said, “He was not the light, but that he might bear witness of the light.” (John 1:8) And lest thou shouldst say, How was he not the light, of whom Christ says that “he was a lamp”?—I answer, In comparison of the other light, he was not light. For “that was the true light that enlighteneth every man coming into this world.” Accordingly, when He said also to the disciples, “Ye are the light of the world,” lest they should imagine that anything was attributed to them which was to be understood of Christ alone, and thus the lamps should be extinguished by the wind of pride, when He had said, “Ye are the light of the world,” He immediately subjoined, “A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid; neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may shine on all that are in the house.” But what if He did not call the apostles the candle, but the lighters of the candle, which they were to put on a candlestick? Hear that He called themselves the candle. “So let your light shine,” saith He, “before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify,” not you, but “your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “For, indeed, all men are lamps, since they can be both lighted and extinguished. Moreover, when the lamps are wise, they shine and glow with the Spirit; yet also, if they did burn and are put out, they even stink. The servants of God remain good lamps by the oil of His mercy, not by their own strength. The free grace of God, truly, is the oil of the lamps.”

If the “free grace of God, truly, is the oil of the lamps”, then the grace of God can be used up just like oil is used up when it burns in a lamp. Augustine did not fully understand the believer’s standing in Christ when one truly believes.

Now he is referring to **Matthew 25 (KJV):1** Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

We will see that Augustine misinterprets this parable. But first, let us continue to read his writing.

He continues, ““For I have labored more than they all,” saith a certain lamp; and lest he should seem to burn by his own strength, he added, “But not I, but the grace of God that was with me.” (1 Corinthians 15:10)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):10** But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

He continues, “All prophecy, therefore, before the coming of the Lord, is a lamp. Of this lamp the Apostle Peter says: “We have a more sure word of prophecy, to which ye do well

giving heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts.” (2 Peter 1:19)”

He refers to **2 Peter 1 (KJV):19** We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

And we read that the word of God also is a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path in **Psalms 119 (KJV):105** Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

He continues, “Accordingly the prophets are lamps, and all prophecy one great lamp. What of the apostles? Are not they, too, lamps? They are, clearly. He alone is not a lamp. For He is not lighted and put out; because “even as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.” The apostles also, I say, are lamps; and they give thanks because they were both lighted by the light of truth, and are burning with the spirit of charity, and supplied with the oil of God’s grace.”

He refers in part to **John 1 (KJV):4** In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

He continues, “If they were not lamps, the Lord would not say to them, “Ye are the light of the world.””

He refers in context to **Matthew 5 (KJV):13** Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

He continues, “For after He said, “Ye are the light of the world,” He shows that they should not think themselves such a light as that of which it is said, “That was the true light, that enlighteneth every man coming into this world.””

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):9** That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

He continues, “But this was said of the Lord at that time when He was distinguished from John (the Baptist). Of John the Baptist, indeed, it had been said, “He was not the light, but that he might bear witness of the light.” (John 1:8)”

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):8** He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

He continues, “And lest thou shouldst say, How was he not the light, of whom Christ says that “he was a lamp”?—I answer, In comparison of the other light, he was not light. For “that was the true light that enlighteneth every man coming into this world.” Accordingly, when He said also to the disciples, “Ye are the light of the world,” lest they should imagine that anything was attributed to them which was to be understood of Christ alone, and thus the lamps should be extinguished by the wind of pride, when He had said, “Ye are the light of the world,” He immediately subjoined, “A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid; neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may shine on all that are in the house.””

That we are the candles of the Lord is clearly stated in **Proverbs 20 (KJV):27** The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

The lighting of our candles, or lamps, takes place when we are born again by the Spirit of God.

Augustine then concludes, “But what if He did not call the apostles the candle, but the lighters of the candle, which they were to put on a candlestick? Hear that He called themselves the candle. “So let your light shine,” saith He, “before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify,” not you, but “your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 5 (KJV):13** Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Now remember that Augustine began as he said, “For, indeed, all men are lamps, since they can be both lighted and extinguished. Moreover, when the lamps are wise, they shine and glow with the Spirit; yet also, if they did burn and are put out, they even stink. The servants of God remain good lamps by the oil of His mercy, not by their own strength. The free grace of God, truly, is the oil of the lamps.”

Now Augustine is referring to the parable in **Matthew 25 (KJV):1** Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. 11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

This parable is about being ready for the Lord’s coming. It is true that lamps can be extinguished when they are lit using earthly oil. But let us read again in **Proverbs 20 (KJV):27** The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

It is the spirit of man that is the candle of the Lord. It is not the soul or the flesh, for there is a difference between the soul and the spirit as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The spirit of man is where we are born again of the Spirit, as Jesus reveals in **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.



Augustine and the Catholic Church in his time did not discern this difference. Augustine thought that the soul was made up of spirit. He thought there were only two parts to man's being, the body and the soul, which was composed of spirit.

Now in our soul area, we can still sin, but in our spirit that has been born again, we cannot sin because we believers have been born of God as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):9** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

It is in our soul area where we are progressively cleansed as we walk in the light of the word of God. But in our spirit is the divine sinless nature of God as Peter reveals in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Therefore the spirit of man which has been born again by the Spirit of God has eternal life, and cannot be extinguished. Once a believer's spirit is lit as the candle of the Lord, it cannot be extinguished. It is not an earthly candle, but the candle of the Lord. Now again, Augustine believed that, "The servants of God remain good lamps by the oil of His mercy, not by their own strength. The free grace of God, truly, is the oil of the lamps."

He imagines that the free grace of God, like oil in a lamp, can be used up. But when we study a parable in the word of God, we must not try to make it stand on all fours, as it were. Parables are not to be used to establish doctrine. In the case of Matthew 25:1-13 above, the main point of Jesus' teaching in the parable was to be ready and "watch", as we read in **Matthew 25 (KJV):13** Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

And we must remember that He was speaking to mostly unbelieving Jews at the time. The oil certainly represents the Holy Spirit, whom, if a person has not, he or she is none of His as we read on **Romans 8 (KJV):8** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

If we have truly believed, Christ is in us, and the Spirit is life because of righteousness. The life of the Spirit is now the life of our spirits who have been born of the Spirit. This life cannot be extinguished because it is eternal life. And the Spirit is our life because of righteousness, not ours, but the righteousness of God to all believers as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Once we have been born of the Spirit, and justified by God, who is there who can condemn us as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the

day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So the only thing we can conclude in the parable in Matthew 25:1-13 is that the foolish virgins were never saved in the first place, for the Lord would never have spoken to a true believer as He does in **Matthew 25 (KJV):11** Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Now this is a fault in Augustine's doctrine. He believed that the free grace of God was like oil in a lamp that could be used up by sin as it were. When we understand the Biblical truth of regeneration in the word of God, and the Biblical truth of justification in the word of God, we understand that our regeneration and our standing are secure if we have truly believed. If we then sin, we have an advocate with the Father as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

But the grace of God does not get used up by sin once we have been born again. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we don't deal with our sin after having been born again, God will chasten us, even to the point of physical death as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):29** For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

But he or she will still be saved as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):14** If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Let us build "gold, silver, precious stones" as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):10** According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

## Deadly Sins

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XXVI. Chapter VI. 41–59, paragraph 11, page 171**

11. “I am,” saith He, “the bread of life.” And what was the source of their pride? “Your fathers,” saith He, “did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.” What is it whereof ye are proud? “They ate manna, and are dead.” Why they ate and are dead? Because they believed that which they saw; what they saw not, they did not understand. Therefore were they “your” fathers, because you are like them. For so far, my brethren, as relates to this visible corporeal death, do not we too die who eat the bread that cometh down from heaven? They died just as we shall die, so far, as I said, as relates to the visible and carnal death of this body. But so far as relates to that death, concerning which the Lord warns us by fear, and in which their fathers died: Moses ate manna, Aaron ate manna, Phinehas ate manna, and many ate manna, who were pleasing to the Lord, and they are not dead. Why? Because they understood the visible food spiritually, hungered spiritually, tasted spiritually, that they might be filled spiritually. For even we at this day receive visible food: but the sacrament is one thing, the virtue of the sacrament another. How many do receive at the altar and die, and die indeed by receiving? Whence the apostle saith, “Eateth and drinketh judgment to himself.” (1 Corinthians 11:29) For it was not the mouthful given by the Lord that was the poison to Judas. And yet he took it; and when he took it, the enemy entered into him: not because he received an evil thing, but because he being evil received a good thing in an evil way. See ye then, brethren, that ye eat the heavenly bread in a spiritual sense; bring innocence to the altar. **Though your sins are daily, at least let them not be deadly.** Before ye approach the altar, consider well what ye are to say: “Forgive us our debts, even as we forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12) Thou forgivest, it shall be forgiven thee: approach in peace, it is bread, not poison. But see whether thou forgivest; for if thou dost not forgive, thou liest, and liest to Him whom thou canst not deceive. Thou canst lie to God, but thou canst not deceive God. He knows what thou doest. He sees thee within, examines thee within, inspects within, judges within, and within He either condemns or crowns. But the fathers of these Jews were evil fathers of evil sons, unbelieving fathers of unbelieving sons, murmuring fathers of murmurers. For in no other thing is that people said to have offended the Lord more than in murmuring against God. And for that reason, the Lord, willing to show those men to be the children of such murmurers, thus begins His address to them: “Why murmur ye among yourselves,” ye murmurers, children of murmurers? Your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; not because manna was an evil thing, but because they ate it in an evil manner.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““I am,” saith He, “the bread of life.” And what was the source of their pride? “Your fathers,” saith He, “did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.” What is it whereof ye are proud? “They ate manna, and are dead.””

He refers in context to **John 6 (KJV):** 48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

He continues, “Why they ate and are dead? Because they believed that which they saw; what they saw not, they did not understand. Therefore were they “your” fathers, because you are like them. For so far, my brethren, as relates to this visible corporeal death, do not we too die who eat the bread that cometh down from heaven? They died just as we shall die, so far, as I said, as relates to the visible and carnal death of this body. But so far as relates to that death,

concerning which the Lord warns us by fear, and in which their fathers died: Moses ate manna, Aaron ate manna, Phinehas ate manna, and many ate manna, who were pleasing to the Lord, and they are not dead. Why? Because they understood the visible food spiritually, hungered spiritually, tasted spiritually, that they might be filled spiritually. For even we at this day receive visible food: but the sacrament is one thing, the virtue of the sacrament another.”

The manna was visible food on earth, but it had a spiritual source, that is, from God in heaven. The bread and wine of Communion are visible foods, and they help us remember what Jesus has done for us on the cross. But Augustine believes there is a “virtue of the sacrament” of Communion.

He continues, “How many do receive at the altar and die, and die indeed by receiving? Whence the apostle saith, “Eateth and drinketh judgment to himself.” (1 Corinthians 11:29)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):27** Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

In verse 30, “many sleep”, that is they died physically, for eating the Lord’s Supper, or Communion, in an unworthy manner.

He continues, “For it was not the mouthful given by the Lord that was the poison to Judas. And yet he took it; and when he took it, the enemy entered into him: not because he received an evil thing, but because he being evil received a good thing in an evil way. See ye then, brethren, that ye eat the heavenly bread in a spiritual sense; bring innocence to the altar.”

Augustine uses the word “altar” in reference to the Lord’s Supper, or Communion here. The reason is because in Augustine’s time, the Catholic Church believed that the Lord’s Supper was a sacrifice, and that the bread and wine were changed into the body and blood of the Lord.

However, the word “altar” in the Gospels is used by Jesus to refer to the altar in the temple as we read in **Matthew 23 (KJV):18** And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. 19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? 20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. 21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. 22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

The word “altar” is also used to refer to the altar in heaven as we read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):10** We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. 11 For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. 12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. 14 For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. 15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

This altar is in heaven as we read in **Revelation 9 (KJV):13** And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God...

Augustine continues, “**Though your sins are daily, at least let them not be deadly.**”

Augustine did not use the word “mortal” in relationship to sins. But he did call them “deadly”.

He continues, “Before ye approach the altar, consider well what ye are to say: “Forgive us our debts, even as we forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)”

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

He again refers to the “altar”. The “altar” had become a tradition in the Catholic Church.

He continues, “Thou forgivest, it shall be forgiven thee: approach in peace, it is bread, not poison. But see whether thou forgivest; for if thou dost not forgive, thou liest, and liest to Him whom thou canst not deceive. Thou canst lie to God, but thou canst not deceive God. He knows what thou doest. He sees thee within, examines thee within, inspects within, judges within, and within He either condemns or crowns. But the fathers of these Jews were evil fathers of evil sons, unbelieving fathers of unbelieving sons, murmuring fathers of murmurers. For in no other thing is that people said to have offended the Lord more than in murmuring against God. And for that reason, the Lord, willing to show those men to be the children of such murmurers, thus begins His address to them: “Why murmur ye among yourselves,” ye murmurers, children of murmurers? Your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; not because manna was an evil thing, but because they ate it in an evil manner.”

He refers in context to **John 6 (KJV):41** The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42 And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? 43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. 44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. 47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. 48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

And we read in **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):5** But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. 7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. 8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. 9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. 10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

## Heretics

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 2, The City of God**  
**Book XXI, Chapter 25, page 472-473**

Chapter 25.—Whether Those Who Received Heretical Baptism, and Have Afterwards Fallen Away to Wickedness of Life; Or Those Who Have Received Catholic Baptism, But Have Afterwards Passed Over to Heresy and Schism; Or Those Who Have Remained in the Catholic Church in Which They Were Baptized, But Have Continued to Live Immorally,—May Hope Through the Virtue of the Sacraments for the Remission of Eternal Punishment.

**Note:** it will be important to remember this summary of Chapter 25 above, as we process the following.

But let us now reply to those who promise deliverance from eternal fire, not to the devil and his angels (as neither do they of whom we have been speaking), nor even to all men whatever, but only to those who have been washed by the baptism of Christ, and have become partakers of His body and blood, no matter how they have lived, no matter what heresy or impiety they have fallen into. But they are contradicted by the apostle, where he says, “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variances, emulations, wrath, strife, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and the like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, for they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5 (KJV):19-21) Certainly this sentence of the apostle is false, if such persons shall be delivered after any lapse of time, and shall then inherit the kingdom of God. But as it is not false, they shall certainly never inherit the kingdom of God. And if they shall never enter that kingdom, then they shall always be retained in eternal punishment; for there is no middle place where he may live unpunished who has not been admitted into that kingdom.

And therefore we may reasonably inquire how we are to understand these words of the Lord Jesus: “This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.” (John 6:50-51) And those, indeed, whom we are now answering, are refuted in their interpretation of this passage by those whom we are shortly to answer, and who do not promise this deliverance to all who have received the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s body, but only to the Catholics, however wickedly they live; for these, say they, have eaten the Lord’s body not only sacramentally, but really, being constituted members of His body, of which the apostle says, “We being many are one bread, one body.” (1 Corinthians 10:17) **He then who is in the unity of Christ’s body (that is to say, in the Christian membership), of which body the faithful have been wont to receive the sacrament at the altar, that man is truly said to eat the body and drink the blood of Christ. And consequently heretics and schismatics being separate from the unity of this body, are able to receive the same sacrament, but with no profit to themselves,—nay, rather to their own hurt, so that they are rather more severely judged than liberated after some time. For they are not in that bond of peace which is symbolized by that sacrament.**

**But again, even those who sufficiently understand that he who is not in the body of Christ cannot be said to eat the body of Christ, are in error when they promise liberation from the fire**



of eternal punishment to persons who fall away from the unity of that body into heresy, or even into heathenish superstition. For, in the first place, they ought to consider how intolerable it is, and how discordant with sound doctrine, to suppose that many, indeed, or almost all, who have forsaken the Church Catholic, and have originated impious heresies and become heresiarchs, should enjoy a destiny superior to those who never were Catholics, but have fallen into the snares of these others; that is to say, if the fact of their Catholic baptism and original reception of the sacrament of the body of Christ in the true body of Christ is sufficient to deliver these heresiarchs from eternal punishment. For certainly he who deserts the faith, and from a deserter becomes an assailant, is worse than he who has not deserted the faith he never held. And, in the second place, they are contradicted by the apostle, who, after enumerating the works of the flesh, says with reference to heresies, “They who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

And therefore neither ought such persons as lead an abandoned and damnable life to be confident of salvation, though they persevere to the end in the communion of the Church Catholic, and comfort themselves with the words, “He that endureth to the end shall be saved.” By the iniquity of their life they abandon that very righteousness of life which Christ is to them, whether it be by fornication, or by perpetrating in their body the other uncleannesses which the apostle would not so much as mention, or by a dissolute luxury, or by doing any one of those things of which he says, “They who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Consequently, they who do such things shall not exist anywhere but in eternal punishment, since they cannot be in the kingdom of God. For, while they continue in such things to the very end of life, they cannot be said to abide in Christ to the end; for to abide in Him is to abide in the faith of Christ. And this faith, according to the apostle’s definition of it, “worketh by love.” (Galatians 5:6) And “love,” as he elsewhere says, “worketh no evil.” (Romans 13:10) Neither can these persons be said to eat the body of Christ, for they cannot even be reckoned among His members. For, not to mention other reasons, they cannot be at once the members of Christ and the members of a harlot. In fine, He Himself, when He says, “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him,” (John 6:56) shows what it is in reality, and not sacramentally, to eat His body and drink His blood; for this is to dwell in Christ, that He also may dwell in us. So that it is as if He said, He that dwelleth not in me, and in whom I do not dwell, let him not say or think that he eateth my body or drinketh my blood. Accordingly, they who are not Christ’s members do not dwell in Him. And they who make themselves members of a harlot, are not members of Christ unless they have penitently abandoned that evil, and have returned to this good to be reconciled to it.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But let us now reply to those who promise deliverance from eternal fire, not to the devil and his angels (as neither do they of whom we have been speaking), nor even to all men whatever, but only to those who have been washed by the baptism of Christ, and have become partakers of His body and blood, no matter how they have lived, no matter what heresy or impiety they have fallen into.”

He is arguing against any who say that those cannot lose their salvation, “who have been washed by the baptism of Christ, and have become partakers of His body and blood, no matter how they have lived, no matter what heresy or impiety they have fallen into”

Augustine continues as he then argues, “But they are contradicted by the apostle, where

he says, “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variances, emulations, wrath, strife, heresies, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and the like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, for they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5 (KJV):19-21)”

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):19** Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Augustine is then emphatic, as he then says, “Certainly this sentence of the apostle is false, if such persons shall be delivered after any lapse of time, and shall then inherit the kingdom of God. But as it is not false, they shall certainly never inherit the kingdom of God. And if they shall never enter that kingdom, then they shall always be retained in eternal punishment; for there is no middle place where he may live unpunished who has not been admitted into that kingdom.”

He continues as he then ponders, “And therefore we may reasonably inquire how we are to understand these words of the Lord Jesus: “This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.” (John 6:50-51)”

He quotes in part from **John 6 (KJV):50** This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

He then continues as he says, “And those, indeed, whom we are now answering, are refuted in their interpretation of this passage by those whom we are shortly to answer, and who do not promise this deliverance to all who have received the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s body, but only to the Catholics, however wickedly they live; for these, say they, have eaten the Lord’s body not only sacramentally, but really, being constituted members of His body, of which the apostle says, “We being many are one bread, one body.” (1 Corinthians 10:17)”

He refers in part to **1 Corinthians 10 (KJV):17** For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

Augustine then continues as he says, “**He then who is in the unity of Christ’s body (that is to say, in the Christian membership), of which body the faithful have been wont to receive the sacrament at the altar, that man is truly said to eat the body and drink the blood of Christ. And consequently heretics and schismatics being separate from the unity of this body, are able to receive the same sacrament, but with no profit to themselves,—nay, rather to their own hurt, so that they are rather more severely judged than liberated after some time. For they are not in that bond of peace which is symbolized by that sacrament.**”

Augustine has just made unity with the body of Christ a condition of salvation.

Augustine then asserts that those “**who have forsaken the Church Catholic, and have originated impious heresies and become heresiarchs**” cannot inherit the kingdom of God, as we continue in his writing, “**But again, even those who sufficiently understand that he who is not in**

the body of Christ cannot be said to eat the body of Christ, are in error when they promise liberation from the fire of eternal punishment to persons who fall away from the unity of that body into heresy, or even into heathenish superstition. For, in the first place, they ought to consider how intolerable it is, and how discordant with sound doctrine, to suppose that many, indeed, or almost all, who have forsaken the Church Catholic, and have originated impious heresies and become heresiarchs, should enjoy a destiny superior to those who never were Catholics, but have fallen into the snares of these others; that is to say, if the fact of their Catholic baptism and original reception of the sacrament of the body of Christ in the true body of Christ is sufficient to deliver these heresiarchs from eternal punishment. For certainly he who deserts the faith, and from a deserter becomes an assailant, is worse than he who has not deserted the faith he never held. And, in the second place, they are contradicted by the apostle, who, after enumerating the works of the flesh, says with reference to heresies, "They who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

So remaining in unity with the "Church Catholic" is now a condition of salvation. But this is not the only condition for salvation, as he continues and says, "And therefore neither ought such persons as lead an abandoned and damnable life to be confident of salvation, though they persevere to the end in the communion of the Church Catholic, and comfort themselves with the words, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." By the iniquity of their life they abandon that very righteousness of life which Christ is to them, whether it be by fornication, or by perpetrating in their body the other uncleannesses which the apostle would not so much as mention, or by a dissolute luxury, or by doing any one of those things of which he says, "They who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Consequently, they who do such things shall not exist anywhere but in eternal punishment, since they cannot be in the kingdom of God. For, while they continue in such things to the very end of life, they cannot be said to abide in Christ to the end; for to abide in Him is to abide in the faith of Christ."

So he now adds the sins mentioned in Galatians 5:19-21 as damnable sins. That is, if one commits these sins, he has lost his salvation, and the implication is that he must repent before he dies, or he will go to hell to "eternal punishment".

He then continues, "And this faith, according to the apostle's definition of it, "worketh by love." (Galatians 5:6) And "love," as he elsewhere says, "worketh no evil." (Romans 13:10)"

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):6** For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

And to **Romans 13 (KJV):10** Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

He continues, "Neither can these persons be said to eat the body of Christ, for they cannot even be reckoned among His members. For, not to mention other reasons, they cannot be at once the members of Christ and the members of a harlot. In fine, He Himself, when He says, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him," (John 6:56) shows what it is in reality, and not sacramentally, to eat His body and drink His blood; for this is to dwell in Christ, that He also may dwell in us."

He refers to **John 6 (KJV):56** He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

So the sins in Galatians 5:19-21 also place one outside of the body of Christ, "for they cannot even be reckoned among His members", if they commit these sins.

He then concludes, “So that it is as if He said, He that dwelleth not in me, and in whom I do not dwell, let him not say or think that he eateth my body or drinketh my blood. Accordingly, they who are not Christ’s members do not dwell in Him. And they who make themselves members of a harlot, are not members of Christ unless they have penitently abandoned that evil, and have returned to this good to be reconciled to it.”

## Sin Is the Death of the Soul

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XLIX. Chapter XI. 1–54, paragraphs 2-3, page 270-271**

2. We have, however, read in the Gospel of three dead persons who were raised to life by the Lord, and, let us hope, to some good purpose. For surely the Lord’s deeds are not merely deeds, but signs. And if they are signs, besides their wonderful character, they have some real significance: and to find out this in regard to such deeds is a somewhat harder task than to read or hear of them. We were listening with wonder, as at the sight of some mighty miracle enacted before our eyes, in the reading of the Gospel, how Lazarus was restored to life. **If we turn our thoughts to the still more wonderful works of Christ, every one that believeth riseth again: if we all consider, and understand that more horrifying kind of death, every one who sinneth dies. But every man is afraid of the death of the flesh; few, of the death of the soul.** In regard to the death of the flesh, which must certainly come some time, all are on their guard against its approach: this is the source of all their labor. Man, destined to die, labors to avert his dying; and yet man, destined to live for ever, labors not to cease from sinning. And when he labors to avoid dying, he labors to no purpose, for its only result will be to put off death for a while, not to escape it; but if he refrain from sinning, his toil will cease, and he shall live for ever. Oh that we could arouse men, and be ourselves aroused along with them, to be as great lovers of the life that abideth, as men are of that which passeth away! What will a man not do who is placed under the peril of death? When the sword was overhanging their heads, men have given up every means of living they had in reserve. Who is there that has not made an immediate surrender of all, to escape being slain? And, after all, he has perhaps been slain. Who is there that, to save his life, has not been willing at once to lose his means of living, and prefer a life of beggary to a speedy death? Who has had it said to him, Be off to sea if you would escape with your life, and has delayed to do so? Who has had it said to him, Set to work if you would preserve your life, and has continued a sluggard? It is but little that God requires of us, that we may live for ever: and we neglect to obey Him. God says not to thee, Lose all you have, that you may live a little time oppressed with toil; but, Give to the poor of what you have, that you may live always exempt from labor. The lovers of this temporal life, which is theirs, neither when, nor as long as they wish, are our accusers; and we accuse not ourselves in turn, so sluggish are we, so lukewarm about obtaining eternal life, which will be ours if we wish it, and will be imperishable when we have it; but this death which we fear, notwithstanding all our reluctance, will yet be ours in possession.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “We have, however, read in the Gospel of three

dead persons who were raised to life by the Lord, and, let us hope, to some good purpose. For surely the Lord's deeds are not merely deeds, but signs. And if they are signs, besides their wonderful character, they have some real significance: and to find out this in regard to such deeds is a somewhat harder task than to read or hear of them. We were listening with wonder, as at the sight of some mighty miracle enacted before our eyes, in the reading of the Gospel, how Lazarus was restored to life. **If we turn our thoughts to the still more wonderful works of Christ, every one that believeth riseth again: if we all consider, and understand that more horrifying kind of death, every one who sinneth dies. But every man is afraid of the death of the flesh; few, of the death of the soul."**

He speaks of **"the death of the flesh"** and **"the death of the soul"**. But the death of the soul, in Augustine's thinking, is really spiritual death.

In regards to "the death of the soul", spiritual death is mentioned in **Matthew 10 (KJV):28** And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Here Jesus speaks of killing the soul, or destroying both soul and body in hell. This is spiritual death, that is, total separation from God forever.

Sometimes in the Scriptures, the death of the soul relates to physical death as we read in **Ezekiel 18 (KJV):4** Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

And in **Ezekiel 18 (KJV):20** The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

Augustine continues, "In regard to the death of the flesh, which must certainly come some time, all are on their guard against its approach: this is the source of all their labor. Man, destined to die, labors to avert his dying; and yet man, destined to live for ever, labors not to cease from sinning. And when he labors to avoid dying, he labors to no purpose, for its only result will be to put off death for a while, not to escape it; but if he refrain from sinning, his toil will cease, and he shall live for ever."

Though Augustine does not mention it here, this is what Jesus taught in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

We find rest for our souls when we come to Jesus, and we cease from sinning.

He continues, "Oh that we could arouse men, and be ourselves aroused along with them, to be as great lovers of the life that abideth, as men are of that which passeth away! What will a man not do who is placed under the peril of death? When the sword was overhanging their heads, men have given up every means of living they had in reserve. Who is there that has not made an immediate surrender of all, to escape being slain? And, after all, he has perhaps been slain. Who is there that, to save his life, has not been willing at once to lose his means of living, and prefer a life of beggary to a speedy death? Who has had it said to him, Be off to sea if you would escape with your life, and has delayed to do so? Who has had it said to him, Set to work if you would preserve your life, and has continued a sluggard? It is but little that God requires of us, that we may live for ever: and we neglect to obey Him. God says not to thee, Lose all you have, that you may live a little time oppressed with toil; but, Give to the poor of what you have,



that you may live always exempt from labor. The lovers of this temporal life, which is theirs, neither when, nor as long as they wish, are our accusers; and we accuse not ourselves in turn, so sluggish are we, so lukewarm about obtaining eternal life, which will be ours if we wish it, and will be imperishable when we have it; but this death which we fear, notwithstanding all our reluctance, will yet be ours in possession.”

Now let us continue to read in **Ezekiel 18 (KJV)**:1 The word of the Lord came unto me again, saying, 2 What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? 3 As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. 4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

The issue that the Lord is dealing with here is whether the son will suffer for the father's sins. But “the soul that sinneth, it shall die”. When Ezekiel speaks of soul in this Scripture, he refers to the person.

We continue to read in **Ezekiel 18 (KJV)**:5 But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, 6 And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman, 7 And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; 8 He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, 9 Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God.

The righteous man will live. We continue to read in **Ezekiel 18 (KJV)**:10 If he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things, 11 And that doeth not any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife, 12 Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination, 13 Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? He shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.

The son who sins shall die for his sins, meaning he shall die a physical death. But it is possible that spiritual death is also referred to if one has not had faith in the redeemer who was to come.

We continue to read in **Ezekiel 18 (KJV)**:14 Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like, 15 That hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbour's wife, 16 Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, 17 That hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live.

If the father is unrighteous but the son is righteous, the son shall live. We continue to read in **Ezekiel 18 (KJV)**:18 As for his father, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did that which is not good among his people, lo, even he shall die in his iniquity.



19 Yet say ye, Why? Doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. 20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

We see the righteousness of God here. We continue to read in **Ezekiel 18 (KJV)**:21 But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. 22 All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. 23 Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

God allows for repentance, but physical death can be the result of the sin unto death. This is a sin which may be committed by believers, but it only relates to physical death. The spirit will still be saved as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

We continue to read in **Ezekiel 18 (KJV)**:24 But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. 25 Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal? 26 When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. 27 Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. 28 Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. 29 Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal? 30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. 31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

The Lord is righteous. Let us continue to read in the next paragraph.

3. If, then, the Lord in the greatness of His grace and mercy raiseth our souls to life, that we may not die for ever, we may well understand that those three dead persons whom He raised in the body, have some figurative significance of that resurrection of the soul which is effected by faith: He raised up the ruler of the synagogue's daughter, while still lying in the house: (Mark 5:41-42) He raised up the widow's young son, while being carried outside the gates of

the city; (Luke 7:14-15) and He raised up Lazarus, when four days in the grave. Let each one give heed to his own soul: in sinning he dies: sin is the death of the soul. But sometimes sin is committed only in thought. Thou hast felt delight in what is evil, thou hast assented to its commission, thou hast sinned; that assent has slain thee: but the death is internal, because the evil thought had not yet ripened into action. The Lord intimated that He would raise such a soul to life, in raising that girl, who had not yet been carried forth to the burial, but was lying dead in the house, as if sin still lay concealed. But if thou hast not only harbored a feeling of delight in evil, but hast also done the evil thing, thou hast, so to speak, carried the dead outside the gate: thou art already without, and being carried to the tomb. Yet such an one also the Lord raised to life. and restored to his widowed mother. If thou hast sinned, repent, and the Lord will raise thee up, and restore thee to thy mother Church. The third example of death is Lazarus. A grievous kind of death it is, and is distinguished as a habit of wickedness. For it is one thing to fall into sin, another to form the habit of sinning. He who falls into sin, and straightway submits to correction, will be speedily restored to life; for he is not yet entangled in the habit, he is not yet laid in the tomb. But he who has become habituated to sin, is buried, and has it properly said of him, "he stinketh;" for his character, like some horrible smell, begins to be of the worst repute. Such are all who are habituated to crime, abandoned in morals. Thou sayest to such an one, Do not so. But when wilt thou be listened to by one on whom the earth is thus heaped, who is breeding corruption, and pressed down with the weight of habit? And yet the power of Christ was not unequal to the task of restoring such an one to life. We know, we have seen, we see every day men changing the very worst of habits, and adopting a better manner of life than that of those who blamed them. Thou detestedst such a man: look at the sister of Lazarus herself (if, indeed, it was she who anointed the Lord's feet with ointment, and wiped with her hair what she had washed with her tears), who had a better resurrection than her brother; she was delivered from the mighty burden of a sinful character. For she was a notorious sinner; and had it said of her, "Her many sins are forgiven her, for she has loved much." (Luke 7:37-47) We see many such, we know many: let none despair, but let none presume in himself. Both the one and the other are sinful. Let thine unwillingness to despair take such a turn as to lead thee to make choice of Him in whom alone thou mayest well presume.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "If, then, the Lord in the greatness of His grace and mercy raiseth our souls to life, that we may not die for ever, we may well understand that those three dead persons whom He raised in the body, have some figurative significance of that resurrection of the soul which is effected by faith: He raised up the ruler of the synagogue's daughter, while still lying in the house: (Mark 5:41-42) He raised up the widow's young son, while being carried outside the gates of the city; (Luke 7:14-15) and He raised up Lazarus, when four days in the grave."

We will refer to these Scriptures shortly.

He continues, "Let each one give heed to his own soul: in sinning he dies: sin is the death of the soul."

In the Garden of Eden, the Lord gave Adam a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV):16** And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the

knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

When Adam and Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they died spiritually, and physical death was to follow. They were reborn when they confessed their sin, as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):9** And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. 11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? 12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. 13 And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

The consequences of their sin are revealed in **Genesis 3 (KJV):16** Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. 17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

The Lord made coats of skins to cover their nakedness, which were symbolic of His righteousness as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV):20** And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. 21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

The judgment of God is upon the whole human race because of Adam's sin as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):21** For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

The whole human race has sinned and comes short of the glory of God as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):23** For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Every unbeliever is dead in trespasses and sins as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):1** And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Every unbeliever is under condemnation as we read in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

The wrath of God is upon unbelievers as we read in **John 3 (KJV):36** He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

And this is why we all need to be born again. This new birth takes place in our spirit as Jesus taught in **John 3 (KJV):3** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto

him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

In verse 6, we read, that “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”. The spirit is different from the soul. When we are born again, we have God consciousness in our spirit. Our soul gives us consciousness of this world. Augustine did not understand this difference.

So we read that the soul that sinneth, it shall die in **Ezekiel 18 (KJV):20** The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

The soul dies in that it no longer has consciousness of this world. But when Augustine says, “**Let each one give heed to his own soul: in sinning he dies: sin is the death of the soul,**” he is speaking of spiritual death, according to his understanding. But after one is born again, when they sin they do not die spiritually, or in their soul. When a believer sins, there is an interruption in their fellowship with the Lord. This is dealt with by the confession of our sins, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The reason we can do this is because we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Our advocate can now treat us as sons and daughters because of our standing as righteous ones whom He has justified. We are disciplined by a loving Father, but we are not condemned.

Augustine continues, “**But sometimes sin is committed only in thought. Thou hast felt delight in what is evil, thou hast assented to its commission, thou hast sinned; that assent has slain thee: but the death is internal, because the evil thought had not yet ripened into action.**”

And Jesus taught as in **Matthew 5 (KJV):28** But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

And now Augustine will show the “**figurative significance of that resurrection of the soul which is effected by faith**” that he mentioned earlier in this paragraph.

He continues, “**The Lord intimated that He would raise such a soul to life, in raising that girl, who had not yet been carried forth to the burial, but was lying dead in the house, as if sin still lay concealed.**”

He refers in context to **Mark 5 (KJV):38** And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. 39 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. 40 And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. 41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. 42 And straightway the damsel arose,

and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. 43 And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

Nothing is mentioned in this Scripture about a “concealed” sin of the damsel as a reason for her death. Augustine has made an allegory of these verses to suit his own purposes. His purpose is to keep people from sinning, but he exceeds the bounds of the Scripture in doing so.

Augustine continues, “But if thou hast not only harbored a feeling of delight in evil, but hast also done the evil thing, thou hast, so to speak, carried the dead outside the gate: thou art already without, and being carried to the tomb. Yet such an one also the Lord raised to life. and restored to his widowed mother. If thou hast sinned, repent, and the Lord will raise thee up, and restore thee to thy mother Church.”

He refers in context to **Luke 7 (KJV):12** Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. 13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. 14 And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. 15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. 16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

Augustine again makes an allegory of these verses, and after doing so, says, “If thou hast sinned, repent, and the Lord will raise thee up, and restore thee to thy mother Church.” In his allegory, it is as if your soul died when you sinned, and you were alienated from your “mother Church”. He is building a dependence on the Catholic Church, and not on the word of God. When we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, and we only need to confess our sin for Him to cleanse us of all unrighteousness. Our soul doesn’t die when we sin, and need to be raised to life again. We only need to confess our sins to restore our fellowship with the Lord.

He continues, “The third example of death is Lazarus.”

He refers to **John 11 (KJV):39** Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. 40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? 41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. 42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. 43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Augustine then continues his “figurative significance of that resurrection of the soul which is effected by faith”, as he says, “A grievous kind of death it is, and is distinguished as a habit of wickedness. For it is one thing to fall into sin, another to form the habit of sinning. He who falls into sin, and straightway submits to correction, will be speedily restored to life; for he is not yet entangled in the habit, he is not yet laid in the tomb. But he who has become habituated to sin, is buried, and has it properly said of him, “he stinketh,” for his character, like some horrible smell, begins to be of the worst repute. Such are all who are habituated to crime,

abandoned in morals. Thou sayest to such an one, Do not so. But when wilt thou be listened to by one on whom the earth is thus heaped, who is breeding corruption, and pressed down with the weight of habit? And yet the power of Christ was not unequal to the task of restoring such an one to life. We know, we have seen, we see every day men changing the very worst of habits, and adopting a better manner of life than that of those who blamed them.”

Augustine is again using this Scripture as another allegory in his sermon. There is nothing in the Scripture that intimates that Lazarus was in the “habit of sinning”, and then submitted to correction, and was then “speedily restored to life”. Augustine’s purpose is to encourage people to live for God. But he exceeds the bounds of the Scripture in doing so. This builds a dependence on the Catholic Church in his time, and its ministers.

However, his allegory does remind us of the prodigal son as we read in **Luke 15 (KJV)**:21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Living in sin makes a great distance between us and the Father. It is as if we are dead and lost. But repentance restores us to fellowship. We don’t have to be born again, again.

There are figures in the Scriptures as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV)**:6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

The first tabernacle was a figure of heaven itself, the “holiest of all” in verses 8 and 9. We continue to read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV)**:11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

The Old Testament sacrifices were figures of the one sacrifice of Christ that would accomplish eternal redemption. Scripture defines its figures. We must be careful not to exceed the Scripture in our teaching. This can lead to all sorts of rabbit trails.

Augustine continues, “Thou detestedst such a man: look at the sister of Lazarus herself (if, indeed, it was she who anointed the Lord’s feet with ointment, and wiped with her hair what she had washed with her tears), who had a better resurrection than her brother; she was delivered from the mighty burden of a sinful character. For she was a notorious sinner; and had it said of her, “Her many sins are forgiven her, for she has loved much.” (Luke 7:37-47)



Augustine refers to a woman mentioned in context in **Luke 7 (KJV):36** And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. 37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, 38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. 40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. 41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? 43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. 45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. 48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. 49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? 50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

No mention of Lazarus's sister is found here. But a note in the text of Augustine's writing, however, says, "Augustin is mistaken here, although his error has been followed by many ancient writers, and some in more recent times. The time, place, and circumstances make it impossible for the incident here referred to, to be the same as that which took place in Bethany immediately before our Lord's crucifixion. On that last occasion only was it Lazarus' sister, Mary, who anointed Jesus. Luke here speaks only of a woman that was a sinner, and there is little evidence to connect her with any of the other Scripture women, even with Mary of Magdala, as is often done, and who is first mentioned by Luke in a different connection in the following chapter (viii. 2).—Tr.)

"Mary called Magdalene" is mentioned in **Luke 8 (KJV):1** And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, 2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, 3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

There is absolutely no connection of the woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears to Lazarus' sister, Mary. Augustine again exceeds the Scriptures with his allegory.

He concludes, "We see many such, we know many: let none despair, but let none presume in himself. Both the one and the other are sinful. Let thine unwillingness to despair take such a turn as to lead thee to make choice of Him in whom alone thou mayest well presume."

His encouragement is good. But his freely allegorizing of the Scripture can lead down

other rabbit trails. There are figures in the Scriptures. But they are always explained by the Scriptures.

## **Losing the Impression That Was Stamped**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XL. Chapter VIII. 28–32, paragraph 9, page 228**

9. What, brethren, does He promise believers? “And ye shall know the truth.” Why so? Had they not come to such knowledge when the Lord was speaking? If they had not, how did they believe? They believed, not because they knew, but that they might come to know. For we believe in order that we may know, we do not know in order that we may believe. For what we shall yet know, neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered the heart of man. (Isaiah 64:4, 1 Corinthians 2:9) For what is faith, but believing what you see not? Faith then is to believe what you see not; truth, to see what you have believed, as He Himself saith in a certain place. The Lord then walked on earth, first of all, for the creation of faith. He was man, He was made in a low condition. He was seen by all, but not by all was He known. By many was He rejected, by the multitude was He slain, by few was He mourned; and yet even by those who mourned Him, His true being was still unrecognized. All this is the beginning as it were of faith’s lineaments and future upbuilding. As the Lord, referring thereto, saith in a certain place, “He that loveth me keepeth my commandments; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” They certainly already saw the person to whom they were listening; and yet to them, if they loved Him, does He give it as a promise that they should see Him. So also here, “Ye shall know the truth.” How so? Is that not the truth which Thou hast been speaking? The truth it is, but as yet it is only believed, not beheld. If you abide in that which is believed, you shall attain to that which is seen. Hence John himself, the holy evangelist, says in his epistle, “Dearly beloved, we are the sons of God; but it is not yet apparent what we shall be.” We are so already, and something we shall be. What more shall we be than we are? Listen: “It is not yet apparent what we shall be: [but] we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him.” How? “For we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2) A great promise, but the reward of faith. You seek the reward; then let the work precede. If you believe, ask for the reward of faith; but if you believe not, with what face can you seek the reward of faith? “If” then “ye continue in my word, ye shall be my disciples indeed,” that ye may behold the very truth as it is, not through sounding words, but in dazzling light, wherewith He shall satisfy us: as we read in the psalm, “The light of Thy countenance is impressed upon us.” (Psalm 4:7, Vulgate) We are God’s money: we have wandered away as coin from the treasury. The impression that was stamped upon us has been rubbed out by our wandering. He has come to refashion, for He it was that fashioned us at first; and He is Himself asking for His money, as Cæsar for his. Therefore He says, “Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s:” (Matthew 22:21) to Cæsar his money, to God yourselves. And then shall the truth be reproduced in us.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “What, brethren, does He promise believers?”

“And ye shall know the truth.” Why so? Had they not come to such knowledge when the Lord was speaking? If they had not, how did they believe? They believed, not because they knew, but that they might come to know. For we believe in order that we may know, we do not know in order that we may believe. For what we shall yet know, neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered the heart of man. (Isaiah 64:4, 1 Corinthians 2:9)”

He refers to **Isaiah 64 (KJV):4** For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

And to **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):9** But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

He continues, “For what is faith, but believing what you see not?”

He refers to **Hebrews 11 (KJV):1** Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

He continues, “Faith then is to believe what you see not; truth, to see what you have believed, as He Himself saith in a certain place. The Lord then walked on earth, first of all, for the creation of faith. He was man, He was made in a low condition. He was seen by all, but not by all was He known. By many was He rejected, by the multitude was He slain, by few was He mourned; and yet even by those who mourned Him, His true being was still unrecognized. All this is the beginning as it were of faith’s lineaments and future upbuilding. As the Lord, referring thereto, saith in a certain place, “He that loveth me keepeth my commandments; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.””

He refers to **John 14 (KJV):21** He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

He continues, “They certainly already saw the person to whom they were listening; and yet to them, if they loved Him, does He give it as a promise that they should see Him. So also here, “Ye shall know the truth.””

He refers in context to **John 8 (KJV):31** Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

He continues, “How so? Is that not the truth which Thou hast been speaking? The truth it is, but as yet it is only believed, not beheld. If you abide in that which is believed, you shall attain to that which is seen. Hence John himself, the holy evangelist, says in his epistle, “Dearly beloved, we are the sons of God; but it is not yet apparent what we shall be.””

He refers to **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

He continues, “We are so already, and something we shall be. What more shall we be than we are? Listen: “It is not yet apparent what we shall be: [but] we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him.” How? “For we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2) A great promise, but the reward of faith. You seek the reward; then let the work precede. If you believe, ask for the reward of faith; but if you believe not, with what face can you seek the reward of

faith? “If” then “ye continue in my word, ye shall be my disciples indeed,” that ye may behold the very truth as it is, not through sounding words, but in dazzling light, wherewith He shall satisfy us: as we read in the psalm, “The light of Thy countenance is impressed upon us.” (Psalm 4:7, Vulgate)”

He refers to **Psalm 4 (Douay Rheims):6** Offer up the sacrifice of justice, and trust in the Lord: many say, Who sheweth us good things? 7 The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us: thou hast given gladness in my heart.

And we read as in **Psalm 4 (KJV):5** Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord. 6 There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

He continues, “We are God’s money: we have wandered away as coin from the treasury. The impression that was stamped upon us has been rubbed out by our wandering. He has come to refashion, for He it was that fashioned us at first; and He is Himself asking for His money, as Cæsar for his. Therefore He says, “Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s:” (Matthew 22:21) to Cæsar his money, to God yourselves. And then shall the truth be reproduced in us.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 22 (KJV):17** Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? 19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. 20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

Augustine did not understand the new birth by the Spirit of God in believers. According to Augustine, when we wander, we lose what we had gained when we believed in Jesus Christ. He says that, “The impression that was stamped upon us has been rubbed out by our wandering”. Then he says that if we return, He will “refashion” us, “And then shall the truth be reproduced in us.”

In his thinking, it’s as if we become dead in our trespasses and sins again if we wander, and then when we return, we are born again, again. But this has no basis in the Scripture. After we are born again, we are justified by God, who puts His righteousness down to our account. If we sin we have an advocate with the Father as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Confession brings cleansing as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Our fellowship with the Lord is maintained by walking in the light as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):6** If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

The light that we are to walk in is the word of God as we read in **Psalm 119 (KJV):105** Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

If we wander, He will discipline us. This may include weakness, sickness, and physical death as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):28** But let a man examine himself, and so let him

eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

If we sin we will be “chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” But once we are born again, we are saved, and we cannot be lost again.

## Losing Righteousness

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XLIII. Chapter VIII. 48–59, paragraph 7, page 241**

7. What then of the two fears? There is a servile fear, and there is a clean [chaste] fear: there is the fear of suffering punishment, there is another fear of losing righteousness. That fear of suffering punishment is slavish. What great thing is it to fear punishment? The vilest slave and the cruelest robber do so. It is no great thing to fear punishment, but great it is to love righteousness. Has he, then, who loves righteousness no fear? Certainly he has; not of incurring of punishment, but of losing righteousness. My brethren, assure yourselves of it, and draw your inference from that which you love. Some one of you is fond of money. Can I find any one, think you, who is not so? Yet from this very thing which he loves he may understand my meaning. He is afraid of loss: why is he so? Because he loves money. In the same measure that he loves money, is he afraid of losing it. So, then, some one is found to be a lover of righteousness, who at heart is much more afraid of its loss, who dreads more being stripped of his righteousness, than thou of thy money. This is the fear that is clean—this [the fear] that endureth for ever. It is not this that love makes away with, or casteth out, but rather embraces it, and keeps it with it, and possesses it as a companion. For we come to the Lord that we may see Him face to face. And there it is this pure fear that preserves us; for such a fear as that does not disturb, but reassure. The adulterous woman fears the coming of her husband, and the chaste one fears her husband's departure.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “What then of the two fears? There is a servile fear, and there is a clean [chaste] fear: there is the fear of suffering punishment, there is another fear of losing righteousness.”

If we lost righteousness, we would lose our salvation. Let us continue to read Augustine, as he then says, “That fear of suffering punishment is slavish. What great thing is it to fear punishment? The vilest slave and the cruelest robber do so. It is no great thing to fear punishment, but great it is to love righteousness. Has he, then, who loves righteousness no fear? Certainly he has; not of incurring of punishment, but of losing righteousness.”

Can we lose righteousness? Let us continue to read Augustine, as he then says, “My brethren, assure yourselves of it, and draw your inference from that which you love. Some one of you is fond of money. Can I find any one, think you, who is not so? Yet from this very thing which he loves he may understand my meaning. He is afraid of loss: why is he so? Because he

loves money. In the same measure that he loves money, is he afraid of losing it. So, then, some one is found to be a lover of righteousness, who at heart is much more afraid of its loss, who dreads more being stripped of his righteousness, than thou of thy money. This is the fear that is clean—this [the fear] that endureth for ever.”

He is referring in context to **Psalms 19 (KJV):9** The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

But it is not the fear of losing righteousness, but the fear of the Lord that is clean, enduring forever.

He continues, “It is not this that love makes away with, or casteth out, but rather embraces it, and keeps it with it, and possesses it as a companion. For we come to the Lord that we may see Him face to face. And there it is this pure fear that preserves us; for such a fear as that does not disturb, but reassure. The adulterous woman fears the coming of her husband, and the chaste one fears her husband’s departure.”

We receive the righteousness of God when we believe, because it is God who justifies us as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

After God has justified us, we stand in grace as we read in **Roman 12 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

In the thinking of the early Church, one could lose life by losing the Spirit of God if he or she lived as a profligate after baptism. Irenaeus, who lived between 120 and 202 AD, approximately, and was a bishop in Lyons, France from 177 to 202 A.D., codified this thinking in his writing. Here is a quote.

“For he who lives inherits, but the flesh is inherited. In order that we may not lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses us, the apostle, exhorting us to the communion of the Spirit, has said, according to reason, in those words already quoted, “That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” Just as if he were to say, “Do not err; for unless the Word of God dwell with, and the Spirit of the Father be in you, and if ye shall live frivolously and carelessly as if ye were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood, ye cannot inherit the kingdom of God.””  
**Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Page 534, Irenaeus Against Heresies, Book 1: Chapter IX.—Showing how that passage of the apostle which the heretics pervert, should be understood; viz., “Flesh and blood shall not possess the kingdom of God.”**

The Spirit of God departed from Saul, as we read in **1 Samuel 16 (KJV):14** But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.



So Saul sought a medium as we read in **1 Samuel 28 (KJV):6** And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. 7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

Then Saul went to the woman with a familiar spirit at Endor. The result was as we read in **1 Samuel 28 (KJV):11** Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. 12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? For thou art Saul. 13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. 14 And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. 15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. 16 Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? 17 And the Lord hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David: 18 Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day. 19 Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

Saul died in battle the next day, but he and his sons went to be with Samuel, who was in Paradise, the upper part in Sheol, where all the righteous dead were kept until Jesus rose from the dead, and by His blood entered heaven for us. Jesus then took captivity captive into heaven to be with Him, as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):8** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Saul was disciplined by the Lord as we read in **1 Chronicles 10 (KJV):13** So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it;

Saul is an example of one who commits the sin unto death, as we read of in **1 John 5 (KJV):16** If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

Another example is found in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):26** For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among

you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

The sin unto death relates to physical death, not spiritual death, for though one is “chastened of the Lord” he or she will “not be condemned with the world”.

## A Total Fall

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm XCIV, paragraphs 15-17, page 464-465

15. “Who will rise up for me against the wicked? or who will take my part against the evil doers?” (ver. 16). Many persuade us to divers evils: the serpent ceaseth not to whisper to thee to work iniquity: whichever way thou shalt turn, if perchance thou hast done well, thou seekest to live well with some one, and thou hardly findest any one; many wicked men surround thee, for there are few grains of wheat, and much chaff. This floor hath its grains of corn, but as yet they suffer. Therefore the whole mass of the wheat, when separated from the chaff, will be great: the grains are few, but when compared with the chaff, still many in themselves. When therefore the wicked cry out on every side, and say, Why livest thou thus? Art thou the only Christian? Why dost thou not do what others also do? Why dost thou not frequent the theatres, as others do? Why dost thou not use charms and amulets? Why dost thou not consult astrologers and soothsayers, even as others do? And thou crossest thyself (*Et tu signas te.*), and sayest, I am Christian, that thou mayest repel them, whosoever they are; but the enemy presses on, urges his attacks; what is worse, by the example of Christians he choketh Christians. They toil on, in the midst of heat: the Christian soul suffereth tribulation: yet it hath power to conquer: hath it such power of itself? For this reason remark what he saith. For he answereth, What doth it profit me that I now find charms for myself, and gain a few days? I depart hence from this life, and repair unto my Lord, who shall send me into the flames; because I have preferred a few days to life eternal, He shall send me into hell. What hell? That of the eternal judgment of God. Is it really so (the enemy answereth), unless indeed thou really believest that God careth how men live? And perhaps it is not an acquaintance who speaketh thus to thee in the street, but thy wife at home, or possibly the husband to the faithful and holy wife, her deceiver. If it be the woman to her husband, she is as Eve unto him; if as the husband unto the wife, he is as the devil unto her: either she is herself as Eve unto thee, or thou art a serpent unto her. Sometimes the father would incline his thoughts to his son, and findeth him wicked, utterly depraved: he is in a fever of misery, he wavers, he seeketh how to subdue him, he is almost drawn in, and consenteth: but may God be near him....

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““Who will rise up for me against the wicked? Or who will take my part against the evil doers?” (ver. 16).”

He refers to **Psalm 94 (KJV):16** Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? Or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?

He continues, “Many persuade us to divers evils: the serpent ceaseth not to whisper to

thee to work iniquity: whichever way thou shalt turn, if perchance thou hast done well, thou seekest to live well with some one, and thou hardly findest any one; many wicked men surround thee, for there are few grains of wheat, and much chaff. This floor hath its grains of corn, but as yet they suffer. Therefore the whole mass of the wheat, when separated from the chaff, will be great: the grains are few, but when compared with the chaff, still many in themselves.”

He is referring in part to **Psalm 1 (KJV):4** The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

And to **Matthew 3 (KJV):11** I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance. but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: 12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

He continues, “When therefore the wicked cry out on every side, and say, Why livest thou thus? Art thou the only Christian? Why dost thou not do what others also do? Why dost thou not frequent the theatres, as others do? Why dost thou not use charms and amulets? Why dost thou not consult astrologers and soothsayers, even as others do? And thou crossest thyself (*Et tu signas te.*), and sayest, I am Christian, that thou mayest repel them, whosoever they are; but the enemy presses on, urges his attacks; what is worse, by the example of Christians he choketh Christians. They toil on, in the midst of heat: the Christian soul suffereth tribulation: yet it hath power to conquer: hath it such power of itself?”

It will be come clearer who he is now speaking for in the next paragraph as he continues, “For this reason remark what he saith. For he answereth, What doth it profit me that I now find charms for myself, and gain a few days? I depart hence from this life, and repair unto my Lord, who shall send me into the flames; because I have preferred a few days to life eternal, He shall send me into hell. What hell? That of the eternal judgment of God. Is it really so (the enemy answereth), unless indeed thou really believest that God careth how men live? And perhaps it is not an acquaintance who speaketh thus to thee in the street, but thy wife at home, or possibly the husband to the faithful and holy wife, her deceiver. If it be the woman to her husband, she is as Eve unto him; if as the husband unto the wife, he is as the devil unto her: either she is herself as Eve unto thee, or thou art a serpent unto her. Sometimes the father would incline his thoughts to his son, and findeth him wicked, utterly depraved: he is in a fever of misery, he wavers, he seeketh how to subdue him, he is almost drawn in, and consenteth: but may God be near him....”

Let us continue to read in the next paragraph.

16. “If the Lord,” he saith, “had not helped me: within a little my soul had dwelt in hell” (ver. 17). I had almost plunged into that pit which is preparing for sinners: that is, my soul had dwelt in hell. Because he already began to waver, and nearly to consent, he looked back unto the Lord. Suppose, for example’s sake, he was insulted to tempt him to iniquity. For sometimes the wicked flock together, and insult the good; especially if they are more in number, and if they have taken him alone, as there is often much chaff about one grain of wheat (though there will not be when the heap hath been fanned); he is then taken among many wicked ones, is insulted, and surrounded; they wish to place themselves over him, they torment him and insult him for his very righteousness. A great Apostle! say they; Thou hast flown into heaven, as Elias

did! Men do these things, so that sometime, when he listeneth to the tongue of men, he is ashamed to be good among the wicked. Let him therefore resist the evil; but not of his own strength, lest he become proud, and when he wishes to escape the proud, himself increase their number....

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, ““If the Lord,” he saith, “had not helped me: within a little my soul had dwelt in hell” (ver. 17).”

He refers to **Psalm 93 (Douay Rheims):17** Unless the Lord had been my helper, my soul had almost dwelt in hell.

And to **Psalm 94 (Septuagint):17** If the Lord had not helped me, my soul had almost sojourned in Hades.

And to **Psalm 94 (KJV):17** Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.

And to **Psalm 94 (NASB):17** If the Lord had not been my help, My soul would soon have dwelt in the abode of silence.

The word translated above as hell, or Hades, or silence as in the **King James Version**, in Hebrew is דִּמְמָה (pronounced dü·mä'), from an unused root meaning to be dumb (compare H1820); silence; figuratively, death:—silence. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, H1745.**

He continues, “I had almost plunged into that pit which is preparing for sinners: that is, my soul had dwelt in hell.”

In the Old Testament, the righteous dead went down to Sheol which was divided into two parts, that is, Abraham's bosom where the righteous dead went, and Hell or Hades, where the unrighteous dead went. But Augustine was apparently not aware of this division. He speaks here of the possibility of the righteous falling, and going to Hell.

Augustine continues, “Because he already began to waver, and nearly to consent, he looked back unto the Lord. Suppose, for example's sake, he was insulted to tempt him to iniquity. For sometimes the wicked flock together, and insult the good; especially if they are more in number, and if they have taken him alone, as there is often much chaff about one grain of wheat (though there will not be when the heap hath been fanned); he is then taken among many wicked ones, is insulted, and surrounded; they wish to place themselves over him, they torment him and insult him for his very righteousness. A great Apostle! say they; Thou hast flown into heaven, as Elias did! Men do these things, so that sometime, when he listeneth to the tongue of men, he is ashamed to be good among the wicked. Let him therefore resist the evil; but not of his own strength, lest he become proud, and when he wishes to escape the proud, himself increase their number....”

Augustine poses the possibility of a Christian becoming chaff. He continues in the next paragraph.

17. “If I said, My foot hath slipt; Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up” (ver. 18). See how God loveth confession. Thy foot hath slipt, and thou sayest not, my foot hath slipt; but thou sayest thou art firm, when thou art slipping. The moment thou beginnest to slip or waver, confess thou that slip, that thou mayest not bewail thy total fall; that He may help, so that thy soul be not in hell. God loveth confession, loveth humility. Thou hast slipped, as a man; God

helpeth thee, nevertheless: yet say, “My foot hath slipt.” Why dost thou slip, and yet sayest, I am firm? “When I said, My foot hath slipt, Thy mercy, O Lord, hath held me up.” Just as Peter presumed, but not in strength of his own. The Lord was seen to walk upon the sea, trampling on the heads of all the proud in this life. In walking upon the foaming waves, He figured His own course when He trampleth on the heads of the proud. The Church too doth trample upon them: for Peter is the Church Herself. Nevertheless, Peter dared not by himself walk upon the waters; but what said he? “Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.” (Matthew 14:28) He in His own power, Peter by His order; “bid me,” he saith, “come unto Thee.” He answered, “Come.” For the Church also trampleth on the heads of the proud; but since it is the Church, and hath human weakness, that these words might be fulfilled, “If I said, My foot hath slipt,” Peter tottered on the sea, and cried out, “Lord, save me!” (Matthew 14:30) and so what is here put, “If I said, My foot hath slipt,” is put there, “Lord, I perish.” And what is here, “Thy mercy, O Lord, hath held me up,” is there put, “And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, saying, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” (Matthew 14:31) It is wonderful how God proveth men: our very dangers render Him who rescueth us sweeter unto us. For see what followeth: because he said, “If I said, My foot hath slipt, Thy mercy, O Lord, hath held me up.” The Lord hath become especially sweet unto him, in rescuing him from danger; and thus speaking of this very sweetness of the Lord, he exclaimeth and saith, “O Lord, in the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart, Thy comforts have refreshed my soul” (ver. 19). Many sorrows, but many consolations: bitter wounds, and sweet remedies.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, ““If I said, My foot hath slipt; Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up” (ver. 18).”

He refers to **Psalm 94 (Douay Rheims):18** If I said: My foot is moved: thy mercy, O Lord, assisted me.

And to **Psalm 94 (KJV):18** When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.

He continues, “See how God loveth confession. Thy foot hath slipt, and thou sayest not, my foot hath slipt; but thou sayest thou art firm, when thou art slipping. The moment thou beginnest to slip or waver, confess thou that slip, that thou mayest not bewail thy total fall; that He may help, so that thy soul be not in hell.”

Augustine here poses the possibility of one losing their salvation.

He continues, “God loveth confession, loveth humility. Thou hast slipped, as a man; God helpeth thee, nevertheless: yet say, “My foot hath slipt.” Why dost thou slip, and yet sayest, I am firm? “When I said, My foot hath slipt, Thy mercy, O Lord, hath held me up.” Just as Peter presumed, but not in strength of his own. The Lord was seen to walk upon the sea, trampling on the heads of all the proud in this life. In walking upon the foaming waves, He figured His own course when He trampleth on the heads of the proud. The Church too doth trample upon them: for Peter is the Church Herself. Nevertheless, Peter dared not by himself walk upon the waters; but what said he? “Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.” (Matthew 14:28)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 14 (KJV):28** And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

He continues, “He in His own power, Peter by His order; “bid me,” he saith, “come unto

Thee.” He answered, “Come.” For the Church also trampleth on the heads of the proud; but since it is the Church, and hath human weakness, that these words might be fulfilled, “If I said, My foot hath slipt,” Peter tottered on the sea, and cried out, “Lord, save me!” (Matthew 14:30) and so what is here put, “If I said, My foot hath slipt,” is put there, “Lord, I perish.” And what is here, “Thy mercy, O Lord, hath held me up,” is there put, “And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, saying, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” (Matthew 14:31)”

He refers to **Matthew 14 (KJV):30** But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. 31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

He continues, “It is wonderful how God proveth men: our very dangers render Him who rescueth us sweeter unto us. For see what followeth: because he said, “If I said, My foot hath slipt, Thy mercy, O Lord, hath held me up.” The Lord hath become especially sweet unto him, in rescuing him from danger; and thus speaking of this very sweetness of the Lord, he exclaimeth and saith, “O Lord, in the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart, Thy comforts have refreshed my soul” (ver. 19). Many sorrows, but many consolations: bitter wounds, and sweet remedies.”

He refers in context to **Psalms 94 (Doauy Rheims):19** According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, thy comforts have given joy to my soul. 20 Doth the seat of iniquity stick to thee, who framest labour in commandment? 21 They will hunt after the soul of the just, and will condemn innocent blood. 22 But the Lord is my refuge: and my God the help of my hope. 23 And he will render them their iniquity: and in their malice he will destroy them: the Lord our God will destroy them.

And in context to **Psalms 94 (KJV):19** In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul. 20 Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law? 21 They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood. 22 But the Lord is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge. 23 And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off.

We read of much more assurance of salvation in the **King James Version** than the **Latin Vulgate (Douay Rheims)**. In verse 22, “the Lord is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge”. If I slip, that is, if I sin, I have an advocate with the Father as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Jesus Christ is the only propitiation for sin in the whole world. If we fall, we shall not be utterly cast down as we read in **Psalms 37 (KJV):23** The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.

The reason we cannot have a total fall after we have been born again is because God has justified us. That is, He has put His righteousness down to our account as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and



come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

But let us give diligence to make our calling and election sure as Peter encourages in **2 Peter 1 (KJV)**: 1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. 10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

## Summary

Augustine says, ““And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)”. He then says, “They who are baptized, and forthwith depart out of this life, come up from the font without any debt; without any debt they leave the world. But they who are baptized and are still kept in this life, contract defilements by reason of their mortal frailty, by which though the ship be not sunk, yet have they need of recourse to the pump. For otherwise by little and little will that enter in by which the whole ship will be sunk. And to offer this prayer, is to have recourse to the pump.”

In other words, if we don't forgive our debtors, our ship will be sunk, and we will lose our salvation.

According to Augustine, taking vengeance is a damnable sin, as he says, “If thou hadst committed any sin as to other senses, and other lusts, hence mightest thou have had thy cure, in that thou mightest say, “Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.” But whoso instigateth thee to take vengeance, will lose for thee the power thou hadst to say, “As we also forgive our debtors.” When that power is lost, all sins will be retained; nothing at all is remitted.”

He speaks of being overwhelmed by sin, as he says, “But he that walks in His love and mercy, even being free from those great and deadly sins, such crimes as murder, theft, adultery; still, because of those which seem to be minute sins, of tongue, or of thought, or of intemperance in things permitted, he doeth the truth in confession, and cometh to the light in good works: since many minute sins, if they be neglected, kill. Minute are the drops that swell the rivers; minute are the grains of sand; but if much sand is put together, the heap presses and

crushes. Bilge-water neglected in the hold does the same thing as a rushing wave. Gradually it leaks in through the hold; and by long leaking in and no pumping out, it sinks the ship. Now what is this pumping out, but by good works, by sighing, fasting, giving, forgiving, so to effect that sins may not overwhelm us?"

It is a damnable sin to forsake the Church, as he says, "i.e., if thou hold fast charity, neither in Christ shalt thou have occasion of falling, nor in the Church; neither Christ shalt thou forsake, nor the Church. For he that forsakes the Church, how is he in Christ who is not in the members of Christ? How is he in Christ who is not in the body of Christ? Those therefore take scandal, or, occasion of falling, who forsake Christ or the Church."

He speaks of the unpardonable sin, as he says, "And hence, both Jews and whatsoever heretics there are who confess the Holy Ghost, but deny that He is in the Body of Christ, which is His One Only Church, none other than the One Catholic Church, are without doubt like the Pharisees who at that time although they confessed the existence of the Holy Ghost, yet denied that He was in Christ, whose works in casting out devils they attributed to the prince of devils."

And he then adds, "For this blasphemy of the Spirit, for which there is no forgiveness (which I have understood to be not every kind of blasphemy, but a particular sort, and that as I have said or discovered, or even as I think clearly shown to be the case, the persevering hardness of an impenitent heart), cannot be taken hold of in any one, I repeat it, as long as he is still in this life."

He believed we are lamps, but we can be extinguished, as he says, "For, indeed, all men are lamps, since they can be both lighted and extinguished. Moreover, when the lamps are wise, they shine and glow with the Spirit; yet also, if they did burn and are put out, they even stink. The servants of God remain good lamps by the oil of His mercy, not by their own strength. The free grace of God, truly, is the oil of the lamps."

He spoke of "deadly" sins, as he says, "Though your sins are daily, at least let them not be deadly."

He speaks of heretics, as he says, "He then who is in the unity of Christ's body (that is to say, in the Christian membership), of which body the faithful have been wont to receive the sacrament at the altar, that man is truly said to eat the body and drink the blood of Christ. And consequently heretics and schismatics being separate from the unity of this body, are able to receive the same sacrament, but with no profit to themselves,—nay, rather to their own hurt, so that they are rather more severely judged than liberated after some time. For they are not in that bond of peace which is symbolized by that sacrament."

Then of heretics, he also says, "And therefore neither ought such persons as lead an abandoned and damnable life to be confident of salvation, though they persevere to the end in the communion of the Church Catholic, and comfort themselves with the words, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." By the iniquity of their life they abandon that very righteousness of life which Christ is to them, whether it be by fornication, or by perpetrating in their body the other uncleannesses which the apostle would not so much as mention, or by a dissolute luxury, or by doing any one of those things of which he says, "They who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Consequently, they who do such things shall not exist anywhere but in eternal punishment, since they cannot be in the kingdom of God. For, while they continue in such things to the very end of life, they cannot be said to abide in Christ to the end; for to abide in Him is to abide in the faith of Christ."

Regarding the soul, he says, “**Let each one give heed to his own soul: in sinning he dies: sin is the death of the soul.**” About this death he adds, “A grievous kind of death it is, and is distinguished as a habit of wickedness. For it is one thing to fall into sin, another to form the habit of sinning. He who falls into sin, and straightway submits to correction, will be speedily restored to life; for he is not yet entangled in the habit, he is not yet laid in the tomb.”

Regarding someone who wanders off, Augustine also said, “**We are God’s money: we have wandered away as coin from the treasury. The impression that was stamped upon us has been rubbed out by our wandering. He has come to refashion, for He it was that fashioned us at first; and He is Himself asking for His money, as Cæsar for his. Therefore He says, “Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s:” (Matthew 22:21) to Cæsar his money, to God yourselves. And then shall the truth be reproduced in us.**”

Augustine believed it was good to have a chaste fear of losing righteousness, as he says, “**What then of the two fears? There is a servile fear, and there is a clean [chaste] fear: there is the fear of suffering punishment, there is another fear of losing righteousness. That fear of suffering punishment is slavish. What great thing is it to fear punishment? The vilest slave and the cruellest robber do so. It is no great thing to fear punishment, but great it is to love righteousness. Has he, then, who loves righteousness no fear? Certainly he has; not of incurring of punishment, but of losing righteousness.**”

He speaks of a “total fall” as he says, “**See how God loveth confession. Thy foot hath slipt, and thou sayest not, my foot hath slipt; but thou sayest thou art firm, when thou art slipping. The moment thou beginnest to slip or waver, confess thou that slip, that thou mayest not bewail thy total fall; that He may help, so that thy soul be not in hell.**”

What he is really talking about here is committing a damnable, or mortal, sin, which would doom us to hell unless we “have penitently abandoned that evil, and have returned to this good to be reconciled to it.” So repentance is an option. Included in the damnable sins of Galatians 5:19-21 was the sin of heresy. Heresy also puts someone out of the body of Christ, according to Augustine’s thinking.

But let us look at Paul’s discussion in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):15** Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. **16** What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh. **17** But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. **18** Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. **19** What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? **20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

Paul says that committing fornication is like being joined to a harlot, “For two, saith he, shall be one flesh”, in verse 16. And this is a sin. But Paul also told the Corinthians that the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them as we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):4** I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; **5** That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; **6** Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: **7** So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: **8** Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And that they were in Christ Jesus, Paul confirms as we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

And that they were not their own, but “bought with a price”, for their body and their spirit “are God's”, Paul confirms in 1 Corinthians 6:20 above.

We need to understand what happens when we are born again. Jesus explains the new birth to Nicodemus in **John 3 (KJV):1** There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

By this we understand that there are two births, one of flesh, and one of the Spirit of God. With the fleshly birth, the one who was born had no say in his or her birth. So with the spiritual birth, the wind blows where it wishes as we continue in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

And we read that it was not by the will of man in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And again we read **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

So being born of the Spirit, we now have eternal life in our spirit as John reveals in **1 John 5 (KJV):12** He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Being thus born of the Spirit of God, we have a new nature in our spirits as Peter reveals in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

And so John says in **1 John 3 (KJV):9** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Being born of God we delight to do the will of God in our inner man, as Paul reveals in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

Our spirit, which has been born again of the Spirit of God, has a new divine nature, and therefore delights to do the will of God. It cannot sin. But the one who has been born again still has a sinful nature in their flesh as we continue in **Romans 7 (KJV):23** But I see another law in

my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

So having been born again, the born one does not sin in the inner spirit, but in verse 23 above we read that the flesh still has sin in its members. Paul explains in **Romans 7 (KJV):**17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

In verse 18, we read that in my flesh “dwelleth no good thing”. But in my spirit I delight to do the will of God as we read again in **Romans 7 (KJV):**22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

Now our soul is the part of us between the flesh and the spirit. That there is a difference between soul and spirit we know from **Hebrews 4 (KJV):**12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The faculties of the spirit are faith, hope, prayer, and worship. The faculties of our soul are intellect, feelings or emotions, conscience, will, and heart which is the center of our emotions, or feelings. The faculties of our body are touch, taste, sight, hearing, and smelling.

It is in our soul where we must be renewed as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):**1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Our minds are renewed by the knowledge of God which comes from the word of God. As we surrender to the word of God, we are transformed, and we grow spiritually in grace and knowledge.

Our soul is where we have all the baggage of our past, our old ways of thinking, and feelings that have been hurt. So the one who has been born again can still sin when our soul yields to our flesh. But because of our standing in Christ, we have a way to deal with our sin in our soul. When God justified us, He put His righteousness down to our account as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):**21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

We are justified freely by His grace when we have faith and believe. This is now a past event in the life of the one who has faith as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):**1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

And in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

We now have a standing as righteous ones, and we stand in grace, as in Romans 5:2 above. This does not mean that we are perfect yet. There may be a lot to process in our soul area. All of the hurts of the past, the hurt feelings, the old ways of thinking, will have to be cleansed by the word of God. This cleansing happens by the word as we read in **John 15 (KJV):3** Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

And in **John 17 (KJV):17** Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

And when we see Him we will be like Him as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

We are now the sons of God, and if we sin we have an advocate with the Father as we read in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Because of our faith we have a standing with God as righteous ones. We are not condemned as we read in **John 3 (KJV):18** He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

God now deals with us as sons and daughters. If we are disobedient, He will discipline us as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):1** Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.



But let us make sure that we are sons and daughters as we read in **2 Corinthians 13 (KJV):5** Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

We are reprobates if we have not been born again. Once we have been born again, we cannot be reprobates. If we sin, we are still members of the body of Christ. The body of Christ is a spiritual body, and we are added to it sovereignly by the Lord when we believe, and we are born again, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

And in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Our membership in the body of Christ does not depend on our obedience after we have been born again. It also does not depend on our maintaining unity with any Church. And our salvation is not by works. We are saved by grace through faith, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Not only so, but we have been justified by faith as we read above in Romans 5:1-2. When we were justified, the righteousness of God was imputed to us, or put down to our account, as we read above in Romans 3:21-24.

In view of this, when Paul says that “they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God”, we can understand that he is referring to the fact that such things shall not be done in the kingdom of God that we shall inherit. It is the unrighteous that will not inherit the kingdom of God as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):9** Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Those who have been justified are the righteous, and they shall inherit the kingdom of God.

# The New Covenant

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Spirit and the Letter, Chapter 41, page 100

Chapter 41.—The Law Written in the Heart, and the Reward of the Eternal Contemplation of God, Belong to the New Covenant; Who Among the Saints are the Least and the Greatest.

As then the law of works, which was written on the tables of stone, and its reward, the land of promise, which the house of the carnal Israel after their liberation from Egypt received, belonged to the old testament, so the law of faith, written on the heart, and its reward, the beatific vision which the house of the spiritual Israel, when delivered from the present world, shall perceive, belong to the new testament. Then shall come to pass what the apostle describes: “Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away,” (1 Corinthians 13:8)—even that imperfect knowledge of “the child” in which this present life is passed, and which is but “in part,” “by means of a mirror darkly.” (1 Corinthians 13:11-12) Because of this, indeed, “prophecy” is necessary, for still to the past succeeds the future; and because of this, too, “tongues” are required,—that is, a multiplicity of expressions, since it is by different ones that different things are suggested to him who does not as yet contemplate with a perfectly purified mind the everlasting light of transparent truth. “When that, however, which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away,” (1 Corinthians 13:10) then, what appeared to the flesh in assumed flesh shall display Itself as It is in Itself to all who love It; then, there shall be eternal life for us to know the one very God; (John 17:3) then shall we be like Him. (1 John 3:2) because “we shall then know, even as we are known,” (1 Corinthians 13:12) then “they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least unto the greatest of them.” (Jeremiah 31:34) Now this may be understood in several ways: Either, that in that life the saints shall differ one from another in glory, as star from star. It matters not how the expression runs,—whether (as in the passage before us) it be, “From the least unto the greatest of them,” or the other way, From the greatest unto the least. And, in like manner, it matters not even if we understand “*the least*” to mean those who simply believe, and “*the greatest*” those who have been further able to understand—so far as may be in this world—the light which is incorporeal and unchangeable. Or, “*the least*” may mean those who are later in time; whilst by “*the greatest*” He may have intended to indicate those who were prior in time. For they are all to receive the promised vision of God hereafter, since it was for us that they foresaw the future which would be better than their present, that they without us should not arrive at complete perfection. (Hebrews 11:40) And so the earlier are found to be the lesser, because they were less deferred in time; as in the case of the gospel “penny a day,” which is given for an illustration. (Matthew 20:8) This penny they are the first to receive who came last into the vineyard. Or, “the least and the greatest” ought perhaps to be taken in some other sense, which at present does not occur to my mind.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “As then the law of works, which was written

on the tables of stone, and its reward, the land of promise, which the house of the carnal Israel after their liberation from Egypt received, belonged to the old testament, so the law of faith, written on the heart, and its reward, the beatific vision which the house of the spiritual Israel, when delivered from the present world, shall perceive, belong to the new testament.”

The Scripture says that spiritual Israel is the Israel of God as Paul reveals in **Galatians 6 (KJV):16** And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

He continues, “Then shall come to pass what the apostle describes: “Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away,” (1 Corinthians 13:8)—even that imperfect knowledge of “the child” in which this present life is passed, and which is but “in part,” “by means of a mirror darkly.” (1 Corinthians 13:11-12)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 13 (Douay Rheims):8** Charity never falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void or tongues shall cease or knowledge shall be destroyed. 9 For we know in part: and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But, when I became a man, I put away the things of a child. 12 We see now through a glass in a dark manner: but then face to face. Now I know in part: but then I shall know even as I am known.

And to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):8** Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

The word “fail” in verse 8 of the **King James Version** in the Greek is **καταργέω** (pronounced kā-tār-ge'-ō), from G2596 and G691; to be (render) entirely idle (useless), literally or figuratively:—abolish, cease, cumber, deliver, destroy, do away, become (make) of no (none, without) effect, fail, loose, bring (come) to nought, put away (down), vanish away, make void.

This Greek word is composed of two Greek words, that is, from G2596 **κατά** (pronounced kā-tä'), according to, after, in, and G691 **ἀργέω** (pronounced ār-ge'-ō), from G692; to be idle, i.e. (figuratively) to delay:—linger. **Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G2673, G2596, G691.**

So the sense in verse 8 is that prophecies will not be made when the perfect comes in verse 10.

He continues, “Because of this, indeed, “prophecy” is necessary, for still to the past succeeds the future; and because of this, too, “tongues” are required,—that is, a multiplicity of expressions, since it is by different ones that different things are suggested to him who does not as yet contemplate with a perfectly purified mind the everlasting light of transparent truth.”

Prophecy is necessary as Augustine says, “for still to the past succeeds the future”. But he defines “tongues” as “a multiplicity of expressions” of “the everlasting light of transparent truth”. But Paul defines tongues as in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):2** For he that speaketh in an

unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

There are two operations of the gift of speaking in tongues. The first operation was in a known tongue, but unknown to the speaker, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):4** And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. 5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. 6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. 7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

The second is in an unknown tongue, as Paul says in **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):1** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):2** For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.

The purpose of prophecy in the Church was not to reveal the future but to edify as we read in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):3** But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. 4 He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

Speaking in tongues is a gift of the Spirit, and must be interpreted by the Spirit as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):6** Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?

“No man understandeth” the one speaking in tongues in the Church unless there is an interpreter as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):27** If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.

The interpretation of tongues is also a gift of the Spirit as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):7** But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

These are not human abilities, but workings of the Spirit of God. As manifestations of the Spirit, they manifest His presence among us.

Augustine continues, ““When that, however, which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away,” (1 Corinthians 13:10)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):10** But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I

understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

He continues, “Then, what appeared to the flesh in assumed flesh shall display Itself as It is in Itself to all who love It; then, there shall be eternal life for us to know the one very God; (John 17:3)”

He refers to **John 17 (KJV):3** And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

He continues, “then shall we be like Him. (1 John 3:2) because “we shall then know, even as we are known;” (1 Corinthians 13:12)”

He refers to **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

We will know as we are known because we will be changed to have imperishable bodies, like His glorious body, as Paul reveals in **Philippians 3 (KJV):21** Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

This will occur at the resurrection.

He also refers to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):12** For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

He continues, “then “they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least unto the greatest of them.” (Jeremiah 31:34)”

He refers to **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):34** And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Augustine continues, “Now this may be understood in several ways: Either, that in that life the saints shall differ one from another in glory, as star from star.”

Paul speaks of this as he is explaining the resurrection in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):41** There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

And we read in **Daniel 12 (KJV):1** And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Augustine continues, “It matters not how the expression runs,—whether (as in the passage before us) it be, “From the least unto the greatest of them,” or the other way, From the greatest unto the least. And, in like manner, it matters not even if we understand “the least” to mean those who simply believe, and “the greatest” those who have been further able to understand—so far as may be in this world—the light which is incorporeal and unchangeable.

Or, “the least” may mean those who are later in time; whilst by “the greatest” He may have intended to indicate those who were prior in time. For they are all to receive the promised vision of God hereafter, since it was for us that they foresaw the future which would be better than their present, that they without us should not arrive at complete perfection. (Hebrews 11:40)”

He refers in context to **Hebrews 11 (KJV):39** And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

He continues, “And so the earlier are found to be the lesser, because they were less deferred in time; as in the case of the gospel “penny a day,” which is given for an illustration. (Matthew 20:8)”

He refers in context to **Matthew 20 (KJV):8** So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. 9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. 10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. 11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, 12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. 13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? 14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? 16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

He concludes, “This penny they are the first to receive who came last into the vineyard. Or, “the least and the greatest” ought perhaps to be taken in some other sense, which at present does not occur to my mind.”

However, the “penny” relates to the promise of eternal life which all believers shall receive equally, from first to last. But there will be further rewards for faithfulness to our particular ministry gift as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):8** Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

## **Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings**

### **On the Spirit and the Letter, Chapters 48-49, page 103-104**

Chapter 48.—The Image of God is Not Wholly Blotted Out in These Unbelievers; Venial Sins.

According to some, however, they who do by nature the things contained in the law must not be regarded as yet in the number of those whom Christ’s grace justifies, but rather as among those some of whose actions (although they are those of ungodly men, who do not truly and rightly worship the true God) we not only cannot blame, but even justly and rightly praise, since they have been done—so far as we read, or know, or hear—according to the rule of righteousness; though at the same time, were we to discuss the question with what motive they are done, they would hardly be found to be such as deserve the praise and defense which are due to righteous conduct. [XXVIII.] Still, since God’s image has not been so completely erased in the soul of man by the stain of earthly affections, as to have left remaining there not even the merest lineaments of it whence it might be justly said that man, even in the ungodliness of his



life, does, or appreciates, some things contained in the law; if this is what is meant by the statement that “the Gentiles, which have not the law” (that is, the law of God), “do by nature the things contained in the law,” (Romans 2:14) and that men of this character “are a law to themselves,” and “show the work of the law written in their hearts,”—that is to say, what was impressed on their hearts when they were created in the image of God has not been wholly blotted out:—**even in this view of the subject, that wide difference will not be disturbed, which separates the new covenant from the old, and which lies in the fact that by the new covenant the law of God is written in the hearts of believers, whereas in the old it was inscribed on tables of stone. For this writing in the heart is effected by renovation, although it had not been completely blotted out by the old nature. For just as that image of God is renewed in the mind of believers by the new testament, which impiety had not quite abolished (for there had remained undoubtedly that which the soul of man cannot be except it be rational), so also the law of God, which had not been wholly blotted out there by unrighteousness, is certainly written thereon, renewed by grace.** Now in the Jews the law which was written on tables could not effect this new inscription, which is justification, but only transgression. For they too were men, and there was inherent in them that power of nature, which enables the rational soul both to perceive and do what is lawful; but the godliness which transfers to another life happy and immortal has “a spotless law, converting souls,” (Psalm 19:7) so that by the light thereof they may be renewed, and that be accomplished in them which is written, “There has been manifested over us, O Lord, the light of Thy countenance.” (Psalm 4:6) Turned away from which, they have deserved to grow old, whilst they are incapable of renovation except by the grace of Christ,—in other words, without the intercession of the Mediator; there being “one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all.” (1 Timothy 2:5-6) Should those be strangers to His grace of whom we are treating, and who (after the manner of which we have spoken with sufficient fullness already) “do by nature the things contained in the law,” (Romans 2:14) of what use will be their “excusing thoughts” to them “in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men,” (Romans 2:15-16) unless it be perhaps to procure for them a milder punishment? **For as, on the one hand, there are certain venial sins which do not hinder the righteous man from the attainment of eternal life, and which are unavoidable in this life, so, on the other hand, there are some good works which are of no avail to an ungodly man towards the attainment of everlasting life, although it would be very difficult to find the life of any very bad man whatever entirely without them.** But inasmuch as in the kingdom of God the saints differ in glory as one star does from another, (1 Corinthians 15:41) so likewise, in the condemnation of everlasting punishment, it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that other city; (Luke 10:12) whilst some men will be twofold more the children of hell than others. (Matthew 23:15) Thus in the judgment of God not even this fact will be without its influence,—that one man will have sinned more, or less, than another, even when both are involved in the ungodliness that is worthy of damnation.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “According to some, however, they who do by nature the things contained in the law must not be regarded as yet in the number of those whom Christ’s grace justifies, but rather as among those some of whose actions (although they are those of ungodly men, who do not truly and rightly worship the true God) we not only cannot

blame, but even justly and rightly praise, since they have been done—so far as we read, or know, or hear—according to the rule of righteousness; though at the same time, were we to discuss the question with what motive they are done, they would hardly be found to be such as deserve the praise and defense which are due to righteous conduct. [XXVIII.]”

He is referring to **Romans 2 (KJV):14** For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

Augustine will soon explain why the ungodly cannot be justified when they “do by nature the things contained in the law”.

He continues, “Still, since God’s image has not been so completely erased in the soul of man by the stain of earthly affections, as to have left remaining there not even the merest lineaments of it whence it might be justly said that man, even in the ungodliness of his life, does, or appreciates, some things contained in the law; if this is what is meant by the statement that “the Gentiles, which have not the law” (that is, the law of God), “do by nature the things contained in the law,” (Romans 2:14) and that men of this character “are a law to themselves,” and “show the work of the law written in their hearts,”—that is to say, what was impressed on their hearts when they were created in the image of God has not been wholly blotted out:”

He is referring again to **Romans 2 (KJV):14** For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

He continues, “—even in this view of the subject, that wide difference will not be disturbed, which separates the new covenant from the old, and which lies in the fact that by the new covenant the law of God is written in the hearts of believers, whereas in the old it was inscribed on tables of stone.”

Augustine refers to the “new covenant” here. This covenant was prophesied by Jeremiah in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):31** Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

This promise was first and foremost made to Israel as we continue to read in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):35** Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: 36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

He is speaking of a time when Israel as a nation will be restored again to be a godly nation. So when the Lord says in verse 33, “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people”, He is speaking of the new birth that will happen when Israel repents and turns to the Lord. This is also spoken of in **Ezekiel 36 (KJV):24** For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all

countries, and will bring you into your own land. 25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. 28 And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. 29 I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.

Although the covenants in the Bible are different, the new birth was a requirement of the people of God in every age. Augustine continues, “**For this writing in the heart is effected by renovation, although it had not been completely blotted out by the old nature.**”

He is saying that “**this writing in the heart**” was not “**completely blotted out by the old nature,**” because the Gentiles, at times, “do by nature the things contained in the law”, as in Romans 2:14 above.

Augustine continues, “**For just as that image of God is renewed in the mind of believers by the new testament, which impiety had not quite abolished (for there had remained undoubtedly that which the soul of man cannot be except it be rational), so also the law of God, which had not been wholly blotted out there by unrighteousness, is certainly written thereon, renewed by grace.**”

Not only so, but in believers, they are made new creations when they are born again of the Spirit of God. Augustine continues, “Now in the Jews the law which was written on tables could not effect this new inscription, which is justification, but only transgression. For they too were men, and there was inherent in them that power of nature, which enables the rational soul both to perceive and do what is lawful; but the godliness which transfers to another life happy and immortal has “a spotless law, converting souls,” (Psalm 19:7) so that by the light thereof they may be renewed, and that be accomplished in them which is written, “There has been manifested over us, O Lord, the light of Thy countenance.” (Psalm 4:6)”

He refers to **Psalm 19 (KJV):7** The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

And to **Psalm 4 (KJV):6** There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

It is clear that Augustine did not understand the new birth. To him it was grace given to the believer, beginning as a “**writing in the heart**” that “**is effected by renovation**”, which, if one did not persevere, he could lose that grace which effected this renovation. But, according to Augustine, he would not lose it if he was truly predestinated by God.

He continues, “Turned away from which, they have deserved to grow old, whilst they are incapable of renovation except by the grace of Christ,—in other words, without the intercession of the Mediator; there being “one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all.” (1 Timothy 2:5-6)”

He refers to **1 Timothy 2 (KJV):5** For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

We are saved by grace, through faith, and then the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit transforms our character as we grow in grace and knowledge. This is a progressive

sanctification in our soul area. In our spirit, having been born again of the Spirit of God, we are a new creation. Augustine did not completely understand this.

He then argues, “Should those be strangers to His grace of whom we are treating, and who (after the manner of which we have spoken with sufficient fullness already) “do by nature the things contained in the law,” (Romans 2:14) of what use will be their “excusing thoughts” to them “in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men,” (Romans 2:15-16) unless it be perhaps to procure for them a milder punishment?”

He refers to **Romans 2 (KJV)**:14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) 16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

God is real, and He is a God of truth as we read in **Deuteronomy 32 (KJV)**:4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.

But the unsaved are in denial as Paul reveals in **Romans 1 (KJV)**:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

He continues, “For as, on the one hand, there are certain venial sins which do not hinder the righteous man from the attainment of eternal life, and which are unavoidable in this life, so, on the other hand, there are some good works which are of no avail to an ungodly man towards the attainment of everlasting life, although it would be very difficult to find the life of any very bad man whatever entirely without them.”



We see that in Augustine's thinking "there are venials sins which do not hinder the righteous man from the attainment of eternal life, and which are unavoidable in this life". Though he does not mention it here, he also believed that there were "deadly sins" which would hinder the righteous man from the attainment of eternal life.

The reality is that there are no good works which are of any avail to any "man towards the attainment of everlasting life", for it is by grace that we are saved, not of works as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

Augustine continues, "But inasmuch as in the kingdom of God the saints differ in glory as one star does from another, (1 Corinthians 15:41) so likewise, in the condemnation of everlasting punishment, it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that other city; (Luke 10:12) whilst some men will be twofold more the children of hell than others. (Matthew 23:15)"

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):41** There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

And to **Luke 10 (KJV):12** But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

And to **Matthew 23 (KJV):15** Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

He then concludes, "Thus in the judgment of God not even this fact will be without its influence,—that one man will have sinned more, or less, than another, even when both are involved in the ungodliness that is worthy of damnation."

Chapter 49.—The Grace Promised by the Prophet for the New Covenant.

What then could the apostle have meant to imply by,—after checking the boasting of the Jews, by telling them that "not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified," (Romans 2:13) —immediately afterwards speaking of them "which, having not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law," (Romans 2:14) if in this description not they are to be understood who belong to the Mediator's grace, but rather they who, while not worshipping the true God with true godliness, do yet exhibit some good works in the general course of their ungodly lives? Or did the apostle perhaps deem it probable, because he had previously said that "with God there is no respect of persons," (Romans 2:11) and had afterwards said that "God is not the God of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles," (Romans 3:29)—that even such scanty little works of the law, as are suggested by nature, were not discovered in such as received not the law, except as the result of the remains of the image of God; which He does not disdain when they believe in Him, with whom there is no respect of persons? But whichever of these views is accepted, it is evident that the grace of God was promised to the new testament even by the prophet, and that this grace was definitively announced to take this shape,—God's laws were to be written in men's hearts; and they were to

arrive at such a knowledge of God, that they were not each one to teach his neighbour and brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all were to know Him, from the least to the greatest of them. (Jeremiah 31:33-34) This is the gift of the Holy Ghost, by which love is shed abroad in our hearts, (Romans 5:5)—not, indeed, any kind of love, but the love of God, “out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an unfeigned faith,” (1 Timothy 1:5) by means of which the just man, while living in this pilgrim state, is led on, after the stages of “the glass,” and “the enigma,” and “what is in part,” to the actual vision, that, face to face, he may know even as he is known. (1 Corinthians 13:12) For one thing has he required of the Lord, and that he still seeks after, that he may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life, in order to behold the pleasantness of the Lord. (Psalm 27:4)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “What then could the apostle have meant to imply by,—after checking the boasting of the Jews, by telling them that “not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified,” (Romans 2:13) — immediately afterwards speaking of them “which, having not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law,” (Romans 2:14) if in this description not they are to be understood who belong to the Mediator’s grace, but rather they who, while not worshipping the true God with true godliness, do yet exhibit some good works in the general course of their ungodly lives?”

He refers to **Romans 2 (KJV):13** (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. 14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

To answer Augustine’s question, yes, the Scripture is referring to “they who, while not worshipping the true God with true godliness, do yet exhibit some good works in the general course of their ungodly lives”.

He continues, “Or did the apostle perhaps deem it probable, because he had previously said that “with God there is no respect of persons,” (Romans 2:11) and had afterwards said that “God is not the God of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles,” (Romans 3:29)—that even such scanty little works of the law, as are suggested by nature, were not discovered in such as received not the law, except as the result of the remains of the image of God; which He does not disdain when they believe in Him, with whom there is no respect of persons?”

He refers in context to **Romans 2 (KJV):11** For there is no respect of persons with God. 12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;

And in context to **Romans 3 (KJV):29** For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

The Scripture is saying that the born again experience is required in every age. Circumcision did not save the saints in the Old Testament. It was their faith which made them saints, that is, holy ones, and those who had been born again. They did not have all of the knowledge that we have in the New Testament, but they had faith in the one true God which saved them, just as Abraham had.

He continues, “But whichever of these views is accepted, it is evident that the grace of



God was promised to the new testament even by the prophet, and that this grace was definitively announced to take this shape,—God’s laws were to be written in men’s hearts; and they were to arrive at such a knowledge of God, that they were not each one to teach his neighbour and brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all were to know Him, from the least to the greatest of them. (Jeremiah 31:33-34)”

He refers to **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):33** But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

This was a promise to Israel that they would again be the people of God. But even in the other covenants, they had to be born again. When Jesus came, the nation of Israel for the most part had no knowledge of this new birth because many of their teachers were not saved, as Jesus reveals in His dialog with Nicodemus in **John 3 (KJV):10** Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

Augustine continues, “This is the gift of the Holy Ghost, by which love is shed abroad in our hearts, (Romans 5:5)—not, indeed, any kind of love, but the love of God, “out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an unfeigned faith,” (1 Timothy 1:5) by means of which the just man, while living in this pilgrim state, is led on, after the stages of “the glass,” and “the enigma,” and “what is in part,” to the actual vision, that, face to face, he may know even as he is known. (1 Corinthians 13:12)”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):5** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

And to **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):5** Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

And to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):12** For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

He concludes, “For one thing has he required of the Lord, and that he still seeks after, that he may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life, in order to behold the pleasantness of the Lord. (Psalm 27:4)”

He refers to **Psalms 27 (KJV):4** One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.

## Summary

Augustine says, “As then the law of works, which was written on the tables of stone, and its reward, the land of promise, which the house of the carnal Israel after their liberation from Egypt received, belonged to the old testament, so the law of faith, written on the heart, and its reward, the beatific vision which the house of the spiritual Israel, when delivered from the present world, shall perceive, belong to the new testament.” Augustine did not know that

Israel will be restored at the end of the tribulation period. The New Covenant was a promise to Israel, but it began with the death of Jesus on the cross, as He taught in **Matthew 26 (KJV):26** And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

And this is mentioned in **Hebrews 8 (KJV):8** For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

And in **Hebrews 8 (KJV):13** In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

And in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):24** And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

The word in Greek here in Hebrews 12:24 is the same Greek work translated “testament” in Matthew 26:28, and is **διαθήκη** (pronounced dē-ä-thā'-kā), “from G1303; properly, a disposition, i.e. (specially) a contract (especially a devisory will):—covenant, testament.”

**Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G1242.**

The Church has not replaced Israel. The days are still to come for Israel as we read in **Jeremiah 31 (KJV):31** Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: 33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

The New Covenant, or Testament, has begun for us in the Church now. It will begin for Israel when they are saved at the end of the tribulation, as we read in **Zechariah 12 (KJV):9** And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. 10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

This will be at the time of Jacob's trouble but he shall be saved out of it as we read in **Jeremiah 30 (KJV):4** And these are the words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. 5 For thus saith the Lord; We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. 6 Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? 7 Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.

# Sanctification

## Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings

### On Man's Perfection in Righteousness, Chapters XVII-XVIII, page 173

Chapter XVII.—(38.) The Seventh Passage. Who May Be Called Immaculate. How It is that in God's Sight No Man is Justified.

“They also, says he, “quote the text: ‘For in thy sight shall no man living be justified.’” (Psalm 143:2) And his affected answer to this passage amounts to nothing else than the showing how texts of Holy Scripture seem to clash with one another, whereas it is our duty rather to demonstrate their agreement. These are his words: “We must confront them with this answer, from the testimony of the evangelist concerning holy Zacharias and Elisabeth, when he says, ‘And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.’” (Luke 1:6) Now both these righteous persons had, of course, read amongst these very commandments the method of cleansing their own sins. For, according to what is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews of “every high priest taken from among men,” (Hebrews 5:1) Zacharias used no doubt to offer sacrifices even for his own sins. The meaning, however, of the phrase “blameless,” which is applied to him, we have already, as I suppose, sufficiently explained. “And,” he adds, “the blessed apostle says, ‘That we should be holy, and without blame before Him.’” (Ephesians 1:4) This, according to him, is said that we should be so, if those persons are to be understood by “blameless” who are altogether without sin. If, however, they are “blameless” who are without blame or censure, then it is impossible for us to deny that there have been, and still are, such persons even in this present life; for it does not follow that a man is without sin because he has not a blot of accusation. Accordingly the apostle, when selecting ministers for ordination, does not say, “If any be sinless,” for he would be unable to find any such; but he says, “If any be without accusation,” (Titus 1:6) for such, of course, he would be able to find. But our opponent does not tell us how, in accordance with his views, we ought to understand the Scripture, “For in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” (Psalm 143:2) The meaning of these words is plain enough, receiving as it does additional light from the preceding clause: “Enter not,” says the Psalmist, “into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” It is judgment which he fears, therefore he desires that mercy which triumphs over judgment. (James 2:13) **For the meaning of the prayer, “Enter not into judgment with Thy servant,” is this: “Judge me not according to Thyself,” who art without sin; “for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” This without doubt is understood as spoken of the present life, whilst the predicate “shall not be justified” has reference to that perfect state of righteousness which belongs not to this life.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““They also, says he, “quote the text: ‘For in thy sight shall no man living be justified.’” (Psalm 143:2)”

He refers to **Psalm 143 (KJV):2** And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

He continues, “And his affected answer to this passage amounts to nothing else than the showing how texts of Holy Scripture seem to clash with one another, whereas it is our duty

rather to demonstrate their agreement. These are his words: “We must confront them with this answer, from the testimony of the evangelist concerning holy Zacharias and Elisabeth, when he says, ‘And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.’” (Luke 1:6)”

He refers in context to **Luke 1 (KJV):5** There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

He continues, “Now both these righteous persons had, of course, read amongst these very commandments the method of cleansing their own sins. For, according to what is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews of “every high priest taken from among men,” (Hebrews 5:1) Zacharias used no doubt to offer sacrifices even for his own sins.”

He refers to **Hebrews 5 (KJV):1** For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

And speaking of Jesus, we read in **Hebrews 7 (KJV):25** Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. 26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

So Zacharias used “to offer sacrifices even for his own sins”, just as Augustine says above.

Augustine continues, “The meaning, however, of the phrase “blameless,” which is applied to him, we have already, as I suppose, sufficiently explained. “And,” he adds, “the blessed apostle says, ‘That we should be holy, and without blame before Him.’” (Ephesians 1:4)”

He refers to **Ephesians 1 (KJV):4** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

He continues, “This, according to him, is said that we should be so, if those persons are to be understood by “blameless” who are altogether without sin. If, however, they are “blameless” who are without blame or censure, then it is impossible for us to deny that there have been, and still are, such persons even in this present life; for it does not follow that a man is without sin because he has not a blot of accusation. Accordingly the apostle, when selecting ministers for ordination, does not say, “If any be sinless,” for he would be unable to find any such; but he says, “If any be without accusation,” (Titus 1:6) for such, of course, he would be able to find.”

He refers to **Titus 1 (KJV):6** If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

He continues, “But our opponent does not tell us how, in accordance with his views, we ought to understand the Scripture, “For in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” (Psalm 143:2)

He refers again to **Psalm 143 (KJV):2** And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

He continues, “The meaning of these words is plain enough, receiving as it does additional light from the preceding clause: “Enter not,” says the Psalmist, “into judgment with

Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” It is judgment which he fears, therefore he desires that mercy which triumphs over judgment. (James 2:13)”

He refers to **James 2 (NASB):13** For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

He concludes, “For the meaning of the prayer, “Enter not into judgment with Thy servant,” is this: “Judge me not according to Thyself,” who art without sin; “for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” This without doubt is understood as spoken of the present life, whilst the predicate “shall not be justified” has reference to that perfect state of righteousness which belongs not to this life.”

Augustine speaks of the present life. In the **King James Version** we read as in **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

And in **Romans 5 (Douay Rheims):1** Being justified therefore by faith, let us have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access through faith into this grace wherein we stand: and glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God.

The **King James Version** agrees with the **Latin Vulgate**, which makes the verb “being justified” a present tense.

We also read as in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):11** And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

And in **1 Corinthians 6 (Douay Rheims):11** And such some of you were. But you are washed: but you are sanctified: but you are justified: in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God.

The **King James Version** also agrees in this verse with the **Latin Vulgate**, which makes the verbs “are washed”, “are sanctified”, “are justified” a present tense as well. This could lead one to believe that our justification is on going until we die.

However, in the Greek the verbs are in the aorist tense, that is, the Greek past tense, as we read in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

And in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

So it is when we believe that we are justified by God. That is, He imputes, or reckons, or puts His righteousness down to our account. And it is the very righteousness of God that is put down to our account as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

So because of our justification by God, we have a standing with God as sons and daughters. His righteousness has been put down to our account. But we are not perfect yet in our character, for when we see Him we will be like Him as we read in **1 John 3 (KJV):2**

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Chapter XVIII.—(39.) The Eighth Passage. In What Sense He is Said Not to Sin Who is Born of God. In What Way He Who Sins Shall Not See Nor Know God.

“They also quote,” says he, “this passage, ‘If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.’” (1 John 1:8) And this very clear testimony he has endeavoured to meet with apparently contradictory texts, saying thus: “The same St. John in this very epistle says, ‘This, however, brethren, I say, that ye sin not. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin.’” (1 John 3:9) Also elsewhere: ‘Whosoever is born of God sinneth not; because his being born of God preserveth him, and the evil one toucheth him not.’” (1 John 5:18) And again in another passage, when speaking of the Saviour, he says: ‘Since He was manifested to take away sins, whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.’” (1 John 3:5-6) And yet again: ‘Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope towards Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.’” (1 John 3:2-3) And yet, notwithstanding the truth of all these passages, that also is true which he has adduced, without, however, offering any explanation of it: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8) Now it follows from the whole of this, that in so far as we are born of God we abide in Him who appeared to take away sins, that is, in Christ, and sin not,—which is simply that “the inward man is renewed day by day;” (2 Corinthians 4:16) **but in so far as we are born of that man “through whom sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men,” (Romans 5:12) we are not without sin, because we are not as yet free from his infirmity, until, by that renewal which takes place from day to day (for it is in accordance with this that we were born of God), that infirmity shall be wholly repaired, wherein we were born from the first man, and in which we are not without sin.** While the remains of this infirmity abide in our inward man, however much they may be daily lessened in those who are advancing, “we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us, if we say that we have no sin.” Now, however true it is that “whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, nor known Him,” (1 John 3:6) since with that vision and knowledge, which shall be realized in actual sight, no one can in this life see and know Him; yet with that vision and knowledge which come of faith, there may be many who commit sin,—even apostates themselves,—who still have believed in Him some time or other; so that of none of these could it be said, according to the vision and knowledge which as yet come of faith, that he has neither seen Him nor known Him. But I suppose it ought to be understood that it is the renewal which awaits perfection that sees and knows Him; whereas the infirmity which is destined to waste and ruin neither sees nor knows Him. **And it is owing to the remains of this infirmity, of whatever amount, which remain firm in our inward man, that “we deceive ourselves, and have not the truth in us, when we say that we have no sin.” Although, then, by the grace of renovation “we are the sons of God,” yet by reason of the remains of infirmity within us “it doth not appear what we shall be; only we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Then there shall be no more sin, because no infirmity shall any**



longer remain within us or without us. “And every man that hath this hope towards Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure,”—purifieth himself, not indeed by himself alone, but by believing in Him, and calling on Him who sanctifieth His saints; which sanctification, when perfected at last (for it is at present only advancing and growing day by day), shall take away from us for ever all the remains of our infirmity.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, ““They also quote,” says he, “this passage, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8)”

He refers to **1 John 1 (KJV):8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

He continues, “And this very clear testimony he has endeavoured to meet with apparently contradictory texts, saying thus: “The same St. John in this very epistle says, ‘This, however, brethren, I say, that ye sin not. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin.’ (1 John 3:9)”

He refers to **1 John 3 (KJV):9** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

He continues, “Also elsewhere: ‘Whosoever is born of God sinneth not; because his being born of God preserveth him, and the evil one toucheth him not.’ (1 John 5:18)”

He refers to **1 John 5 (KJV):18** We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

He continues, “And again in another passage, when speaking of the Saviour, he says: ‘Since He was manifested to take away sins, whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.’ (1 John 3:5-6) And yet again: ‘Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope towards Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.’” (1 John 3:2-3)”

He refers in context to **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. **3** And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. **4** Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. **5** And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. **6** Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

He continues, “And yet, notwithstanding the truth of all these passages, that also is true which he has adduced, without, however, offering any explanation of it: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8)”

He refers again to **1 John 1 (KJV):8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

He continues, “Now it follows from the whole of this, that in so far as we are born of God we abide in Him who appeared to take away sins, that is, in Christ, and sin not,—which is simply that “the inward man is renewed day by day;” (2 Corinthians 4:16) **but in so far as we are born of that man “through whom sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men,” (Romans 5:12) we are not without sin, because we are not as yet free from his infirmity, until, by that renewal which takes place from day to day (for it is in**

accordance with this that we were born of God), that infirmity shall be wholly repaired, wherein we were born from the first man, and in which we are not without sin.”

He refers first to **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):16** For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

And to **Romans 5 (KJV):12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

He continues, “While the remains of this infirmity abide in our inward man, however much they may be daily lessened in those who are advancing, “we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us, if we say that we have no sin.””

This is what we call a progressive sanctification. The “inward man” contains our soul and our spirit. Our spirit has the divine nature from the new birth, which is the “seed” which John speaks of in 1 John 3:9. Our soul is progressively being cleansed as we walk in the light.

It is evident that Augustine did not understand the makeup of the inward man. He thought that the soul was composed of spirit. This assumption formed the basis for his thinking that “in so far as we are born of God we abide in Him who appeared to take away sins”, and that a “renewal which takes place from day to day”. So we are progressively born again from day to day in his thinking.

He did not understand that there is a division between soul and spirit as we read in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The spirit of man is where we connect with God. This is the part of us that has been born again as Jesus reveals in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

This is why we delight in the law of God after the inward man as we read in context in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Our soul is composed of mind, will, heart, which is the center of our emotions, and our conscience. Before Christ we were darkened in our understanding as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):17** This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Our mind and conscience were defiled as we read in **Titus 1 (KJV):15** Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

Our heart was as in **Jeremiah 17 (KJV):9** The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

After we are born again, it takes time for us to be cleansed in our heart, mind, and conscience. So it is in our soul that we are renewed day by day, as we present ourselves a living

sacrifice as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

So we can agree with the apostle John in **1 John 3 (KJV):9** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Our spirit does not commit sin, because it is born of God, and therefore has a new divine nature as we read in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Being born again is not a gradual renewal whereby we are progressively more and more born again. But our soul is going through a renewal, that is, a progressive sanctification day by day. This process is what John describes in **1 John 1 (KJV):6** If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

The light that we walk in is the word of God as we read in **Psalms 119 (KJV):105** Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

This is what Jesus prayed in **John 17 (KJV):17** Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

And so we read in **Psalms 119 (KJV):9** Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.

Our sanctification is a growth in the things of God. Peter describes this growth in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

As our knowledge increases, we have more light. This may reveal more sin, which may mean a change in our thinking. As we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness, as we read above in 1 John 1:9.

Augustine and the Catholic Church in his time did not understand the division between soul and spirit.

He continues, “Now, however true it is that “whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, nor known Him,” (1 John 3:6) since with that vision and knowledge, which shall be realized in actual sight, no one can in this life see and know Him;”

He refers again to **1 John 3 (KJV):6** Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

He continues, “yet with that vision and knowledge which come of faith, there may be many who commit sin,—even apostates themselves,—who still have believed in Him some time or other; so that of none of these could it be said, according to the vision and knowledge which as yet come of faith, that he has neither seen Him nor known Him. But I suppose it ought

to be understood that it is the renewal which awaits perfection that sees and knows Him; whereas the infirmity which is destined to waste and ruin neither sees nor knows Him.”

Augustine only saw the soul and the body as the parts of man. But the soul of believers is being progressively sanctified, while our spirit has the divine sinless nature of God in it, being born of the Spirit of God. This is the seed that John speaks of in **1 John 3 (KJV):9** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

In our standing we are sinless. But in our state, that is, our character in our soul, we may have much to be cleansed of.

He continues, “And it is owing to the remains of this infirmity, of whatever amount, which remain firm in our inward man, that “we deceive ourselves, and have not the truth in us, when we say that we have no sin.””

He refers again to **1 John 1 (KJV):8** If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

And this is true of our soul area, but not our spirit after we have been born again.

He continues, “Although, then, by the grace of renovation “we are the sons of God,” yet by reason of the remains of infirmity within us “it doth not appear what we shall be; only we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Then there shall be no more sin, because no infirmity shall any longer remain within us or without us. “And every man that hath this hope towards Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure,”—purifieth himself, not indeed by himself alone, but by believing in Him, and calling on Him who sanctifieth His saints; which sanctification, when perfected at last (for it is at present only advancing and growing day by day), shall take away from us for ever all the remains of our infirmity.”

And again he refers to **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

As we grow in grace and knowledge of the word of God, we have more light to walk in. As we yield to this light, and we walk in it, we become doers of the word of God.

And our light shines brighter as we read in **Proverbs 4 (NASB):18** But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, That shines brighter and brighter until the full day.

## Summary

Augustine says, “Now it follows from the whole of this, that in so far as we are born of God we abide in Him who appeared to take away sins, that is, in Christ, and sin not,—which is simply that “the inward man is renewed day by day;” (2 Corinthians 4:16) but in so far as we are born of that man “through whom sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men,” (Romans 5:12) we are not without sin, because we are not as yet free from his infirmity, until, by that renewal which takes place from day to day (for it is in accordance with this that we were born of God), that infirmity shall be wholly repaired, wherein we were born from the first man, and in which we are not without sin.”

Augustine did not understand that it is in our spirit where we are born again. It is not a gradual or partial renewal day by day, for that is not a birth. He only saw the progressive sanctification that the believer goes through in the soul area, as he or she is “renewed day by day”.

Then speaking of the resurrection, he says, “**Then there shall be no more sin, because no infirmity shall any longer remain within us or without us. “And every man that hath this hope towards Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure,”—purifieth himself, not indeed by himself alone, but by believing in Him, and calling on Him who sanctifieth His saints; which sanctification, when perfected at last (for it is at present only advancing and growing day by day), shall take away from us for ever all the remains of our infirmity.**” When we see Him we will be like Him.

Sanctification in the Biblical sense has to do with separation from uncleanness as we read in **2 Chronicles 29 (KJV):5** And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place.

Then it also has to do with being set apart to God. Dr. Albert Grimes says in **Lesson 8: The Doctrine of Sanctification**, “The Son of God, as He was set apart by the Father and sent into the world to do God’s will, was sanctified in this sense, as stated in John 10:36, “Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?””

He also says, “In this same sense the first born of the children were sanctified unto the Lord, as Numbers 8:17 states, “For all the firstborn of the children of Israel are mine, both man and beast: on the day that I smote every firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.”” <http://www.theriskofchrist.com/grimes/book01.pdf>

As the Father draws us to Jesus, it is the Spirit of God who begins to separate us out from the world, as we read in **2 Thessalonians 2 (KJV):13** But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

When we then believe, we are as the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):2** Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's:

Being in Christ, we have an identification with Him as one who is sanctified, as we read in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

This separation to God, and oneness with Christ, happened when we believed, as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

So in God’s eyes we are clean when we believe in Jesus. But there is also a progressive sanctification that goes on in the life of the believer. And this is the will of God as we read in **1 Thessalonians 4 (KJV):3** For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: 4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; 5 Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: 6 That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord

is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. 7 For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds as we read in **Romans 12 (KJV)**:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We are to grow in grace and knowledge as we read in **2 Peter 3 (KJV)**:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.



# Catholic

## Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings

### On the Soul and Its Origin, Book III, Chapters 1-2, page 343-344

#### Chapter 1 [I.]—Augustin's Purpose in Writing.

As to that which I have thought it my duty to write to you, my much loved son Victor, I would have you to entertain this above all other thoughts in your mind, if I seemed to despise you, that it was certainly not my intention to do so. At the same time I must beg of you not to abuse our condescension in such a way as to suppose that you possess my approval merely because you have not my contempt. For it is not to follow, but to correct you, that I give you my love; and since I by no means despair of the possibility of your amendment, I do not want you to be surprised at my inability to despise the man who has my love. Now, since it was my bounden duty to love you before you had united with us, in order that you might become a Catholic; how much more ought I now to love you since your union with us, to prevent your becoming a new heretic, **and that you may become so firm a Catholic that no heretic may be able to withstand you!** So far as appears from the mental endowments which God has largely bestowed upon you, you would be undoubtedly a wise man if you only did not believe that you were one already, and begged of Him who maketh men wise, with a pious, humble, and earnest prayer, that you might become one, and preferred not to be led astray with error rather than to be honoured with the flattery of those who go astray.

**Commentary:** In summary, the errors contained in the books of Vincentius Victor relate to the fact that he says that the soul comes from God, but was not made either out of nothing or out of any created thing. But Augustine wants him to **“become so firm a Catholic that no heretic may be able to withstand”** him.

The word “Catholic” was used to differentiate from others which were deemed heretical. The Apostolic See of Rome was the residence of the Pope, the highest authority in the Catholic Church.

#### Chapter 2 [II.]—Why Victor Assumed the Name of Vincentius. The Names of Evil Men Ought Never to Be Assumed by Other Persons.

Augustine begins as he says, “The first thing which caused me some anxiety about you was the title which appeared in your books with your name; for on inquiring of those who knew you, and were probably your associates in opinion, who Vincentius Victor was, **I found that you had been a Donatist, or rather a Rogatist, but had lately come into communion with the Catholic Church. Now, while I was rejoicing, as one naturally does at the recovery of those whom he sees rescued from that system of error,—and in your case my joy was all the greater because I saw that your ability, which so much delighted me in your writings, had not remained behind with the enemies of truth,**—additional information was given me by your friends which caused me sorrow amid my joy, to the effect that you

wished to have the name Vincentius prefixed to your own name, inasmuch as you still held in affectionate regard the successor of Rogatus, who bore this name, as a great and holy man, and that for this reason you wished his name to become your surname. Some persons also told me that you had, moreover, boasted about his having appeared in some sort of a vision to you, and assisted you in composing those books the subject of which I have discussed with you in this small work of mine, and to such an extent as to dictate to you himself the precise topics and arguments which you were to write about. Now, if all this be true, I no longer wonder at your having been able to make those statements which, if you will only lend a patient ear to my admonition, **and with the attention of a Catholic duly consider and weigh those books**, you will undoubtedly come to regret having ever advanced. For he who, according to the apostle's portrait, "transforms himself into an angel of light," (2 Corinthians 11:14) has transformed himself before you into a shape which you believe to have been, or still to be, an angel of light. **In this way, indeed, he is less able to deceive Catholics when his transformations are not into angels of light, but into heretics; now, however, that you are a Catholic, I should be sorry for you to be beguiled by him.** He will certainly feel torture at your having learnt the truth, and so much the more in proportion to the pleasure he formerly experienced in having persuaded you to believe error. **With a view, however, to your refraining from loving a dead person, when the love can neither be serviceable to yourself nor profitable to him, I advise you to consider for a moment this one point—that he is not, of course, a just and holy man, since you withdrew yourself from the snares of the Donatists or Rogatists on the score of their heresy; but if you do think him to be just and holy, you ruin yourself by holding communion with Catholics. You are, indeed, only feigning yourself a Catholic if you are in mind the same as he was on whom you bestow your love; and you are aware how terribly the Scripture has spoken on this subject: "The Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the man who feigns." (Wisdom 1:5) If, however, you are sincere in communicating with us, and do not merely pretend to be a Catholic, how is it that you still love a dead man to such a degree as to be willing even now to boast of the name of one in whose errors you no longer permit yourself to be held? We really do not like your having such a surname, as if you were the monument of a dead heretic. Nor do we like your book to have such a title as we should say was a false one if we read it on his tomb. For we are sure Vincentius is not Victor, the conqueror, but Victus, the conquered;—may it be, however, with fruitful effect, even as we wish you to be conquered by the truth! And yet your thought was an astute and skillful one, when you designated the books, which you wish us to suppose were dictated to you by his inspiration, by the name of Vincentius Victor; as much as to intimate that it was rather he than you who wished to be designated by the victorious appellation, as having been himself the conqueror of error, by revealing to you what were to be the contents of your written treatise. **But of what avail is all this to you, my son? Be, I pray you, a true Catholic, not a feigned one, lest the Holy Spirit should flee from you, and that Vincentius be unable to profit you at all, into whom the most malignant spirit of error has transformed himself for the purpose of deceiving you; for it is from that one that all these evil opinions have proceeded, notwithstanding the artful fraud which has persuaded you to the contrary. If this admonition shall only induce you to correct****

these errors with the humility of a God-fearing man and the peaceful submission of a Catholic, they will be regarded as the mistakes of an over zealous young man, who is eager rather to amend them than to persevere in them. But if he shall have by his influence prevailed on you to contend for these opinions with obstinate perseverance, which God forbid, it will in such a case be necessary to condemn them and their author as heretical, as is required by the pastoral and remedial nature of the Church's charge, to check the dire contagion before it quietly spreads through the heedless masses, while wholesome correction is neglected, under the name but without the reality of love.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "The first thing which caused me some anxiety about you was the title which appeared in your books with your name; for on inquiring of those who knew you, and were probably your associates in opinion, who Vincentius Victor was, I found that you had been a Donatist, or rather a Rogatist, but had lately come into communion with the Catholic Church. Now, while I was rejoicing, as one naturally does at the recovery of those whom he sees rescued from that system of error,—and in your case my joy was all the greater because I saw that your ability, which so much delighted me in your writings, had not remained behind with the enemies of truth."

Anyone outside the "communion with the Catholic Church" could be deemed to be "the enemies of truth".

Augustine continues, "—additional information was given me by your friends which caused me sorrow amid my joy, to the effect that you wished to have the name Vincentius prefixed to your own name, inasmuch as you still held in affectionate regard the successor of Rogatus, who bore this name, as a great and holy man, and that for this reason you wished his name to become your surname. Some persons also told me that you had, moreover, boasted about his having appeared in some sort of a vision to you, and assisted you in composing those books the subject of which I have discussed with you in this small work of mine, and to such an extent as to dictate to you himself the precise topics and arguments which you were to write about. Now, if all this be true, I no longer wonder at your having been able to make those statements which, if you will only lend a patient ear to my admonition, and with the attention of a Catholic duly consider and weigh those books, you will undoubtedly come to regret having ever advanced."

Being a "Catholic" meant that you agreed with the doctrine and teaching of the Catholic Church centered in Rome.

He continues, "For he who, according to the apostle's portrait, "transforms himself into an angel of light," (2 Corinthians 11:14) has transformed himself before you into a shape which you believe to have been, or still to be, an angel of light."

He refers in context to **2 Corinthians 11 (KJV):** 13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

He continues, "In this way, indeed, he is less able to deceive Catholics when his

transformations are not into angels of light, but into heretics; now, however, that you are a Catholic, I should be sorry for you to be beguiled by him. He will certainly feel torture at your having learnt the truth, and so much the more in proportion to the pleasure he formerly experienced in having persuaded you to believe error. With a view, however, to your refraining from loving a dead person, when the love can neither be serviceable to yourself nor profitable to him, I advise you to consider for a moment this one point—that he is not, of course, a just and holy man, since you withdrew yourself from the snares of the Donatists or Rogatists on the score of their heresy; but if you do think him to be just and holy, you ruin yourself by holding communion with Catholics. You are, indeed, only feigning yourself a Catholic if you are in mind the same as he was on whom you bestow your love; and you are aware how terribly the Scripture has spoken on this subject: “The Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the man who feigns.” (Wisdom 1:5)”

He refers to **Wisdom 1 (Septuagint):5** For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and remove from thoughts that are without understanding, and will not abide when unrighteousness cometh in.

We are not saved by being Catholic or Protestant, but by believing in Jesus Christ, that He rose from the dead, and confessing Him as Lord. Augustine is making “**communion with Catholics**” a test of true faith.

He continues, “If, however, you are sincere in communicating with us, and do not merely pretend to be a Catholic, how is it that you still love a dead man to such a degree as to be willing even now to boast of the name of one in whose errors you no longer permit yourself to be held? We really do not like your having such a surname, as if you were the monument of a dead heretic. Nor do we like your book to have such a title as we should say was a false one if we read it on his tomb. For we are sure Vincentius is not Victor, the conqueror, but Victus, the conquered;—may it be, however, with fruitful effect, even as we wish you to be conquered by the truth! And yet your thought was an astute and skillful one, when you designated the books, which you wish us to suppose were dictated to you by his inspiration, by the name of Vincentius Victor; as much as to intimate that it was rather he than you who wished to be designated by the victorious appellation, as having been himself the conqueror of error, by revealing to you what were to be the contents of your written treatise. But of what avail is all this to you, my son? Be, I pray you, a true Catholic, not a feigned one, lest the Holy Spirit should flee from you, and that Vincentius be unable to profit you at all, into whom the most malignant spirit of error has transformed himself for the purpose of deceiving you;”

Victor had followed a man name Vincentius who was a heretic according to Augustine. Although Victor was now a Catholic, he had written some books by the name of Vincentius Victor, adding the name Vincentius to his name. Augustine was warning Victor about the errors of Vincentius. In his warning, one could conclude that if one was not a true Catholic, the Holy Spirit would flee from them. And if the Holy Spirit should flee from us, that would mean we would lose our salvation.

Irenaeus, who lived between 120 and 202 AD, approximately, and was a bishop in Lyons, France from 177 to 202 A.D., codified this thinking in his writing. Here is a quote.

“For a living person inherits the goods of the deceased; and it is one thing to inherit, another to be inherited. The former rules, and exercises power over, and orders the things inherited at his will; but the latter things are in a state of subjection, are under order, and are ruled over by him who has obtained the inheritance. What, therefore, is it that lives? The Spirit of God, doubtless. What, again, are the possessions of the deceased? The various parts of the man, surely, which rot in the earth. But these are inherited by the Spirit when they are translated into the kingdom of heaven. For this cause, too, did Christ die, that the Gospel covenant being manifested and known to the whole world, might in the first place set free His slaves; and then afterwards, as I have already shown, might constitute them heirs of His property, when the Spirit possesses them by inheritance. **For he who lives inherits, but the flesh is inherited. In order that we may not lose life by losing that Spirit which possesses us, the apostle, exhorting us to the communion of the Spirit, has said, according to reason, in those words already quoted, “That flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” Just as if he were to say, “Do not err; for unless the Word of God dwell with, and the Spirit of the Father be in you, and if ye shall live frivolously and carelessly as if ye were this only, viz., mere flesh and blood, ye cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”**” **Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Page 534, Irenaeus Against Heresies, Book 1: Chapter IX.—Showing how that passage of the apostle which the heretics pervert, should be understood; viz., “Flesh and blood shall not possess the kingdom of God.”**

But to lose life by losing the Holy Spirit once one has been born again is not possible according to the Scriptures. The reason is because whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit as Jesus taught in **John 3 (KJV):6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

We do not give ourselves birth as John reveals in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

We were born of God, and being born of God, we have the eternal life of the Spirit of God in our spirits. Christ is now our life as we read in **Colossians 3 (KJV):4** When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

If we sin, our heavenly Father will discipline us as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):6** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.



He will discipline us, but He will not forsake us as we read in **Hebrews 13 (KJV):5** Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Augustine concludes, “for it is from that one that all these evil opinions have proceeded, notwithstanding the artful fraud which has persuaded you to the contrary. If this admonition shall only induce you to correct these errors with the humility of a God-fearing man and the peaceful submission of a Catholic, they will be regarded as the mistakes of an over zealous young man, who is eager rather to amend them than to persevere in them. But if he shall have by his influence prevailed on you to contend for these opinions with obstinate perseverance, which God forbid, it will in such a case be necessary to condemn them and their author as heretical, as is required by the pastoral and remedial nature of the Church’s charge, to check the dire contagion before it quietly spreads through the heedless masses, while wholesome correction is neglected, under the name but without the reality of love.”

He is right to correct the error of the Donatists, but “the peaceful submission of a Catholic” would not necessarily free Victor from all error. The Catholic Church in Augustine’s time had many traditions which were not in accord with the Scriptures. The possibility that one could lose their salvation after having been born again is only one such tradition. The Catholic Church hierarchy of Pope, Cardinals, and Bishops is another. What was needed back then was a right understanding of **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):16** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Believers need to be taught to walk in the light of the word of God. This will bring them into submission to the Lord. It is not about belonging to a particular denomination, but abiding in Him.

## **Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings**

### **On the Soul and Its Origin, Book III, Chapter 12, page 348**

Chapter 12 [IX.]—His Sixth Error. (See Above in Book I. 10-12 [IX., X.], and in Book II. 13, 14 [IX., X.].)

If you wish to be a Catholic, refrain from believing, or saying, or teaching that “infants which are forestalled by death before they are baptized may yet attain to forgiveness of their original sins.” For the examples by which you are misled—that of the thief who confessed the Lord upon the cross, or that of Dinocrates the brother of St. Perpetua—contribute no help to you in defense of this erroneous opinion. As for the thief, although in God’s judgment he might be reckoned among those who are purified by the confession of martyrdom, yet you cannot tell whether he was not baptized. For, to say nothing of the opinion that he might have been sprinkled with the water which gushed at the same time with the blood out of the Lord’s side, (John 19:34) as he hung on the cross next to Him, and thus have been washed with a baptism of the most sacred kind, what if he had been baptized



in prison, as in after times some under persecution were enabled privately to obtain? Or what if he had been baptized previous to his imprisonment? If, indeed, he had been, the remission of his sins which he would have received in that case from God would not have protected him from the sentence of public law, so far as appertained to the death of the body. What if, being already baptized, he had committed the crime and incurred the punishment of robbery and lawlessness, but yet received, by virtue of repentance added to his baptism, forgiveness of the sins which, though baptized, he had committed? For beyond doubt his faith and piety appeared to the Lord clearly in his heart, as they do to us in his words. If, indeed, we were to conclude that all those who have quitted life without a record of their baptism died unbaptized, we should calumniate the very apostles themselves; for we are ignorant when they were, any of them, baptized, except the Apostle Paul. (Acts 9:18) If, however, we could regard as an evidence that they were really baptized the circumstance of the Lord's saying to St. Peter, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet," (John 13:10) what are we to think of the others, of whom we do not read even so much as this,—Barnabas, Timothy, Titus, Silas, Philemon, the very evangelists Mark and Luke, and innumerable others, about whose baptism God forbid that we should entertain any doubt, although we read no record of it? As for Dinocrates, he was a child of seven years of age; and as children who are baptized so old as that can now recite the creed and answer for themselves in the usual examination, I know not why he may not be supposed after his baptism to have been recalled by his unbelieving father to the sacrilege and profanity of heathen worship, and for this reason to have been condemned to the pains from which he was liberated at his sister's intercession. For in the account of him you have never read, either that he was never a Christian, or died a catechumen. But for the matter of that, the account itself that we have of him does not occur in that canon of Holy Scripture whence in all questions of this kind our proofs ought always to be drawn.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "If you wish to be a Catholic, refrain from believing, or saying, or teaching that "infants which are forestalled by death before they are baptized may yet attain to forgiveness of their original sins."

Augustine did not understand that the teaching of baptismal regeneration according to the dogma of the Catholic Church is not Scriptural. No one can have faith for salvation for another. It is possible that the Lord, in His mercy, forgives infants who have not yet reached the age of accountability as we read in **Deuteronomy 1 (KJV):39** Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.

Just as the thief on the cross who was not baptized, but entered paradise with Jesus that same day, so it will be with children who die before reaching the age of accountability.

He continues, "For the examples by which you are misled—that of the thief who confessed the Lord upon the cross, or that of Dinocrates the brother of St. Perpetua—contribute no help to you in defense of this erroneous opinion. As for the thief, although in God's judgment he might be reckoned among those who are purified by the confession of martyrdom, yet you cannot tell whether he was not baptized. For, to say nothing of the

opinion that he might have been sprinkled with the water which gushed at the same time with the blood out of the Lord's side, (John 19:34) as he hung on the cross next to Him, and thus have been washed with a baptism of the most sacred kind, what if he had been baptized in prison, as in after times some under persecution were enabled privately to obtain? Or what if he had been baptized previous to his imprisonment? If, indeed, he had been, the remission of his sins which he would have received in that case from God would not have protected him from the sentence of public law, so far as appertained to the death of the body. What if, being already baptized, he had committed the crime and incurred the punishment of robbery and lawlessness, but yet received, by virtue of repentance added to his baptism, forgiveness of the sins which, though baptized, he had committed? For beyond doubt his faith and piety appeared to the Lord clearly in his heart, as they do to us in his words."

And beyond doubt, it was his faith that saved him. There is no record of the thief having been baptized. There is only his confession that he was justly condemned as we read in **Luke 23 (KJV):39** And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Besides this, there is the abundant testimony of the Scripture of the one who has believed as in **John 3 (KJV):16** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

And in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

He continues, "If, indeed, we were to conclude that all those who have quitted life without a record of their baptism died unbaptized, we should calumniate the very apostles themselves; for we are ignorant when they were, any of them, baptized, except the Apostle Paul. (Acts 9:18)"

Note that the word "calumniate" means : to utter maliciously false statements, charges, or imputations about". (**Merriam Webster**)

Paul was baptized in **Acts 9 (KJV):18** And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

He continues, "If, however, we could regard as an evidence that they were really baptized the circumstance of the Lord's saying to St. Peter, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet," (John 13:10) what are we to think of the others, of whom we do not read even so much as this,—Barnabas, Timothy, Titus, Silas, Philemon, the very evangelists Mark and Luke, and innumerable others, about whose baptism God forbid that we should entertain any doubt, although we read no record of it?"

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):10** Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

To Augustine, any mention of washing referred to baptism. But there is a washing that occurs when we believe and we are regenerated as Paul reveals in **Titus 3 (KJV):4** But after

that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

This washing refers to the complete forgiveness of sins when one is regenerated, or born again.

Again, we read in **John 3 (KJV):**36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

It is our faith that saves us.

Augustine concludes, “As for Dinocrates, he was a child of seven years of age; and as children who are baptized so old as that can now recite the creed and answer for themselves in the usual examination, I know not why he may not be supposed after his baptism to have been recalled by his unbelieving father to the sacrilege and profanity of heathen worship, and for this reason to have been condemned to the pains from which he was liberated at his sister’s intercession. For in the account of him you have never read, either that he was never a Christian, or died a catechumen. But for the matter of that, the account itself that we have of him does not occur in that canon of Holy Scripture whence in all questions of this kind our proofs ought always to be drawn.”

We can agree with Augustine that “our proofs ought always to be drawn” from “that canon of Holy Scripture”. And we must not exceed the Scripture in our proof.

## **Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings**

### **On the Soul and Its Origin, Book III, Chapters 15-17, page 349-350**

Chapter 15 [XI.]—His Ninth Error. (See Above in Book II. 14 [X].) (Limbo)

If you wish to be a Catholic, I pray you, neither believe, nor say, nor teach that “there are some mansions outside the kingdom of God which the Lord said were in His Father’s house.” For He does not affirm, as you have adduced his testimony, “There are with my Father (*apud Patrem meum*) many mansions;” although, if He had even expressed Himself so, the mansions could hardly be supposed to have any other situation than *in the house* of His Father; but He plainly says, “In my Father’s house are many mansions.” (John 14:2) Now, who would be so reckless as to separate some parts of God’s house from the kingdom of God; so that, whilst the kings of the earth are found reigning, not in their house only, nor only in their own country, but far and wide, even in regions across the sea, the King who made the heaven and the earth is not described as reigning even over all His own house?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “If you wish to be a Catholic, I pray you, neither believe, nor say, nor teach that “there are some mansions outside the kingdom of God which the Lord said were in His Father’s house.” For He does not affirm, as you have adduced his testimony, “There are with my Father (*apud Patrem meum*) many mansions;” although, if He had even expressed Himself so, the mansions could hardly be supposed to have any other situation than in the house of His Father; but He plainly says, “In my Father’s house are many

**mansions.” (John 14:2)”**

He refers in context to **John 14 (KJV):** 1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. 4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. 5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Augustine is right to correct those who **“teach that “there are some mansions outside the kingdom of God which the Lord said were in His Father’s house.””**

The word in the Greek for “house” is οἰκία (pronounced oy-kee'-ah); from G3624; properly, residence (abstractly), but usually (concretely) an abode (literally or figuratively); by implication, a family (especially domestics):—home, house(-hold). **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3614.**

The word in the Greek for “mansions” is μονή (pronounced mon-ay'); from G3306; a staying, i.e. residence (the act or the place):—abode, mansion”. **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G3438.**

So we could say that the meaning in John 14:2 is that in the Father’s home there are many places to stay. And there will be a place for us.

Augustine continues, **“Now, who would be so reckless as to separate some parts of God’s house from the kingdom of God; so that, whilst the kings of the earth are found reigning, not in their house only, nor only in their own country, but far and wide, even in regions across the sea, the King who made the heaven and the earth is not described as reigning even over all His own house?”**

And we can agree with Augustine here.

**Chapter 16.—God Rules Everywhere: and Yet the “Kingdom of Heaven” May Not Be Everywhere.**

You may, however, not improbably contend that all things, it is true, belong to the kingdom of God, because He reigns in heaven, reigns on earth, in the depths beneath, in paradise, in hell (for where does He not reign, since His power is everywhere supreme?); but that the kingdom of heaven is one thing, into which none are permitted to enter, according to the Lord’s own true and settled sentence, unless they are washed in the laver of regeneration, while quite another thing is the kingdom over the earth, or over any other parts of creation, in which there may be some mansions of God’s house; but these, although appertaining to the kingdom of God, belong not to that kingdom of heaven where God’s kingdom exists with an especial excellence and blessedness; and that it hence happens that, while no parts and mansions of God’s house can be rudely separated from the kingdom of God, yet not all the mansions are prepared in the kingdom of heaven; **and still, even in the abodes which are not situated in the kingdom of heaven, those may live happily, to whom, if they are even unbaptized, God has willed to assign such habitations. They are no doubt in the kingdom of God, although (as not having been baptized) they cannot possibly be in the kingdom of heaven.**

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine seems to have allowed for a Limbo as he says, “and still, even in the abodes which are not situated in the kingdom of heaven, those may live happily, to whom, if they are even unbaptized, God has willed to assign such habitations. They are no doubt in the kingdom of God, although (as not having been baptized) they cannot possibly be in the kingdom of heaven.”

Augustine continues in the next paragraph, as he explains here what Vincentius Victor believes about the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God.

#### Chapter 17.—Where the Kingdom of God May Be Understood to Be.

Now, they who say this, do no doubt seem to themselves to say a good deal, because theirs is only a slight and careless view of Scripture; nor do they understand in what sense we use the phrase, “kingdom of God,” when we say of it in our prayers, “Thy kingdom come;” (Matthew 6:10) for that is called the kingdom of God, in which His whole family shall reign with Him in happiness and for ever. Now, in respect of the power which He possesses over all things, he is of course even now reigning. What, therefore, do we intend when we pray that His kingdom may come unless that we may deserve to reign with Him? But even they will be under His power who shall have to suffer the pains of eternal fire. Well, then, do we mean to predicate of these unhappy beings that they too will be in the kingdom of God? Surely it is one thing to be honoured with the gifts and privileges of the kingdom of God, and another thing to be restrained and punished by the laws of the same. However, that you may have a very manifest proof that on the one hand the kingdom of heaven must not be parceled out to the baptized, and other portions of the kingdom of God be given to the unbaptized, as you seem to have determined, I beg of you to hear the Lord’s own words; He does not say, “Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven;” but His words are, “he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” His discourse with Nicodemus on the subject before us runs thus: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Observe, He does not here say, the kingdom of heaven, but the kingdom of God. And then, on Nicodemus asking Him in reply, “How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” the Lord, in explanation, repeats His former statement more plainly and openly: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Observe again, He uses the same phrase, the kingdom of God, not the kingdom of heaven. (John 3:3-6) It is worthy of remark, that while He varies two expressions in explaining them the second time (for after saying, “Except a man be born again,” He interprets that by the fuller expression, “Except a man be born of water and the Spirit;” and in like manner He explains, “he cannot see,” by the completer phrase, “he cannot enter into”), He yet makes no variation here; He said “the kingdom of God” the first time, and He afterwards repeated the same phrase exactly. It is not now necessary to raise and discuss the question, whether the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven must be understood as involving different senses, or whether only one thing is described under two designations. It is enough to find that no one can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be washed in the laver of regeneration. I suppose you perceive by this time how wide of the truth it is to separate from the kingdom of God any mansions that are placed in the house of God. And as to the idea which you have entertained that there will be



found dwelling among the various mansions, which the Lord has told us abound in His Father's house, some who have not been born again of water and the Spirit, I advise you, if you will permit me, not to defer amending it, in order that you may hold the Catholic faith.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, "Now, they who say this, do no doubt seem to themselves to say a good deal, because theirs is only a slight and careless view of Scripture; nor do they understand in what sense we use the phrase, "kingdom of God," when we say of it in our prayers, "Thy kingdom come;" (Matthew 6:10) for that is called the kingdom of God, in which His whole family shall reign with Him in happiness and for ever."

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV):10** Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

He continues, "Now, in respect of the power which He possesses over all things, he is of course even now reigning. What, therefore, do we intend when we pray that His kingdom may come unless that we may deserve to reign with Him?"

But we are made worthy to reign with him by His justification of us because of our faith. So when we pray that His kingdom come, we are praying that His will is what shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. Right now, the course of this world is according to the prince of the power of the air. But in believers, He now reigns in hearts that are yielded to His will.

He continues, "But even they will be under His power who shall have to suffer the pains of eternal fire. Well, then, do we mean to predicate of these unhappy beings that they too will be in the kingdom of God? Surely it is one thing to be honoured with the gifts and privileges of the kingdom of God, and another thing to be restrained and punished by the laws of the same."

Yes we can agree with Augustine here. He then continues, "However, that you may have a very manifest proof that on the one hand the kingdom of heaven must not be parceled out to the baptized, and other portions of the kingdom of God be given to the unbaptized, as you seem to have determined, I beg of you to hear the Lord's own words; He does not say, "Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom or heaven;" but His words are, "he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." His discourse with Nicodemus on the subject before us runs thus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Observe, He does not here say, the kingdom of heaven, but the kingdom of God. And then, on Nicodemus asking Him in reply, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" The Lord, in explanation, repeats His former statement more plainly and openly: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Observe again, He uses the same phrase, the kingdom of God, not the kingdom of heaven. (John 3:3-6)"

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):1** There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: **2** The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. **3** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. **4** Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? **5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.



He continues, “It is worthy of remark, that while He varies two expressions in explaining them the second time (for after saying, “Except a man be born again,” He interprets that by the fuller expression, “Except a man be born of water and the Spirit;” and in like manner He explains, “he cannot see,” by the completer phrase, “he cannot enter into”), He yet makes no variation here; He said “the kingdom of God” the first time, and He afterwards repeated the same phrase exactly. It is not now necessary to raise and discuss the question, whether the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven must be understood as involving different senses, or whether only one thing is described under two designations. **It is enough to find that no one can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be washed in the laver of regeneration.**”

Now let us continue to read in **John 3 (KJV):**6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Jesus speaks of two births here in verse 6, as he says, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”. So when He says in verse 5, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”, he is speaking of two births, being born of water speaking of the water surrounding the fetus in the fleshly birth, and then the spiritual birth of our spirits by the Spirit of God. Baptism is not referred to here.

Augustine continues, **“I suppose you perceive by this time how wide of the truth it is to separate from the kingdom of God any mansions that are placed in the house of God. And as to the idea which you have entertained that there will be found dwelling among the various mansions, which the Lord has told us abound in His Father’s house, some who have not been born again of water and the Spirit, I advise you, if you will permit me, not to defer amending it, in order that you may hold the Catholic faith.”**

Augustine is correct in his rebuke of Vincentius Victor for holding that one who is not born again may go to a mansion in the Kingdom of God which is not in the Kingdom of Heaven. But the doctrine of regeneration held by the **“Catholic faith”** in his time had been corrupted, and was not according to Scripture. Regeneration by baptism is not a Biblical truth.

## **Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings**

### **On the Soul and Its Origin, Book III, Chapter 19, page 350-351 (Limbo)**

Chapter 19 [XIII.]—His Eleventh Error. (See Above in Book I. 15 [XII.] and Book II. 16.)

Once more, if you desire to be a Catholic, do not believe, or say, or teach that “some of those persons who have departed this life without Christ’s baptism, do not in the meantime go into the kingdom of heaven, but into paradise; yet afterwards in the resurrection of the dead they attain also to the blessedness of the kingdom of heaven.” Even the Pelagian heresy was not daring enough to grant them this, although it holds that infants do not contract original sin. **You, however, as a Catholic, confess that they are born in sin; and yet by some unaccountable perverseness in the novel opinion you put forth, you assert that they are absolved from that sin with which they were born, and admitted into the kingdom of heaven without the baptism which saves.** Nor do you seem to be aware how much below Pelagius himself you are in your views on this point. For he, being alarmed by that sentence of the Lord which does not permit

unbaptized persons to enter into the kingdom of heaven, does not venture to send infants thither, although he believes them to be free from all sin; whereas you have so little regard for what is written, “Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,” (John 3:5) that (to say nothing of the error which induces you recklessly to sever paradise from the kingdom of God) you do not hesitate to promise to certain persons, whom you, as a Catholic, believe to be born under guilt, both absolution from this guilt and the kingdom of heaven, even when they die without baptism. As if you could possibly be a true Catholic because you build up the doctrine of original sin against Pelagius, if you show yourself a new heretic against the Lord, by pulling down His statement respecting baptism. For our own part, beloved brother, we do not desire thus to gain victories over heretics: vanquishing one error by another, and, what is still worse, a less one by a greater. You say, “Should any one perhaps be reluctant to allow that paradise was temporarily bestowed in the meantime on the souls of the dying thief and of Dinocrates, while there still remains to them the reversion of the kingdom of heaven at the resurrection, seeing that the principal passage stands in the way of the opinion, ‘Except a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven,’ he may still hold my ungrudging assent on this point; only let him do full honour to both the effect and the aim of the divine mercy and foreknowledge.” These are your own words, and in them you express your agreement with the man who says that paradise is conferred on certain unbaptized for a time, in such a sense that at the resurrection there is in store for them the reward of the kingdom of heaven, in opposition to “that principal passage” which has determined that none shall enter into that kingdom who has not been born again of water and the Holy Ghost. Pelagius was afraid to oppose himself to this “principal passage” of the Gospel, and he did not believe that any (whom he still did not suppose to be sinners) would enter into the kingdom of heaven unbaptized. **You, on the contrary, acknowledge that infants have original sin, and yet you absolve them from it without the laver of regeneration, and send them for a temporary residence in paradise, and subsequently permit them to enter even into the kingdom of heaven.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Once more, if you desire to be a Catholic, do not believe, or say, or teach that “some of those persons who have departed this life without Christ’s baptism, do not in the meantime go into the kingdom of heaven, but into paradise; yet afterwards in the resurrection of the dead they attain also to the blessedness of the kingdom of heaven.” Even the Pelagian heresy was not daring enough to grant them this, although it holds that infants do not contract original sin. **You, however, as a Catholic, confess that they are born in sin; and yet by some unaccountable perverseness in the novel opinion you put forth, you assert that they are absolved from that sin with which they were born, and admitted into the kingdom of heaven without the baptism which saves.”**

There is good reason to believe that infants who die in infancy are promoted to glory as we read again in **Deuteronomy 1 (KJV):39** Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.

But we can agree with Augustine that the Pelagian belief that “infants do not contract original sin” is heresy. In Adam all die as in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

He continues, “Nor do you seem to be aware how much below Pelagius himself you are in your views on this point. For he, being alarmed by that sentence of the Lord which does not permit unbaptized persons to enter into the kingdom of heaven, does not venture to send infants thither, although he believes them to be free from all sin; whereas you have so little regard for what is written, “Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,” (John 3:5) that (to say nothing of the error which induces you recklessly to sever paradise from the kingdom of God) you do not hesitate to promise to certain persons, whom you, as a Catholic, believe to be born under guilt, both absolution from this guilt and the kingdom of heaven, even when they die without baptism. As if you could possibly be a true Catholic because you build up the doctrine of original sin against Pelagius, if you show yourself a new heretic against the Lord, by pulling down His statement respecting baptism.”

In Augustine’s mind, one was a true Christian if one was a true Catholic. But what we now see is that a “true Catholic” was one who believed in the traditions of the Catholic Church in which they lived at that time. And these traditions were not necessarily Biblical.

Augustine continues, “For our own part, beloved brother, we do not desire thus to gain victories over heretics: vanquishing one error by another, and, what is still worse, a less one by a greater. You say, “Should any one perhaps be reluctant to allow that paradise was temporarily bestowed in the meantime on the souls of the dying thief and of Dinocrates, while there still remains to them the reversion of the kingdom of heaven at the resurrection, seeing that the principal passage stands in the way of the opinion, ‘Except a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven,’ he may still hold my ungrudging assent on this point; only let him do full honour to both the effect and the aim of the divine mercy and foreknowledge.”

He refers to **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Augustine did not understand that Jesus was explaining the two births, the one of flesh by water surrounding the fetus, and the spiritual one of the Spirit which gives birth to our spirits when we believe in Jesus Christ. We do not get born of the Spirit by water, or by a ritual involving water. The wind blows as we read in **John 3 (KJV):8** The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

He continues, “These are your own words, and in them you express your agreement with the man who says that paradise is conferred on certain unbaptized for a time, in such a sense that at the resurrection there is in store for them the reward of the kingdom of heaven, in opposition to “that principal passage” which has determined that none shall enter into that kingdom who has not been born again of water and the Holy Ghost.”

The word “paradise” refers to **Luke 23 (KJV):43** And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

But the word “paradise” here refers to Abraham’s bosom because Jesus would spend three days and three nights in the heart of the earth and then ascend to heaven. Abraham’s bosom is where the righteous dead went before Jesus died on the cross and ascended into heaven as we read in **Luke 16 (KJV):22** And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in

hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

The unrighteous dead went to hell, and were in torment. When Jesus rose from the dead He took captivity captive in Abraham's Bosom, or paradise, and ascended into heaven where all the righteous dead now go after death.

Sheol is the Hebrew word translated Hades in the Greek. Sheol was divided into two prison houses, Abraham's bosom for the righteous dead, and Hell for the unrighteous dead.

Augustine concludes, "Pelagius was afraid to oppose himself to this "principal passage" of the Gospel, and he did not believe that any (whom he still did not suppose to be sinners) would enter into the kingdom of heaven unbaptized. **You, on the contrary, acknowledge that infants have original sin, and yet you absolve them from it without the laver of regeneration, and send them for a temporary residence in paradise, and subsequently permit them to enter even into the kingdom of heaven.**"

Augustine did not understand that paradise referred to Abraham's bosom, and that this was where the righteous dead were kept until the way into the holiest was made known as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):8** The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. 11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

So Christ entered into the holy place, into heaven itself as we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):24** For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

And He has led all the righteous dead now into heaven as we read again in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):8** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

## **Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings**

### **Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, Book IV, Chapter 34, page 434**

Chapter 34.—The Calling Together of a Synod Not Always Necessary to the Condemnation of Heresies.

What is it, then, that they say, that “subscription was extorted from simple bishops sitting in their places without any Synodal congregation”? Was subscription extorted against such heretics as these from the most blessed and excellent men in the faith, Cyprian and Ambrose, before such heretics as these were in existence?—seeing that they overthrow their impious dogmas with such clearness that we can scarcely find anything more manifest to say against them. Or, indeed, was there any need of the congregation of a Synod to condemn this open pest, as if no heresy could at any time be condemned except by a Synodal congregation?—when, on the contrary, very few heresies can be found for the sake of condemning which any such necessity has arisen; and those have been many and incomparably more which have deserved to be accused and condemned in the place where they arose, and thence could be known and avoided over the rest of the lands. But the pride of such as these, which lifts itself up so much against God as not to be willing to glory in Him but rather in free will, is understood as grasping also at this glory, that a Synod of the East and West should be gathered together on their account. In fact, they endeavour, forsooth, to disturb the Catholic world, because, the Lord being against them, they are unable to pervert it; when rather they ought to have been trodden out wherever those wolves might have appeared, by watchfulness and pastoral diligence, after a competent and sufficient judgment made concerning them; whether with a view of their being healed and changed, or with a view of their being shunned by the safety and soundness of others, by the help of the Shepherd of the sheep, who seeks the lost sheep also among the little ones, who makes the sheep holy and righteous freely; who both providently instructs them, although sanctified and justified, yet in their frailty and infirmity to pray for a daily remission for their daily sins, without which no one lives in this world, even although he may live well; and mercifully listens to their prayers.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “What is it, then, that they say, that “subscription was extorted from simple bishops sitting in their places without any Synodal congregation”?”

We note that Augustine mentions a “Synodal congregation”.

He mentions it again, as he continues, “Was subscription extorted against such heretics as these from the most blessed and excellent men in the faith, Cyprian and Ambrose, before such heretics as these were in existence?—seeing that they overthrow their impious dogmas with such clearness that we can scarcely find anything more manifest to say against them. Or, indeed, was there any need of the congregation of a Synod to condemn this open pest, as if no heresy could at any time be condemned except by a Synodal congregation?—when, on the contrary, very few heresies can be found for the sake of condemning which any such necessity has arisen; and those have been many and incomparably more which have deserved to be accused and condemned in the place where they arose, and thence could be known and avoided over the rest of the lands.”

A “Synodal congregation” was a gathering of all of the bishops. Augustine is arguing that there is no need for a “Synodal congregation” to condemn every heresy that arises. This can instead be done by simply appealing to “blessed and excellent men in the faith”, such as



“Cyprian and Ambrose”.

Augustine continues, “But the pride of such as these, which lifts itself up so much against God as not to be willing to glory in Him but rather in free will, is understood as grasping also at this glory, that a Synod of the East and West should be gathered together on their account. In fact, they endeavour, forsooth, to disturb the Catholic world, because, the Lord being against them, they are unable to pervert it; when rather they ought to have been trodden out wherever those wolves might have appeared, by watchfulness and pastoral diligence, after a competent and sufficient judgment made concerning them;”

“Watchfulness and pastoral diligence” is the job of the pastor, but a pastor must be basing his confidence on the word of God, and not on the traditions of any church.

Augustine continues, “whether with a view of their being healed and changed, or with a view of their being shunned by the safety and soundness of others, by the help of the Shepherd of the sheep, who seeks the lost sheep also among the little ones, who makes the sheep holy and righteous freely; who both providently instructs them, although sanctified and justified, yet in their frailty and infirmity to pray for a daily remission for their daily sins, without which no one lives in this world, even although he may live well; and mercifully listens to their prayers.”

And let us not forget that the sheep, that is those who have believed in Jesus Christ and confessed Him as Lord, were washed, sanctified, and justified as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (NASB):11** Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

And whom God has justified, who is he who condemns as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

#### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**St. AUGUSTIN: Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, according to Matthew.**

**Book I. Explanation of the first part of the sermon delivered by our Lord on the mount, as contained in the fifth chapter of Matthew.**

**Chapter V., paragraph 14, page 8**

14. But it may be asked, What is the difference when He says, “when men shall revile you,” and “when they shall say all manner of evil against you,” since to revile is just this, to say evil against? But it is one thing when the reviling word is hurled with contumely in presence of him who is reviled, as it was said to our Lord, “Say we not the truth that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?” (John 8:48) and another thing, when our reputation is injured in our absence, as it is also written of Him, “Some said, He is a prophet; others said, Nay, but He deceiveth the people.” (John 7:40, 7:12) Then, further, to persecute is to inflict violence, or to assail with snares, as was done by him who betrayed Him, and by them who crucified Him. Certainly, as for the fact that this also is not put in a bare form, so that it should be said, “and shall say all manner of evil against you,” but there is added the word “falsely,” and also the expression “for my sake;” I think that the addition is made for the sake of those who wish to glory in



persecutions, and in the baseness of their reputation; and to say that Christ belongs to them for this reason, that many bad things are said about them; while, on the one hand, the things said are true, when they are said respecting their error; and, on the other hand, if sometimes also some false charges are thrown out, which frequently happens from the rashness of men, yet they do not suffer such things for Christ's sake. **For he is not a follower of Christ who is not called a Christian according to the true faith and the catholic discipline.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "But it may be asked, What is the difference when He says, "when men shall revile you," and "when they shall say all manner of evil against you," since to revile is just this, to say evil against? But it is one thing when the reviling word is hurled with contumely in presence of him who is reviled, as it was said to our Lord, "Say we not the truth that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" (John 8:48) and another thing, when our reputation is injured in our absence, as it is also written of Him, "Some said, He is a prophet; others said, Nay, but He deceiveth the people." (John 7:40, 7:12)"

The word "contumely" means "harsh language or treatment arising from haughtiness and contempt". (**Merriam Webster**)

He refers to **John 8 (KJV):48** Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

And to **John 7 (KJV):40** Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet.

And to **John 7 (KJV):12** And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people.

He continues, "Then, further, to persecute is to inflict violence, or to assail with snares, as was done by him who betrayed Him, and by them who crucified Him. Certainly, as for the fact that this also is not put in a bare form, so that it should be said, "and shall say all manner of evil against you," but there is added the word "falsely," and also the expression "for my sake;" I think that the addition is made for the sake of those who wish to glory in persecutions, and in the baseness of their reputation; and to say that Christ belongs to them for this reason, that many bad things are said about them; while, on the one hand, the things said are true, when they are said respecting their error; and, on the other hand, if sometimes also some false charges are thrown out, which frequently happens from the rashness of men, yet they do not suffer such things for Christ's sake. **For he is not a follower of Christ who is not called a Christian according to the true faith and the catholic discipline."**

It was unthinkable to Augustine that anyone could stand up for the truth and be not **"called a Christian according to the true faith and the catholic discipline."**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermon VI, On the Lord's Prayer in St. Matthew's Gospel Chapter VI, 9. Etc, to the Competentes, Paragraph 14, page 279**

14. Now because by reason of those daily sins of which I have spoken, it is necessary for you to say, in that daily prayer of cleansing as it were, "Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors;" what will ye do? Ye have enemies. For who can live on this earth without them? Take heed to yourselves, love them. In no way can thine enemy so hurt thee by his violence, as

thou dost hurt thyself if thou love him not. For he may injure thy estate, or flocks, or house, or thy man-servant, or thy maid-servant, or thy son, or thy wife; or at most, if such power be given him, thy body. But can he injure thy soul, as thou canst thyself? Reach forward, dearly beloved, I beseech you, to this perfection. But have I given you this power? He only hath given it to whom ye say, "Thy will be done as in heaven so in earth. Yet let it not seem impossible to you. I know, I have known by experience, that there are Christian men who do love their enemies. If it seem to you impossible, ye will not do it. Believe then first that it can be done, and pray that the will of God may be done in you. For what good can thy neighbour's ill do thee? If he had no ill, he would not even be thine enemy. Wish him well then, that he may end his ill, and he will be thine enemy no longer. For it is not the human nature in him that is at enmity with thee, but his sin. Is he therefore thine enemy, because he hath a soul and body? In this he is as thou art: thou hast a soul, and so hath he: thou hast a body, and so hath he. He is of the same substance as thou art; ye were made both out of the same earth, and quickened by the same Lord. In all this he is as thou art. Acknowledge in him then thy brother. **The first pair, Adam and Eve, were our parents; the one our father, the other our mother; and therefore we are brethren. But let us leave the consideration of our first origin. God is our Father, the Church our Mother, and therefore are we brethren.** But you will say, my enemy is a heathen, a Jew, a heretic, of whom I spake some time ago on the words, "Thy will be done as in heaven so in earth." O Church, thy enemy is the heathen, the Jew, the heretic; he is the earth. If thou art heaven, call on thy Father which is in heaven, and pray for thine enemies: for so was Saul an enemy of the Church; thus was prayer made for him, and he became her friend. He not only ceased from being her persecutor, but he laboured to be her helper. And yet, to say the truth, prayer was made against him; but against his malice, not against his nature. So let thy prayer be against the malice of thine enemy, that it may die, and he may live. For if thine enemy were dead, thou hast lost it might seem an enemy, yet hast thou not found a friend. But if his malice die, thou hast at once lost an enemy and found a friend.

**Commentary:** To summarize, Augustine says, "**The first pair, Adam and Eve, were our parents; the one our father, the other our mother; and therefore we are brethren. But let us leave the consideration of our first origin. God is our Father, the Church our Mother, and therefore are we brethren.**"

In saying this, he is giving a place to the hierarchy of the Church, the Pope, the bishops, the cardinals, which they do not have. God has made a way for every individual in His body, the Church, to have relationship with Him. The Church is not our "**Mother**".

We read in **1 John 2 (KJV):** 26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. 28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. 29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

Everyone in the body of Christ, that is, every believer, can hear from God by the anointing we have received from Him. As that anointing that we have received from Him teaches us, we shall abide in Him. Our trust and reliance must be on the Lord.

The Church is not our Mother. This exceeds what is written in the Scriptures. In Augustine's mind, the Church is our Mother by baptismal regeneration. But we are saved by grace through faith the moment we believe in Jesus Christ, and confess Him as Lord.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine  
Sermon VII, Again, on Matt. vi. on the Lord's Prayer. To the Competentes., Paragraph 2,  
page 280-281**

2. The Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, hath taught us a Prayer; and though He be the Lord Himself, as ye have heard and repeated in the Creed, the Only Son of God, yet He would not be alone. He is the Only Son, and yet would not be alone; He hath vouchsafed to have brethren. For to whom doth He say, "Say, Our Father, which art in heaven?" (Matthew 6:9) Whom did He wish us to call our Father, save His own Father? Did He grudge us this? Parents sometimes when they have gotten one, or two, or three children, fear to give birth to any more, lest they reduce the rest to beggary. But because the inheritance which He promiseth us is such as many may possess, and no one be straitened; therefore hath He called into His brotherhood the peoples of the nations; and the Only Son hath numberless brethren; who say, "Our Father, which art in heaven." So said they who have been before us; and so shall say those who will come after us. See how many brethren the Only Son hath in His grace, sharing His inheritance with those for whom He suffered death. **We had a father and mother on earth, that we might be born to labours and to death: but we have found other parents, God our Father, and the Church our Mother, by whom we are born unto life eternal. Let us then consider, beloved, whose children we have begun to be; and let us live so as becomes those who have such a Father. See, how that our Creator hath condescended to be our Father!**

**Commentary:** To summarize, Augustine says, **"We had a father and mother on earth, that we might be born to labours and to death: but we have found other parents, God our Father, and the Church our Mother, by whom we are born unto life eternal. Let us then consider, beloved, whose children we have begun to be; and let us live so as becomes those who have such a Father. See, how that our Creator hath condescended to be our Father!"**

Augustine is trying to establish a loyalty to the Catholic Church by the analogy of a father and mother, a family. In so doing, he is giving a place to the hierarchy of the Church which is not Scriptural. Augustine assumes that, since it is by the Church that one is baptized, that it is through the Church that one is **"born unto life eternal"**, and therefore the Church is our Mother. But since it is not by baptism that we are born again, but by our faith in Jesus Christ the moment we believe, the Church is not in any way our mother. We are only baptized because we believe. Baptism is an outward sign to the world of what has already happened on the inside.

We pass from death to life when we hear and believe as we read again in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XLV. Chapter X. 1–10, paragraph 5, page 250-251**

5. For there are countless numbers who not only boast that they see, but would have it appear that they are enlightened by Christ; yet are they heretics. Have even they somehow entered by the gate? Surely not. Sabellius says, He who is the Son is Himself the Father; but if the Son, then is there no Father. He enters not by the door, who asserts that the Son is the Father. Arius says, The Father is one thing, the Son is another thing. He would say rightly if he said, Another person; but not another thing. For when he says, Another thing, he contradicts Him who says in his hearing, “I and my Father are One.” Neither does he therefore enter by the door; for he preaches a Christ such as he fabricates for himself, not such as the truth declares Him. Thou hast the name, thou hast not the reality. Christ is the name of something; keep hold of the thing itself, if thou wouldst benefit by the name. Another, I know not from whence, says with Photinus, Christ is mere man; He is not God. He enters not in by the door, for Christ is both man and God. But why need I make many references, and enumerate the many vanities of heretics? **Keep hold of this, that Christ’s sheepfold is the Catholic Church. Whoever would enter the sheepfold, let him enter by the door, let him preach the true Christ.** Not only let him preach the true Christ, but seek Christ’s glory, not his own; for many, by seeking their own glory, have scattered Christ’s sheep, instead of gathering them. For Christ the Lord is a low gateway: he who enters by this gateway must humble himself, that he may be able to enter with head unharmed. But he that humbleth not, but exalteth himself, wishes to climb over the wall; and he that climbeth over the wall, is exalted only to fall.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “For there are countless numbers who not only boast that they see, but would have it appear that they are enlightened by Christ; yet are they heretics. Have even they somehow entered by the gate? Surely not. Sabellius says, He who is the Son is Himself the Father; but if the Son, then is there no Father. He enters not by the door, who asserts that the Son is the Father. Arius says, The Father is one thing, the Son is another thing. He would say rightly if he said, Another person; but not another thing. For when he says, Another thing, he contradicts Him who says in his hearing, “I and my Father are One.””

He refers to **John 10 (KJV):30** I and my Father are one.

He continues, “Neither does he therefore enter by the door; for he preaches a Christ such as he fabricates for himself, not such as the truth declares Him. Thou hast the name, thou hast not the reality. Christ is the name of something; keep hold of the thing itself, if thou wouldst benefit by the name. Another, I know not from whence, says with Photinus, Christ is mere man; He is not God. He enters not in by the door, for Christ is both man and God.”

He refers to Photinus, who was Bishop of Sirmium, and who published his heretical opinions about A.D. 343.

He continues, “But why need I make many references, and enumerate the many vanities of heretics? **Keep hold of this, that Christ’s sheepfold is the Catholic Church. Whoever would enter the sheepfold, let him enter by the door, let him preach the true Christ.**”

Augustine considered the Catholic Church in his time to be the true Church, preaching “the true Christ.”

He continues, “Not only let him preach the true Christ, but seek Christ’s glory, not his

own; for many, by seeking their own glory, have scattered Christ's sheep, instead of gathering them. For Christ the Lord is a low gateway: he who enters by this gateway must humble himself, that he may be able to enter with head unharmed. But he that humbleth not, but exalteth himself, wishes to climb over the wall; and he that climbeth over the wall, is exalted only to fall."

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine  
On the Psalms, Psalm CXLIX, paragraph 2, page 677**

2. The field of the Lord is the world, not Africa. It is not with the Lord's field, as it is without these fields of ours, where Getulia bears sixty or an hundred fold, Numidia only ten fold: everywhere fruit is borne to Him, both an hundred fold, and sixty fold, and thirty fold: only do thou choose what thou wilt be, if thou thinkest to belong to the Lord's Cross. **"The Church" then "of the saints" is the Catholic Church. The Church of the saints is not the Church of heretics.** The Church of the saints is that which God first prefigured before it was seen, and then set forth that it might be seen. The Church of the saints was heretofore in writings, now it is in nations: the Church of the saints was heretofore only read of, now it is both read of and seen. When it was only read of, it was believed; now it is seen, and is spoken against. His praise is in the "children of the kingdom," that is, "the Church of the saints."

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine believed that, **"The Church" then "of the saints" is the Catholic Church. The Church of the saints is not the Church of heretics."**

## **The Pope**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XLIX. Chapter XI. 1-54 , paragraph 27, page 278**

27. "And one of them, [named] Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied." **We are here taught that the Spirit of prophecy used the agency even of wicked men to foretell what was future; which, however, the evangelist attributes to the divine sacramental fact that he was pontiff, which is to say, the high priest.** It may, however, be a question in what way he is called the high priest of that year, seeing that God appointed one person to be high priest, who was to be succeeded only at his death by another. But we are to understand that ambitious schemes and contentions among the Jews led to the appointment afterwards of more than one, and to their annual turn of service. For it is said also of Zacharias: "And it came to pass that, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord." (Luke 1:8-9) From which it is evident that there were more than one, and that each had his turn: for it was lawful for the high priest alone to



place the incense on the altar. (Exodus 30:7) And perhaps also there were several in actual service in the same year, who were succeeded next year by several others, and that it fell by lot to one of them to burn incense. What was it, then, that Caiaphas prophesied? “That Jesus should die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.” This is added by the evangelist; for Caiaphas prophesied only of the Jewish nation, in which there were sheep of whom the Lord Himself had said, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (Matthew 15:24) But the evangelist knew that there were other sheep, which were not of this fold, but which had also to be brought, that there might be one fold and one shepherd. But this was said in the way of predestination; for those who were still unbelieving were as yet neither His sheep nor the children of God.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, ““And one of them, [named] Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied.””

He refers in context to **John 11 (KJV):49** And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;

He continues, “We are here taught that the Spirit of prophecy used the agency even of wicked men to foretell what was future; which, however, the evangelist attributes to the divine sacramental fact that he was pontiff, which is to say, the high priest.”

Augustine uses the word “pontiff” here. “A pontiff (from Latin *pontifex*) was, in Roman antiquity, a member of the most illustrious of the colleges of priests of the Roman religion, the College of Pontiffs. The term “pontiff” was later applied to any high or chief priest and, in Roman Catholic ecclesiastical usage, to a bishop and more particularly to the Bishop of Rome, the Pope or “Roman Pontiff”. ” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pontiff>

Augustine continues, “It may, however, be a question in what way he is called the high priest of that year, seeing that God appointed one person to be high priest, who was to be succeeded only at his death by another. But we are to understand that ambitious schemes and contentions among the Jews led to the appointment afterwards of more than one, and to their annual turn of service. For it is said also of Zacharias: “And it came to pass that, while he executed the priest’s office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest’s office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.” (Luke 1:8-9)”

He refers in context to **Luke 1 (KJV):6** There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, 9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.



But Zacharias was not the high priest, but just a priest. There was more than one priest in Israel, but only one high priest.

Augustine continues, “From which it is evident that there were more than one, and that each had his turn: for it was lawful for the high priest alone to place the incense on the altar. (Exodus 30:7)”

He refers to **Exodus 30 (KJV):7** And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.

But we see that actually the practice was to be done by Aaron and his sons as we read in **Exodus 30 (KJV):19** For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: 20 When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord: 21 So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.

And in **Exodus 30 (KJV):30** And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.

Aaron was the high priest in that time, and was the only one to go into the Holy of Holies to offer the sacrifice on the day of atonement. But to offer incense or other burnt offerings was done by all of the priests.

Augustine continues, “And perhaps also there were several in actual service in the same year, who were succeeded next year by several others, and that it fell by lot to one of them to burn incense. What was it, then, that Caiaphas prophesied? “That Jesus should die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.””

He refers again to **John 11 (KJV):49** And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. 51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; 52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

That there was more than one high priest during this time is evident in **Luke 3 (KJV):2** Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

And we also read as in **John 18 (KJV):13** And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

And in **Acts 4 (KJV):6** And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

What we must understand is that during this time, Israel was under Roman rule. The following is helpful in understanding why there was more than one high priest at this time.

“**Annas** (also **Ananus** or **Ananias**; Hebrew: חנן), son of Seth (23/22 BC – death date unknown, probably around 40 A.D.), was appointed by the Roman legate Quirinius as the first High Priest of the newly formed Roman province of Iudaea in 6 A.D; just after the Romans had deposed Archelaus, Ethnarch of Judaea, thereby putting Judaea directly under Roman rule.

Annas officially served as High Priest for ten years (6–15 A.D.), when at the age of 36 he was deposed by the procurator Valerius Gratus. Yet while having been officially removed from office, he remained as one of the nation's most influential political and social individuals, aided greatly by the use of his five sons and his son-in-law Caiaphas as puppet High Priests. His death is unrecorded. His son Annas the Younger, also known as Ananus the son of Ananus, was assassinated in 66 A.D. for advocating peace with Rome.” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annas>

Augustine continues, “This is added by the evangelist; for Caiaphas prophesied only of the Jewish nation, in which there were sheep of whom the Lord Himself had said, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (Matthew 15:24)”

He refers first to **John 11 (KJV):52** And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

And then to **Matthew 15 (KJV):24** But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

He concludes, “But the evangelist knew that there were other sheep, which were not of this fold, but which had also to be brought, that there might be one fold and one shepherd. But this was said in the way of predestination; for those who were still unbelieving were as yet neither His sheep nor the children of God.”

He refers to **John 10 (KJV):16** And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

Jesus prophesied of the Gentiles who were not of the fold of Israel, but would be brought into the one fold of the Church of Christ, which would include Jew and Gentile.

## Abraham's Bosom

### Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 1, Confessions Book IX Chapter III., paragraphs 5-6, Page 130-131

—He Retires to the Villa of His Friend Verecundus, Who Was Not Yet a Christian, and Refers to His Conversion and Death, as Well as that of Nebridius.

5. Verecundus was wasted with anxiety at that our happiness, since he, being most firmly held by his bonds, saw that he would lose our fellowship. For he was not yet a Christian, though his wife was one of the faithful; and yet hereby, being more firmly enchained than by anything else, was he held back from that journey which we had commenced. Nor, he declared, did he wish to be a Christian on any other terms than those that were impossible. **However, he invited us most courteously to make use of his country house so long as we should stay there. Thou, O Lord, wilt “recompense” him for this “at the resurrection of the just,” (Luke 14:14) seeing that Thou hast already given him “the lot of the righteous.” (Psalm 125:3) For although, when we were absent at Rome, he, being overtaken with bodily sickness, and therein being made a Christian, and one of the faithful, departed this life, yet hadst Thou mercy on him, and not on him only, but on us also; (Philippians 2:27) lest, thinking on the exceeding kindness of our friend to us, and unable to count him in Thy flock, we should be tortured with intolerable grief.** Thanks be unto Thee, our God, we are Thine. Thy exhortations, consolations, and faithful promises assure us that Thou now repayest Verecundus for that country house at Cassiacum, where from the fever of the world we found rest in Thee, with the perpetual freshness of Thy Paradise, in that Thou hast forgiven him his earthly sins, in that mountain flowing with milk, that fruitful mountain,—Thine own.

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine refers to **Luke 14 (KJV):14** And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

And to **Psalm 125 (KJV):3** For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.

And to **Philippians 2 (KJV):27** For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

So Verecundus was not yet a Christian, but his wife was.

Augustine then continues.

6. **He then was at that time full of grief; but Nebridius was joyous. Although he also, not being yet a Christian, had fallen into the pit of that most pernicious error of believing Thy Son to be a phantasm, yet, coming out thence, he held the same belief that we did; not as yet initiated in any of the sacraments of Thy Church, but a most earnest inquirer after truth. Whom, not long after our conversion and regeneration by Thy baptism, he being also a faithful member of the Catholic Church, and serving Thee in perfect chastity and continency amongst his own people in Africa, when his whole household had been brought to Christianity through him, didst**

Thou release from the flesh; and now he lives in Abraham's bosom. Whatever that may be which is signified by that bosom, there lives my Nebridius, my sweet friend, Thy son, O Lord, adopted of a freedman; there he liveth. For what other place could there be for such a soul? There liveth he, concerning which he used to ask me much,—me, an inexperienced, feeble one. Now he puts not his ear unto my mouth, but his spiritual mouth unto Thy fountain, and drinketh as much as he is able, wisdom according to his desire,—happy without end. Nor do I believe that he is so inebriated with it as to forget me, seeing Thou, O Lord, whom he drinketh, art mindful of us. Thus, then, were we comforting the sorrowing Verecundus (our friendship being untouched) concerning our conversion, and exhorting him to a faith according to his condition, I mean, his married state. And tarrying for Nebridius to follow us, which being so near, he was just about to do, when, behold, those days passed over at last; for long and many they seemed, on account of my love of easeful liberty, that I might sing unto Thee from my very marrow. My heart said unto Thee,—I have sought Thy face; “Thy face, Lord, will I seek.” (Psalm 27:8)

**Commentary:** In summary, Augustine says that Nebridius became “a faithful member of the Catholic Church, and serving Thee in perfect chastity and continency amongst his own people in Africa, when his whole household had been brought to Christianity through him.” And though “not as yet initiated in any of the sacraments of Thy Church, but a most earnest inquirer after truth”, and “a faithful member of the Catholic Church, and serving Thee in perfect chastity and continency amongst his own people in Africa, when his whole household had been brought to Christianity through him”, God then for him did “release from the flesh; and now he lives in Abraham's bosom”.

Augustine concludes, and refers to **Psalm 27 (KJV):8** When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

He tells us more about what he believes Abraham's bosom is in the next quote from his writing.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Soul and Its Origin, Book IV, Chapter 24, page 364**

#### **Chapter 24.—Abraham's Bosom—What It Means.**

As to your supposing that “the Abraham's bosom referred to is corporeal,” and your further assertion, that “by it is meant his whole body,” I fear that you must be regarded (even in such a subject) as trying to joke and raise a laugh, instead of acting gravely and seriously. For you could not else be so foolish as to think that the material bosom of one person could receive so many souls; nay, to use your own words, “bear the bodies of as many meritorious men as the angels carry thither, as they did Lazarus.” Unless it happen to be your opinion, that his soul alone deserved to find its way to the said bosom. If you are not, then, in fun, and do not wish to make childish mistakes, you must understand by “Abraham's bosom” that remote and separate abode of rest and peace in which Abraham now is; and that what was said to Abraham (Luke 16:24) did not merely refer to him personally, but had reference to his appointment as the father of many nations, (Genesis 17:5) to whom he was presented for imitation as the first and principal example of faith; even as God willed Himself to be called “the God of Abraham, the

God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” although He is the God of an innumerable company.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “As to your supposing that “the Abraham’s bosom referred to is corporeal,” and your further assertion, that “by it is meant his whole body,” I fear that you must be regarded (even in such a subject) as trying to joke and raise a laugh, instead of acting gravely and seriously. For you could not else be so foolish as to think that the material bosom of one person could receive so many souls; nay, to use your own words, “bear the bodies of as many meritorious men as the angels carry thither, as they did Lazarus.” Unless it happen to be your opinion, that his soul alone deserved to find its way to the said bosom. If you are not, then, in fun, and do not wish to make childish mistakes, you must understand by “Abraham’s bosom” that remote and separate abode of rest and peace in which Abraham now is; and that what was said to Abraham (Luke 16:24) did not merely refer to him personally, but had reference to his appointment as the father of many nations, (Genesis 17:5) to whom he was presented for imitation as the first and principal example of faith; even as God willed Himself to be called “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” although He is the God of an innumerable company.”

He refers to **Luke 16 (KJV):24** And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

And to **Genesis 17 (KJV):5** Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

And to **Exodus 3 (KJV):6** Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.

But in order to understand what Abraham’s bosom is, we must read the Scripture in context as in **Luke 16 (KJV):19** There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

Jesus is telling this parable. Before Jesus died on the cross, the righteous dead went to Abraham’s bosom. The unrighteous dead went to hell.

Let’s continue to read in **Luke 16 (KJV):24** And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

Now there was a great gulf fixed so that they cannot pass from hell to Abraham’s bosom, or pass from Abraham’s bosom to hell. By this parable, Jesus pointed out the gravity of our choices. Will we choose eternal life with Him, or eternal torment in hell?

We continue to read in **Luke 16 (KJV):**27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Now when Jesus rose from the dead, the door to heaven was opened. This is explained in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. 7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: 9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10 Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. 11 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

And then we read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):**24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

So the path into heaven was made possible by the blood of Jesus. He opened the door for us. Now the path of His resurrection is revealed by Paul in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):**8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Now we also read in a Psalm of David, as in **Psalms 16 (ESV):**10 For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

The word in Hebrew for Sheol is שְׁאוֹל (Pronounced shē'owl). This word was used by Jacob in **Genesis 37 (KJV):**35 All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, “No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning.” Thus his father wept for him.

As we explained before in the chapter on **Martyrdom**, before Jesus rose from the dead, Sheol was where the spirits of the righteous dead went after dying. It was located in the heart of the earth, for Jacob says he “shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning”. This place called Sheol was divided into two places. The righteous went to Abraham’s bosom, which is also called Paradise as we know from Jesus’ words on the cross to the repentant thief, and read in **Luke 23 (KJV):**39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said unto



Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

The first day Jesus was in the tomb, He went to Abraham's bosom, or paradise as he said to the thief on the cross.

The unrighteous dead go to Hell, or Hades in the Greek. So when Jesus "descended first into the lower parts of the earth", as in Ephesians 4:9 above, he "led captivity captive", and "ascended up on high", as in Ephesians 4:8 above. So Jesus led the righteous dead out of Abraham's Bosom and then into heaven. Augustine and the Catholic Church in his time did not understand this in the Scriptures. The spirits of the righteous dead are now in heaven with Jesus, and waiting for the resurrection of the just. The door to heaven was opened by Jesus.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On the Soul and Its Origin, Book II, Chapter 14, page 337**

#### **Book II.**

In the Shape of a Letter Addressed to the Presbyter Peter, he advises Peter not to incur the imputation of having approved of the books which had been addressed to him by Victor on the origin of the soul, by any use he might make of them, nor to take as Catholic doctrines that person's rash utterances contrary to the Christian faith. Victor's various errors, and those, too, of a very serious character, he points out and briefly confutes; and he concludes with advising Peter himself to try to persuade Victor to amend his errors.

To his Lordship, my dearly beloved brother and fellow presbyter Peter, Augustin, bishop, sendeth greeting in the Lord.

Chapter 14 [X.]—Victor Sends Those Infants Who Die Unbaptized to Paradise and the Heavenly Mansions, But Not to the Kingdom of Heaven.

But I beg you mark how bold he is, who is displeased with hesitancy, which prefers to be cautious rather than over knowing in a question so profound as this: "I would be bold to say"—such are his words—"that they can attain to the forgiveness of their original sins, yet not so as to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. Just as in the case of the thief on the cross, who confessed but was not baptized, the Lord did not give him the kingdom of heaven, but paradise; (Luke 23:43) the words remaining accordingly in full force, 'Except a man be born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' (John 3:5) This is especially true, inasmuch as the Lord acknowledges that in His Father's house are many mansions, (John 14:2) by which are indicated the many different merits of those who dwell in them; so that in these abodes the unbaptized is brought to forgiveness, and the baptized to the reward which by grace has been prepared for him." You observe how the man keeps paradise and the mansions of the Father's house distinct from the kingdom of heaven, so that even unbaptized persons may have an abundant provision in places of eternal happiness. Nor does he see, when he says all this, that he is so unwilling to distinguish the future abode of a baptized infant from the kingdom of heaven as to have no fear in keeping distinct therefrom the very house of God the Father, or the several parts thereof. For the Lord Jesus did not say: In all the created universe, or in any portion of that universe, but, "In my Father's house, are many

mansions.” But in what way shall an unbaptized person live in the house of God the Father, when he cannot possibly have God for his Father, except he be born again? He should not be so ungrateful to God, who has vouchsafed to deliver him from the sect of the Donatists or Rogatists, as to aim at dividing the house of God the Father, and to put one portion of it outside the kingdom of heaven, where the unbaptized may be able to dwell. And on what terms does he himself presume that he is to enter into the kingdom of heaven, when from that kingdom he excludes the house of the King Himself, in what part soever He pleases? From the case, however, of the thief who, when crucified at the Lord’s side, put his hope in the Lord who was crucified with him, and from the case of Dinocrates, the brother of St. Perpetua, he argues that even to the unbaptized may be given the remission of sins and an abode with the blessed; as if any one unbelief in whom would be a sin, had shown him that the thief and Dinocrates had not been baptized. Concerning these cases, however, I have more fully explained my views in the book which I wrote to our brother Renatus. This your loving self will be able to ascertain if you will condescend to read the book; for I am sure our brother will not find it in his heart to refuse you, if you ask him the loan of it.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he states the words of Vincentius Victor, “**But I beg you mark how bold he is, who is displeased with hesitancy, which prefers to be cautious rather than over knowing in a question so profound as this: “I would be bold to say”—such are his words—“that they can attain to the forgiveness of their original sins, yet not so as to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. Just as in the case of the thief on the cross, who confessed but was not baptized, the Lord did not give him the kingdom of heaven, but paradise; (Luke 23:43) the words remaining accordingly in full force, ‘Except a man be born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ (John 3:5) This is especially true, inasmuch as the Lord acknowledges that in His Father’s house are many mansions, (John 14:2) by which are indicated the many different merits of those who dwell in them; so that in these abodes the unbaptized is brought to forgiveness, and the baptized to the reward which by grace has been prepared for him.”**

He refers in context to **Luke 23 (KJV):39** And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

And to **John 3 (KJV):5** Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

So Victor does not believe that the unbaptized can enter the kingdom of heaven, but only paradise, or in one of the mansions in the Father’s house, which is outside of the kingdom of heaven.

Before we talk about paradise, let us continue with Augustine’s words, as he then argues, “You observe how the man keeps paradise and the mansions of the Father’s house distinct from the kingdom of heaven, so that even unbaptized persons may have an abundant provision in places of eternal happiness. Nor does he see, when he says all this, that he is so unwilling to

distinguish the future abode of a baptized infant from the kingdom of heaven as to have no fear in keeping distinct therefrom the very house of God the Father, or the several parts thereof. For the Lord Jesus did not say: In all the created universe, or in any portion of that universe, but, "In my Father's house, are many mansions."

He refers to **John 14 (KJV):1** Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Augustine argues well here. There is no place in Scripture that speaks of a Limbo, or some place in the Father's house that is outside of the kingdom of heaven.

Augustine continues, "But in what way shall an unbaptized person live in the house of God the Father, when he cannot possibly have God for his Father, except he be born again?"

The answer according to Scripture is that, to simply believe in Jesus Christ and to confess Him as Lord, is to be born again. Baptism does not save us, but faith in Jesus Christ saves us.

Augustine continues, "He should not be so ungrateful to God, who has vouchsafed to deliver him from the sect of the Donatists or Rogatists, as to aim at dividing the house of God the Father, and to put one portion of it outside the kingdom of heaven, where the unbaptized may be able to dwell. And on what terms does he himself presume that he is to enter into the kingdom of heaven, when from that kingdom he excludes the house of the King Himself, in what part soever He pleases?"

Again, Augustine argues well here. The house of the King Himself is not divided.

He continues, "From the case, however, of the thief who, when crucified at the Lord's side, put his hope in the Lord who was crucified with him, and from the case of Dinocrates, the brother of St. Perpetua, he argues that even to the unbaptized may be given the remission of sins and an abode with the blessed; as if any one unbelief in whom would be a sin, had shown him that the thief and Dinocrates had not been baptized."

The unbaptized may be given the remission of sins, and an abode with the blessed if they have faith in Jesus Christ. He is the way, as He says in **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Now Augustine would not disagree with this, but he would just put the time of being born again at baptism. But we are baptized because we believe, not in order that we may believe. And when we believe we pass from death to life as Jesus spoke in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Augustine then concludes, "Concerning these cases, however, I have more fully explained my views in the book which I wrote to our brother Renatus. This your loving self will be able to ascertain if you will condescend to read the book; for I am sure our brother will not find it in his heart to refuse you, if you ask him the loan of it."

Now, about paradise, it is important to know what the word of God says about the dead. Jesus spoke a parable in **Luke 16 (KJV):19** There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's

bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

So we have a rich man in hell, and the beggar in Abraham's bosom. We continue to read in **Luke 16 (KJV)**:24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

So Lazarus went to Abraham's bosom, a place where the righteous dead went. And the rich man lifted up his eyes in hell. And there was a "great gulf fixed" between the two, Abraham's bosom, and hell.

We continue to read in **Luke 16 (KJV)**:27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Jesus here prophesied of His death. He also uses the proper name of Lazarus for the beggar, so we must conclude that these are real people. This parable explains where the righteous dead went after death.

Now we read in a Psalm of David, as in **Psalms 16 (ESV)**:10 For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

The word in Hebrew for Sheol is שְׁאוֹל (Pronounced shē'owl). This word was used by Jacob in **Genesis 37 (KJV)**:35 All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

Before Jesus rose from the dead, Sheol was where the spirits of the righteous dead went after dying. It was located in the heart of the earth, for Jacob says he "shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning". This place called Sheol was divided into two places. The righteous went to Abraham's bosom, which we could also call Paradise because of Jesus' words on the cross to the repentant thief. And the unrighteous went to Hell, or Hades in the Greek, which is where the wicked dead went.

Again, Sheol was located in the lower parts of the earth. We read of Jesus' descent there in **Ephesians 4 (KJV)**:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

When Jesus ascended up on high, he led "captivity captive" in verse 8. And he ascended after he "descended first into the lower parts of the earth" in verse 9. This is where Sheol is. The unrighteous dead are still there.

Peter also mentions this in **1 Peter 3 (KJV)**:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

It was a prison for the unrighteous but a holding tank for the righteous. The need for such a separation was so that the righteous dead could be kept until the way into the holiest was made manifest, as explained in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):7** But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: 8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

The holiest of all is heaven itself. We continue to read in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):22** And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. 23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

So now that Christ has risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, all the righteous are in heaven with him, as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):22** But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

It is not baptism that gets us entrance into the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, or heaven itself, but simple faith in Jesus Christ by which we receive Him, and we are born again, as we read again in **Romans 10 (KJV):9** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Now, in our day, the righteous dead depart, and are with Christ as Paul reveals in **Philippians 1:23 (KJV):23** For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

Now remember that Jesus told the thief on the cross that, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise", as we read again in **Luke 23 (KJV):42** And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Jesus had prophesied in **Matthew 12 (KJV):40** For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

So Jesus did not enter heaven right away, for he first descended into the lower parts of the earth. He went to Abraham's Bosom, or paradise, where he took with Him the thief on the cross who repented. Then he took captivity captive, and ascended with them to heaven. Now all the righteous go straight to heaven when they die.

## **He Led Captivity Captive (Ephesians 4:8)**

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine**

**Sermons on New-Testament Lessons, Sermon LXXVIII, paragraphs 4-5, page 492**

4. Of Him it is said, "He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, He gave gifts unto men." (Psalm 68:18, Ephesians 4:8) What is, "He led captivity captive"? He conquered death. What is, "He led captivity captive"? The devil was the author of death, and the devil was himself by the Death of Christ led captive. "He ascended up on high." What do we know higher than heaven? Visibly and before the eyes of His disciples He ascended into heaven. This we know, this we believe, this we confess. "He gave gifts unto men." What gifts? The Holy Spirit. He who giveth such a Gift, what is He Himself? For great is God's mercy; He giveth a Gift equal to Himself; for His Gift is the Holy Spirit, and the Whole Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, is One God. What hath the Holy Spirit brought us? Hear the Apostle; "The love of God," saith he, "hath been shed abroad in our hearts." (Romans 5:5) Whence, thou beggar, hath the love of God been shed abroad in thine heart? How, or wherein hath the love of God been shed abroad in the heart of man? "We have," saith he, "this treasure in earthen vessels." Why in earthen vessels? "That the excellency of the power may be of God?" (2 Corinthians 4:7) Finally, when he had said, "The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts;" that no man might think that he hath this love of God of himself, he added immediately, "By the Holy Spirit, who hath been given to us." Therefore, that thou mayest love God, let God dwell in thee, and love Himself in thee, that is, to His love let Him move thee, enkindle, enlighten, arouse thee.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "Of Him it is said, "He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, He gave gifts unto men." (Psalm 68:18, Ephesians 4:8)"

He refers to **Psalm 68 (KJV):18** Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

And to **Ephesians 4 (KJV):8** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

He continues, "What is, "He led captivity captive"? He conquered death. What is, "He led captivity captive"? The devil was the author of death, and the devil was himself by the Death of Christ led captive. "He ascended up on high." What do we know higher than heaven? Visibly and before the eyes of His disciples He ascended into heaven."

He refers to **Acts 1 (KJV):9** And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

He continues, "This we know, this we believe, this we confess. "He gave gifts unto men." What gifts? The Holy Spirit. He who giveth such a Gift, what is He Himself? For great is God's



mercy; He giveth a Gift equal to Himself; for His Gift is the Holy Spirit, and the Whole Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, is One God. What hath the Holy Spirit brought us? Hear the Apostle; “The love of God,” saith he, “hath been shed abroad in our hearts.” (Romans 5:5)”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):5** And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

However, let us read in context in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):8** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) 11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

In verse 11 we read that “he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers”, and this was for “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”, in verse 12. The word “gifts” in verse 8 in the Greek is **δῶμα** (pronounced do'-mä), a gift.

<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G1390&t=KJV>

Wuest says about Ephesians 4:8, “From the subject of the general enabling grace of God given to all saints for service, Paul turns to gifts which He gives to men. The word here is not *charisma*, referring to special gifts such as the gifts noted in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, but *dōma*, a general term for that which is given. These gifts are the gifted men mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. Christ gave these gifts to the Church when He ascended to Heaven.” **Word Studies in the Greek New Testament, Kenneth S. Wuest, Volume I, The Exegesis of Ephesians, Page 98.**

In other words, the gifts spoken of in Ephesians 4:8 are the ministry gifts, and not spiritual gifts as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Augustine continues, “Whence, thou beggar, hath the love of God been shed abroad in thine heart? How, or wherein hath the love of God been shed abroad in the heart of man? “We have,” saith he, “this treasure in earthen vessels.” Why in earthen vessels? “That the excellency of the power may be of God?” (2 Corinthians 4:7)”

He refers to **2 Corinthians 4 (KJV):7** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

He concludes, “Finally, when he had said, “The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts;” that no man might think that he hath this love of God of himself, he added immediately, “By the Holy Spirit, who hath been given to us.” Therefore, that thou mayest love God, let God dwell in thee, and love Himself in thee, that is, to His love let Him move thee, enkindle, enlighten, arouse thee.”

And this is good advice. He continues in the next paragraph.

5. For in this body of ours there is a struggle; as long as we live, we are in combat; as long as we are in combat, we are in peril; but, “in all these things we are conquerors through Him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37) Our combat ye heard of just now when the Apostle was being read. “All the law,” saith he, “is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy

neighbour as thyself.” (Galatians 5:14) This love is from the Holy Spirit. “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” First see, if thou knowest yet how to love thyself; and then will I commit to thee the neighbour whom thou art to love as thyself. But if thou dost not yet know how to love thyself; I fear lest thou shouldest deceive thy neighbour as thyself. For if thou lovest iniquity, thou dost not love thyself. The Psalm is witness; “But whoso loveth iniquity, hateth his own soul.” (Psalm 11:5, Septuagint) Now if thou hate thine own soul, what doth it profit thee that thou dost love thy flesh? If thou hate thine own soul and lovest thy flesh, thy flesh shall rise again; but only that thy soul may be tormented. Therefore the soul must first be loved, which is to be subdued unto God, that this service may maintain its due order, the soul to God, the flesh to the soul. Wouldest thou that thy flesh should serve thy soul? Let thy soul serve God. Thou oughtest to be ruled, that thou mayest be able to rule. For so perilous is this struggle, that if thy Ruler forsake thee, ruin must ensue.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “For in this body of ours there is a struggle; as long as we live, we are in combat; as long as we are in combat, we are in peril; but, “in all these things we are conquerors through Him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):37** Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

He continues, “Our combat ye heard of just now when the Apostle was being read. “All the law,” saith he, “is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Galatians 5:14)”

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):14** For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

He continues, “This love is from the Holy Spirit. “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” First see, if thou knowest yet how to love thyself; and then will I commit to thee the neighbour whom thou art to love as thyself. But if thou dost not yet know how to love thyself; I fear lest thou shouldest deceive thy neighbour as thyself. For if thou lovest iniquity, thou dost not love thyself. The Psalm is witness; “But whoso loveth iniquity, hateth his own soul.” (Psalm 11:5, Septuagint)”

He refers to **Psalm 11 (Septuagint):5** The Lord tries the righteous and the ungodly: and he that loves unrighteousness hates his own soul.

And to **Psalm 11 (KJV):5** The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.

He continues, “Now if thou hate thine own soul, what doth it profit thee that thou dost love thy flesh? If thou hate thine own soul and lovest thy flesh, thy flesh shall rise again; but only that thy soul may be tormented. Therefore the soul must first be loved, which is to be subdued unto God, that this service may maintain its due order, the soul to God, the flesh to the soul. Wouldest thou that thy flesh should serve thy soul? Let thy soul serve God. Thou oughtest to be ruled, that thou mayest be able to rule. For so perilous is this struggle, that if thy Ruler forsake thee, ruin must ensue.”

Augustine makes a good point about disciplining our flesh, but he has completely missed the point of Ephesians 4:8, as we read again in context in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):8** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

The captives he was leading were the spirits of righteous men who had been kept in Abraham's bosom, or paradise. This is where the righteous dead went before Christ. These were waiting for the way into the holiest of all, that is, heaven, to be made possible by Christ, as it is revealed in **Hebrews 9 (KJV):8** The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

And in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):19** Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 And having an high priest over the house of God; 22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, as we read in **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm LXVIII, paragraphs 23-24, page 294**

23. But what is, "Thou hast led captivity captive"? Is it because He hath conquered death, which was holding captive those over whom it reigned? Or hath he called men themselves captivity, who were being held captive under the devil? Which thing's mystery even the title of that Psalm doth contain, to wit, "when the house was being builded after the captivity:" that is, the Church after the coming in of the Gentiles. Calling therefore those very men who were being held captive a captivity, as when "the service" is spoken of there are understood those that serve also, that same captivity he saith by Christ hath been led captive. For why should not captivity be happy, if even for a good purpose men may be caught? Whence to Peter hath been said, "From henceforth thou shalt catch men." (Luke 5:10) Led captive therefore they are because caught, and caught because subjugated, being sent under that gentle yoke, (Matthew 11:30) being delivered from sin whereof they were servants, and being made servants of righteousness (Romans 6:18) whereof they were children. Whence also He is Himself in them, that hath given gifts to men, and hath received gifts in men. And thus in that captivity, in that servitude, in that chariot, under that yoke, there are not thousands of men lamenting, but thousands of men rejoicing. For the Lord is in them, in Sina, in the holy place. (Psalm 68:17)...

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "But what is, "Thou hast led captivity captive"?"

He refers to **Psalm 68 (KJV):18** Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

He continues, as he asks, "Is it because He hath conquered death, which was holding captive those over whom it reigned? Or hath he called men themselves captivity, who were being held captive under the devil? Which thing's mystery even the title of that Psalm doth contain, to wit, "when the house was being builded after the captivity:" that is, the Church after the coming in of the Gentiles."

In his sermons on the Psalms, Augustine tries to make everything apply to the Church.

He continues, “Calling therefore those very men who were being held captive a captivity, as when “the service” is spoken of there are understood those that serve also, that same captivity he saith by Christ hath been led captive. For why should not captivity be happy, if even for a good purpose men may be caught? Whence to Peter hath been said, “From henceforth thou shalt catch men.” (Luke 5:10)”

He refers to **Luke 5 (KJV):10** And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

He continues, “Led captive therefore they are because caught, and caught because subjugated, being sent under that gentle yoke, (Matthew 11:30) being delivered from sin whereof they were servants, and being made servants of righteousness (Romans 6:18) whereof they were children.”

He refers in context to **Matthew 11 (KJV):29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

And to **Romans 6 (KJV):18** Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

He continues, “Whence also He is Himself in them, that hath given gifts to men, and hath received gifts in men. And thus in that captivity, in that servitude, in that chariot, under that yoke, there are not thousands of men lamenting, but thousands of men rejoicing. For the Lord is in them, in Sina, in the holy place. (Psalm 68:17)...”

He refers to **Psalms 67 (Douay Rheims):18** The chariot of God is attended by ten thousands; thousands of them that rejoice: the Lord is among them in Sina, in the holy place.

And to **Psalms 68 (KJV):17** The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.

He continues in the next paragraph.

24. But what next doth he adjoin? “For they that believe not to dwell” (ver. 18): or, as some copies have, “For not believing to dwell.” for what else are men not believing, but they that believe not? To whom this hath been said, is not easy to perceive. For as though a reason were being given of the above words, when it had been said, “Thou hast led captivity captive, Thou hast received gifts in men:” there hath been added in continuation, “for they that believe not to dwell,” that is, not believing that they should dwell. What is this? Of whom saith he this? Did that captivity, before it passed into a good captivity, show whence it was an evil captivity? For through not believing they were possessed by the enemy, “that worketh in the sons of unbelief: among whom ye were sometime, while ye were living among them.” (Ephesians 2:2) By the gifts therefore of His grace, He that hath received gifts in men, hath led captive that captivity. For they believed not that they should dwell. For faith hath thence delivered them, in order that now believing they may dwell in the House of God, even they too becoming the House of God, and the Chariot of God, consisting of thousands of men rejoicing.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “But what next doth he adjoin? “For they that believe not to dwell” (ver. 18): or, as some copies have, “For not believing to dwell.” for

what else are men not believing, but they that believe not?"

He refers to **Psalm 67 (Douay Rheims):19** Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts in men. Yea for those also that do not believe, the dwelling of the Lord God.

And to **Psalm 68 (KJV):18** Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

He continues, "To whom this hath been said, is not easy to perceive. For as though a reason were being given of the above words, when it had been said, "Thou hast led captivity captive, Thou hast received gifts in men:" there hath been added in continuation, "for they that believe not to dwell," that is, not believing that they should dwell. What is this? Of whom saith he this?"

Augustine would have been benefited by the Septuagint as we read in **Psalm 68 (Septuagint):17** The chariots of God are ten thousand fold, thousands of rejoicing ones: the Lord is among them, in Sina, in the holy place. 18 Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for man, yea, for they were rebellious, that thou mightest dwell among them.

He continues, "Did that captivity, before it passed into a good captivity, show whence it was an evil captivity? For through not believing they were possessed by the enemy, "that worketh in the sons of unbelief: among whom ye were sometime, while ye were living among them." (Ephesians 2:2)"

He refers in context to **Ephesians 2 (KJV):2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

He continues, "By the gifts therefore of His grace, He that hath received gifts in men, hath led captive that captivity. For they believed not that they should dwell. For faith hath thence delivered them, in order that now believing they may dwell in the House of God, even they too becoming the House of God, and the Chariot of God, consisting of thousands of men rejoicing."

As we explained above, before Jesus rose from the dead, Sheol was where the spirits of the righteous dead went after dying. It was located in the heart of the earth, for Jacob says he "shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning". This place called Sheol was divided into two places. The righteous went to Abraham's bosom, which we could also call Paradise because of Jesus' words on the cross to the repentant thief, as we read in **Luke 23 (KJV):43** And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

The first day Jesus was in the tomb, He went to Abraham's bosom, or paradise as he said to the thief on the cross.

The unrighteous dead went to Hell, the lower part of Sheol in Hebrew, or Hades in Greek. Abraham's bosom was the upper part of Sheol. So when Jesus "descended first into the lower parts of the earth", as in Ephesians 4:9 above, and he descended into Abraham's bosom in Sheol, and "led captivity captive", and "ascended up on high", as in Ephesians 4:8 above. Augustine and the Catholic Church in his time did not understand this in the Scriptures. The

spirits of the righteous dead are now in heaven with Jesus, and waiting for the resurrection of the just.

## Summary

Augustine was not clear in his thinking about what Abraham's bosom may be, as he says, speaking of "Nebridius", that he was "not as yet initiated in any of the sacraments of Thy Church, but a most earnest inquirer after truth", whom the Lord did "release from the flesh; and now he lives in Abraham's bosom." Augustine then says, "Whatever that may be which is signified by that bosom, there lives my Nebridius, my sweet friend, Thy son, O Lord, adopted of a freedman; there he liveth."

Augustine did not understand that the righteous dead could not enter heaven until Jesus had died on the cross, and by His blood had entered heaven for us. It is by His blood that He has made a way. He is the way as He says in **John 14 (KJV):6** Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

So when Jesus descended into the lower parts of the earth, He led captivity captive and ascended into heaven as in Ephesians 4:8-10. Now all the righteous go straight to heaven to be with the Lord when they pass.



# The Purpose of the Law

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, Book I, Chapter 13, page 381

Chapter 13 [VIII.]—The Fifth Calumny,—That It is Said that Paul and the Rest of the Apostles Were Polluted by Lust.

He says, “They say that even the Apostle Paul, even all the apostles, were always polluted by immoderate lust.” What man, however profane he may be, would dare to say this? But doubtless this man thus misrepresents because they contend that what the apostle said, “I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing, for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not,” (Romans 7:18) and other such things, he said not of himself, but that he introduced the person of somebody else, I know not who, who was suffering these things. Wherefore that passage in his epistle must be carefully considered and investigated, that their error may not lurk in any obscurity of his. Although, therefore, the apostle is here arguing broadly, and with great and lasting conflict maintaining grace against those who were boasting in the law, yet we do come upon a few matters which pertain to the matter in hand. On which subject he says: “Because by the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight. For by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God by the faith of Jesus Christ unto all them that believe. For there is no difference. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 3:20-24) And again: “Where is boasting? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law.” (Romans 3:27-28) And again: “For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but by the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Because the law worketh wrath, for where no law is, there is no transgression.” (Romans 4:13-15) And in another place: “Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded grace did much more abound.” (Romans 5:20) In still another place: “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace.” (Romans 6:14) And again in another place: “Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), that the law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth? For the woman which is under a husband is joined to her husband by the law so long as he liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is freed from the law of her husband.” (Romans 7:1-2) And a little after: “Therefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should belong to another, who has risen from the dead that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh the passions of sins which are by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death, but now we are delivered from the law of death in which we were held, so that we may serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” (Romans 7:4-6) With these and such like testimonies that teacher of the Gentiles showed with sufficient evidence that the law could not take away sin, but rather

increased it, and that grace takes it away; since the law knew how to command, to which command weakness gives way, while grace knows to assist, whereby love is infused. And lest any one, on account of these testimonies, should reproach the law, and contend that it is evil, the apostle, seeing what might occur to those who ill understand it, himself proposed to himself the same question. "What shall we say, then?" said he. "Is the law sin? Far from it. But I did not know sin except by the law." (Romans 7:7) He had already said before, "For by the law is the knowledge of sin." It is not, therefore, the taking away, but the knowledge of sin.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he quotes Pelagius, "He says, "They say that even the Apostle Paul, even all the apostles, were always polluted by immoderate lust." What man, however profane he may be, would dare to say this? But doubtless this man thus misrepresents because they contend that what the apostle said, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing, for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not," (Romans 7:18) and other such things, he said not of himself, but that he introduced the person of somebody else, I know not who, who was suffering these things."

There is no evidence in the Scriptures of Paul representing someone else in Romans, chapter 7. Paul was testifying of his own experience. Paul uses "I" statements all the way through the chapter. This is not to say that "the Apostle Paul, even all the apostles, were always polluted by immoderate lust". Paul will describe his victory because of Christ as we shall see.

Augustine continues, "Wherefore that passage in his epistle must be carefully considered and investigated, that their error may not lurk in any obscurity of his. Although, therefore, the apostle is here arguing broadly, and with great and lasting conflict maintaining grace against those who were boasting in the law, yet we do come upon a few matters which pertain to the matter in hand. On which subject he says: "Because by the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight. For by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God by the faith of Jesus Christ unto all them that believe. For there is no difference. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Romans 3:20-24)"

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

He continues, "And again: "Where is boasting? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law." (Romans 3:27-28)"

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):27** Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

He continues, "And again: "For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but by the righteousness of faith. For if they

which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Because the law worketh wrath, for where no law is, there is no transgression.” (Romans 4:13-15)”

He refers to **Romans 4 (KJV):13** For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: 15 Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

He continues, “And in another place: “Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded grace did much more abound.” (Romans 5:20)”

He refers to **Romans 5 (KJV):20** Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

He continues, “In still another place: “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace.” (Romans 6:14)”

He refers to **Romans 6 (KJV):14** For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

He continues, “And again in another place: “Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law), that the law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth? For the woman which is under a husband is joined to her husband by the law so long as he liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is freed from the law of her husband.” (Romans 7:1-2)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):1** Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

He continues, “And a little after: “Therefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should belong to another, who has risen from the dead that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh the passions of sins which are by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death, but now we are delivered from the law of death in which we were held, so that we may serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” (Romans 7:4-6)”

He refers in context to **Romans 7 (KJV):3** So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. 5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

He continues, “With these and such like testimonies that teacher of the Gentiles showed with sufficient evidence that the law could not take away sin, but rather increased it, and that grace takes it away; since the law knew how to command, to which command weakness gives way, while grace knows to assist, whereby love is infused. And lest any one, on account of these testimonies, should reproach the law, and contend that it is evil, the apostle, seeing what might occur to those who ill understand it, himself proposed to himself the same question.

“What shall we say, then?” said he. “Is the law sin? Far from it. But I did not know sin except

by the law.” (Romans 7:7) He had already said before, “For by the law is the knowledge of sin.” It is not, therefore, the taking away, but the knowledge of sin.”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):7** What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

And to **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

The law could not take away sin, so it could not give life as we read in **Galatians 3 (KJV):21** Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

Augustine’s understanding of the place of the law is according to the Scriptures here.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings Against Two Letters of the Pelagians, Book I, Chapters 16-21, page 382-383**

#### **Chapter 16.—How Sin Died, and How It Revived.**

And what he says in that passage of the Epistle to the Romans, “Sin, that it might appear sin, wrought death to me by that which is good,” (Romans 7:13) agrees with the former passages where he said, “But I had not known sin but by the law, for I had not known lust unless the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” (Romans 7:7) And previously, “By the law is the knowledge of sin,” for he said this also here, “that it might appear sin;” that we might not understand what he had said, “For without law sin was dead,” except in the sense as if it were not, “it lies hidden, it does not appear, it is completely ignored, as if it were buried in I know not what darkness of ignorance.” And in that he says, “And I was alive once without the law,” what does he say except, I seemed to myself to live? And with respect to what he added, “But when the commandment came, sin revived,” what else is it but sin shone forth, became apparent? **Nor yet does he say lived, but revived. For it had lived formerly in Paradise, where it sufficiently appeared, admitted in opposition to the command given; but when it is inherited by children coming into the world, it lies concealed, as if it were dead, until its evil, resisting righteousness, is felt by its prohibition, when one thing is commanded and approved, another thing delights and rules: then, in some measure sin revives in the knowledge of the man that is born, although it had lived already for some time in the knowledge of the man as at first made.**

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “And what he says in that passage of the Epistle to the Romans, “Sin, that it might appear sin, wrought death to me by that which is good,” (Romans 7:13) agrees with the former passages where he said, “But I had not known sin but by the law, for I had not known lust unless the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” (Romans 7:7)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):13** Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

And to **Romans 7 (KJV):7** What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay,

I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

He continues, “And previously, “By the law is the knowledge of sin,” for he said this also here, “that it might appear sin;” that we might not understand what he had said, “For without law sin was dead,” except in the sense as if it were not, “it lies hidden, it does not appear, it is completely ignored, as if it were buried in I know not what darkness of ignorance.” And in that he says, “And I was alive once without the law,” what does he say except, I seemed to myself to live? And with respect to what he added, “But when the commandment came, sin revived,” what else is it but sin shone forth, became apparent?”

He refers to **Romans 3 (KJV):20** Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

And to **Romans 7 (KJV):8** But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. 9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

He then explains, “Nor yet does he say lived, but revived. For it had lived formerly in Paradise, where it sufficiently appeared, admitted in opposition to the command given; but when it is inherited by children coming into the world, it lies concealed, as if it were dead, until its evil, resisting righteousness, is felt by its prohibition, when one thing is commanded and approved, another thing delights and rules: then, in some measure sin revives in the knowledge of the man that is born, although it had lived already for some time in the knowledge of the man as at first made.”

He refers to Adam in Paradise here, after Adam and Eve sinned.

Chapter 17 [X.]—“The Law is Spiritual, But I Am Carnal,” To Be Understood of Paul.

But it is not so clear how what follows can be understood concerning Paul. “For we know,” says he, “that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal.” (Romans 7:14) He does not say, “I was,” but, “I am.” Was, then, the apostle, when he wrote this, carnal? Or does he say this with respect to his body? For he was still in the body of this death, not yet made what he speaks of elsewhere: “It is sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body.” (1 Corinthians 15:44) For then, of the whole of himself, that is, of both parts of which he consists, he shall be a spiritual man, when even the body shall be spiritual. For it is not absurd that in that life even the flesh should be spiritual, if in this life in those who still mind earthly things even the spirit itself may be carnal. Thus, then, he said, “But I am carnal,” because the apostle had not yet a spiritual body, as he might say, “But I am mortal,” which assuredly he could not be understood to have said except in respect of his body, which had not yet been clothed with immortality. Moreover, in reference to what he added, “sold under sin,” (Romans 7:14) lest any one think that he was not yet redeemed by the blood of Christ, this also may be understood in respect of that which he says: “And we ourselves, having the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” (Romans 8:23) For if in this respect he says that he was sold under sin, that as yet his body has not been redeemed from corruption; or that he was sold once in the first transgression of the commandment so as to have a corruptible body which drags down the soul; (Wisdom 9:15) what hinders the apostle here from being understood to say about himself that which he says in such wise that it may be



understood also of himself, even if in his person he wishes not himself alone, but all, to be received who had known themselves as struggling, without consent, in spiritual delight with the affection of the flesh?

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “But it is not so clear how what follows can be understood concerning Paul. “For we know,” says he, “that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal.” (Romans 7:14)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):14** For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

He continues, “He does not say, “I was,” but, “I am.” Was, then, the apostle, when he wrote this, carnal? Or does he say this with respect to his body? For he was still in the body of this death, not yet made what he speaks of elsewhere: “It is sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body.” (1 Corinthians 15:44)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):44** It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

He continues, “For then, of the whole of himself, that is, of both parts of which he consists, he shall be a spiritual man, when even the body shall be spiritual.”

As he says “both parts”, Augustine did not understand that man is composed of three parts as we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He knew this verse, but thought that the soul was composed of spirit, and so, to him, there were only two parts to man. He did not understand the division between soul and spirit. But he does understand that in the resurrection, the body “shall be spiritual”.

He continues, “For it is not absurd that in that life even the flesh should be spiritual, if in this life in those who still mind earthly things even the spirit itself may be carnal.”

At the resurrection, we shall receive a spiritual body, that is, an imperishable body. But in this life, before Christ, our spirit is dead in trespasses and sins. However, in those who are born again, the spirit is not carnal since it has been born of the Spirit of God. But in our souls is where we may still be carnal, that is, in our mind, our will, our emotions, our heart, and our conscience, which compose the soul.

Augustine continues, “Thus, then, he said, “But I am carnal,” because the apostle had not yet a spiritual body, as he might say, “But I am mortal,” which assuredly he could not be understood to have said except in respect of his body, which had not yet been clothed with immortality. Moreover, in reference to what he added, “sold under sin,” (Romans 7:14) lest any one think that he was not yet redeemed by the blood of Christ, this also may be understood in respect of that which he says: “And we ourselves, having the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” (Romans 8:23)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):14** For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

And to **Romans 8 (KJV):23** And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.



He continues, “For if in this respect he says that he was sold under sin, that as yet his body has not been redeemed from corruption; or that he was sold once in the first transgression of the commandment so as to have a corruptible body which drags down the soul; (Wisdom 9:15) what hinders the apostle here from being understood to say about himself that which he says in such wise that it may be understood also of himself, even if in his person he wishes not himself alone, but all, to be received who had known themselves as struggling, without consent, in spiritual delight with the affection of the flesh?”

He refers to **Wisdom 9 (Septuagint):15** For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things.

The apostle Paul is using his experience to explain the experience of all believers who have been born again as he says in **Romans 7 (KJV):22** For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Paul is not saying he is yielding to the flesh, the law of sin. He then explains in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Chapter 18.—How the Apostle Said that He Did the Evil that He Would Not.

Or by chance do we fear what follows, “For that which I do I know not, for what I will I do not, but what I hate that I do,” (Romans 7:15) lest perhaps from these words some one should suspect that the apostle is consenting to the evil works of the concupiscence of the flesh? But we must consider what he adds: “But if I do that which I will not, I consent to the law that it is good.” For he says that he rather consents to the law than to the concupiscence of the flesh. For this he calls by the name of sin. Therefore he said that he acted and laboured not with the desire of consenting and fulfilling, but from the impulse of lusting itself. Hence, then, he says, “I consent to the law that it is good.” I consent because I do not will what it does not will. Afterwards he says, “Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me.” (Romans 7:17) What does he mean by “now then,” but, now at length, under the grace which has delivered the delight of my will from the consent of lust? For, “it is not I that do it,” cannot be better understood than that he does not consent to set forth his members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. For if he lusts and consents and acts, how can he be said not to do the thing himself, even although he may grieve that he does it, and deeply groan at being overcome?

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Or by chance do we fear what follows, “For that which I do I know not, for what I will I do not, but what I hate that I do,” (Romans 7:15) lest perhaps from these words some one should suspect that the apostle is consenting to the evil works of the concupiscence of the flesh?”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):15** For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

He continues, “But we must consider what he adds: “But if I do that which I will not, I consent to the law that it is good.””

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):16** If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

He continues, “For he says that he rather consents to the law than to the concupiscence of the flesh. For this he calls by the name of sin. Therefore he said that he acted and laboured not with the desire of consenting and fulfilling, but from the impulse of lusting itself. Hence, then, he says, “I consent to the law that it is good.” I consent because I do not will what it does not will. Afterwards he says, “Now, then, it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me.” (Romans 7:17)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):17** Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

He continues, “What does he mean by “now then,” but, now at length, under the grace which has delivered the delight of my will from the consent of lust? For, “it is not I that do it,” cannot be better understood than that he does not consent to set forth his members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.”

He is referring to **Romans 6 (KJV):13** Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

He concludes, “For if he lusts and consents and acts, how can he be said not to do the thing himself, even although he may grieve that he does it, and deeply groan at being overcome?”

Paul understood that a part of him did not want to yield to the sin in his flesh. That part of him was his spirit that had been born again of the Spirit of God. So it is a process of sanctification in our soul that takes time. We don’t automatically change our old ways of thinking and feeling. As we walk in the light of His word, a cleansing in these areas of our soul takes place. As our awareness of the spiritual increases, we will experience more of the fruits of the Spirit.

## Chapter 19.—What It is to Accomplish What is Good.

And now does not what follows most plainly show whence he spoke? “For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing”? (Romans 7:18) For if he had not explained what he said by the addition of “that is, in my flesh,” it might, perchance, be otherwise understood, when he said, “in me.” And therefore he repeats and urges the same thing in another form: “For to will is present with me, but to perform that which is good is not.” (Romans 7:18) For this is to perform that which is good, that a man should not even lust. For the good is incomplete when one lusts, even although a man does not consent to the evil of lust. “For the good that I would,” says he, “I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” (Romans 7:19-20) This he repeated impressively, and as it were to stir up the most slothful from slumber: **“I find then that the law,” said he, “is for me wishing to do good, since evil is present with me.”**

(Romans 7:21) The law, then, is for one who would do good, but evil is present from lust, though he does not consent to this who says, “It is no longer I that do it.”

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “And now does not what follows most plainly show whence he spoke? “For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing”? (Romans 7:18)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):18** For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

He continues, “For if he had not explained what he said by the addition of “that is, in my flesh,” it might, perchance, be otherwise understood, when he said, “in me.” And therefore he repeats and urges the same thing in another form: “For to will is present with me, but to perform that which is good is not.” (Romans 7:18) For this is to perform that which is good, that a man should not even lust. For the good is incomplete when one lusts, even although a man does not consent to the evil of lust. “For the good that I would,” says he, “I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” (Romans 7:19-20)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):19** For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

He continues, “This he repeated impressively, and as it were to stir up the most slothful from slumber: “I find then that the law,” said he, “is for me wishing to do good, since evil is present with me.” (Romans 7:21)

He refers to **Romans 7 (Douay Rheims):21** I find then a law, that when I have a will to do good, evil is present with me.

And to **Romans 7 (KJV):21** I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

He seems to slightly misinterpret the verse. Paul says that he finds “then a law”. He did not say, “I find then that the law”, speaking of the law of commandments. Paul is saying, “this is the way I see myself. My flesh lusts, but my inner man delights in the law of God”.

He continues, “The law, then, is for one who would do good, but evil is present from lust, though he does not consent to this who says, “It is no longer I that do it.”

We shall find out more about this law as we continue.

Chapter 20.—In Me, that Is, in My Flesh.

And he declares both more plainly in what follows: “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” (Romans 7:21-22) But in that he said, “bringing me into captivity,” he can feel emotion without consenting to it. Whence, because of those three things, two, to wit, of which we have already argued, in that he says, “But I am carnal,” and “Sold under sin,” and this third, “Bringing me into captivity in the law of sin, which is in my members,” the apostle seems to be describing a man who is still living under the law, and is not yet under grace. But as I have expounded the former two sayings in respect of the still corruptible flesh, so also this latter may be understood as if he had said, “bringing me

into captivity,” in the flesh, not in the mind; in emotion, not in consent; and therefore “bringing me into captivity,” **because even in the flesh there is not an alien nature, but our own**. As, therefore, he himself expounded what he had said, “For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,” so also now out of the exposition of that we ought to learn the meaning of this passage, as if he had said, “Bringing me into captivity,” that is, “my flesh,” “to the law of sin, which is in my members.”

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “And he declares both more plainly in what follows: “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” (Romans 7:22-23)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (KJV):** 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

He continues, “But in that he said, “bringing me into captivity,” he can feel emotion without consenting to it. Whence, because of those three things, two, to wit, of which we have already argued, in that he says, “But I am carnal,” and “Sold under sin,” and this third, “Bringing me into captivity in the law of sin, which is in my members,” the apostle seems to be describing a man who is still living under the law, and is not yet under grace. But as I have expounded the former two sayings in respect of the still corruptible flesh, so also this latter may be understood as if he had said, “bringing me into captivity,” in the flesh, not in the mind; in emotion, not in consent; and therefore “bringing me into captivity,” **because even in the flesh there is not an alien nature, but our own**. As, therefore, he himself expounded what he had said, “For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,” so also now out of the exposition of that we ought to learn the meaning of this passage, as if he had said, “Bringing me into captivity,” that is, “my flesh,” “to the law of sin, which is in my members.””

Augustine seems not to have understood that the “law of sin, which is in my members” is in my flesh as a nature inherited from Adam. The apostle is not “describing a man who is still living under the law, and is not yet under grace”, but a man who is living under grace, and who has just come to the realization that he still has to deal with “the law of sin, which is in” his members.

## Chapter 21.—No Condemnation in Christ Jesus.

Then he adds the reason why he said all these things: “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!” And thence he concludes: “Therefore I myself with the mind serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.” (Romans 7:24-25) To wit, with the flesh, the law of sin, by lusting; but with the mind, the law of God, by not consenting to that lust. “For there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1) For he is not condemned who does not consent to the evil of the lust of the flesh. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made thee free from the law of sin and death,” so that, to wit, the lust of the flesh may not appropriate to itself thy consent. And what follows more and more demonstrates the same meaning. But moderation must be used.”

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Then he adds the reason why he said all these things: “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!” And thence he concludes: “Therefore I myself with the mind serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.” (Romans 7:24-25)”

He refers to **Romans 7 (Douay Rheims):24** Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 The grace of God, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, I myself, with the mind serve the law of God: but with the flesh, the law of sin.

The **Douay Rheims** is a translation of the **Latin Vulgate**. The **Latin Vulgate** in verse 25 has the words gratia Dei per Iesum Christum Dominum nostrum (grace of God by Jesus Christ our Lord).

But in the **King James Version** we read as in **Romans 7 (KJV):24** O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

In verse 25 in the Greek, we have the words:

ἐυχάριστῶ τῷ θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν

I thank God through Jesus Christ the Lord of us (our Lord)

It is what Jesus Christ has done for us that makes it possible to have a new nature in our spirit which has been born again of the Spirit of God. This new divine nature gives us power over the sin nature in our flesh, which we inherit from Adam.

Augustine continues, “To wit, with the flesh, the law of sin, by lusting; but with the mind, the law of God, by not consenting to that lust. “For there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1) For he is not condemned who does not consent to the evil of the lust of the flesh. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made thee free from the law of sin and death,” so that, to wit, the lust of the flesh may not appropriate to itself thy consent. And what follows more and more demonstrates the same meaning. But moderation must be used.

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

I do not have to yield to the flesh any longer because “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death”. I have a new nature in my spirit because of the Spirit of God who has given me a new nature and eternal life in my spirit. This gives me the victory through Jesus Christ over the law of sin and death in my flesh. Now I do not have to yield to this law of sin, which is a nature to sin inherited from Adam, that is in the members of my flesh.

## Summary

Augustine understood that the law does not take away sin, but only gives us the



knowledge of sin in our lives.

He understood that “a man is justified by faith without the works of the law”, as the Scripture says in Romans 3:27-28. And he understood that we are “are not under law, but under grace”, as in Romans 6:14, and that “we are delivered from the law of death in which we were held, so that we may serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter”, as it says in Romans 7:4-6.

But Augustine seems to have confused the law of commandments with the “law of sin” which is the nature of our flesh, as he says, “I find then that the law,” said he, “is for me wishing to do good, since evil is present with me.” (Romans 7:21) The law, then, is for one who would do good, but evil is present from lust, though he does not consent to this who says, “It is no longer I that do it.” And he then says, “because even in the flesh there is not an alien nature, but our own”.

But the Scripture reads as in **Romans 7 (KJV):** 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

The “law of sin” is “in my members”, that is, in my flesh. He then attributes the victory of the “body of this death” as due to “The grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

He doesn’t realize that it is the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord that has provided a new nature in our spirits by being born again by the Holy Spirit. He doesn’t acknowledge this change in our nature, but instead just calls it grace. Again, I do not have to yield to the flesh any longer because “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death”. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” is the new divine nature in our spirit as a result of being born from above by the Spirit of God.



# Love

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 5, Anti-Pelagian Writings On Grace and Free Will, Chapters 34-38, page 458-460

Chapter 34.—The Apostle's Eulogy of Love. Correction to Be Administered with Love.

This charity, that is, this will glowing with intensest love, the apostle eulogizes with these words: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? (As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:35-39) And in another passage he says, "And yet I show unto you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth." (1 Corinthians 12:31, 13:1-8) And a little afterwards he says, "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. Follow after love." (1 Corinthians 13:13, 14:1) He also says to the Galatians, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Galatians 5:13-14, Leviticus 19:18) This is the same in effect as what he writes to the Romans: "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." (Romans 8:8) In like manner he says to the Colossians, "And above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfectness." (Colossians 3:14) And to Timothy he writes, "Now the end of the commandment is love;" and he goes on to describe the quality of this grace, saying, "Out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." (1 Timothy 1:5) Moreover, when he says to the Corinthians, "Let all your things be done with love," (1 Corinthians 16:14) he shows plainly enough that even those chastisements which are deemed sharp and bitter by those who are corrected thereby, are to be administered with love. Accordingly, in another passage, after saying, "Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men," he immediately added, "See that none render evil for evil unto any man." (1 Thessalonians 5:14-15) Therefore, even when the unruly are corrected, it is not rendering evil for evil, but contrariwise, good. However, what but love worketh all these things?

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "This charity, that is, this will glowing with

intensest love, the apostle eulogizes with these words: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? (As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:35-39)”

He refers to **Romans 8 (KJV):35** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

He continues, “And in another passage he says, “And yet I show unto you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth.” (1 Corinthians 12:31, 13:1-8)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):31** But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

And then to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):1** Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. 4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

He continues, “And a little afterwards he says, “And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. Follow after love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13, 14:1)”

He refers to **1 Corinthians 13 (KJV):13** And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

And then to **1 Corinthians 14 (KJV):1** Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

He continues, “He also says to the Galatians, “For, brethren, ye have been called unto

liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Galatians 5:13-14, Leviticus 19:18)”

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):13** For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

And to **Leviticus 19 (KJV):18** Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord.

He continues, “This is the same in effect as what he writes to the Romans: “He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” (Romans 8:8) In like manner he says to the Colossians, “And above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfectness.” (Colossians 3:14) And to Timothy he writes, “Now the end of the commandment is love;” and he goes on to describe the quality of this grace, saying, “Out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” (1 Timothy 1:5) Moreover, when he says to the Corinthians, “Let all your things be done with love,” (1 Corinthians 16:14) he shows plainly enough that even those chastisements which are deemed sharp and bitter by those who are corrected thereby, are to be administered with love.”

He refers to **Romans 13 (KJV):8** Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

And to **Colossians 3 (NIV):14** And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

And to **1 Timothy 1 (NIV):5** The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

And to **1 Corinthians 16 (KJV):14** Let all your things be done with charity.

He continues, “Accordingly, in another passage, after saying, “Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men,” he immediately added, “See that none render evil for evil unto any man.” (1 Thessalonians 5:14-15)”

He refers to **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):14** Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. 15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

He concludes, “Therefore, even when the unruly are corrected, it is not rendering evil for evil, but contrariwise, good. However, what but love worketh all these things?”

## Chapter 35.—Commendations of Love.

The Apostle Peter, likewise, says, “And, above all things, have fervent love among yourselves: for love shall cover the multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:8) The Apostle James also says, “If ye fulfill the royal law, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.” (James 2:8) So also the Apostle John says, “He that loveth his brother abideth in the right;” (1 John 2:10) again, in another passage, “Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother; for this is the message which we have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” (1 John 3:10-11) Then he

says again, “This is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another.” (1 John 3:23) Once more: “And this commandment have we from Him that he who loveth God love his brother also.” (1 John 4:21) Then shortly afterwards he adds, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments; for this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.” (1 John 5:2-3) While, in his second Epistle, it is written, “Not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.” (John 13:34-35)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “The Apostle Peter, likewise, says, “And, above all things, have fervent love among yourselves: for love shall cover the multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:8)”

He refers to **1 Peter 4 (KJV):8** And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

He continues, “The Apostle James also says, “If ye fulfill the royal law, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.” (James 2:8)”

He refers to **James 2 (KJV):8** If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

He continues, “So also the Apostle John says, “He that loveth his brother abideth in the right;” (1 John 2:10) again, in another passage, “Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother; for this is the message which we have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” (1 John 3:10-11)”

He refers to **1 John 2 (KJV):10** He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

And to **1 John 3 (KJV):10** In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. 11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

He continues, “Then he says again, “This is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another.” (1 John 3:23) Once more: “And this commandment have we from Him that he who loveth God love his brother also.” (1 John 4:21)”

He refers to **1 John 3 (KJV):23** And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

And to **1 John 4 (KJV):21** And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

He continues, “Then shortly afterwards he adds, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments; for this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.” (1 John 5:2-3)”

He refers to **1 John 5 (KJV):2** By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

And he concludes, “While, in his second Epistle, it is written, “Not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.” (2 John 1:5)

He refers to **2 John 1 (KJV):5** And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

#### Chapter 36.—Love Commended by Our Lord Himself.

Moreover, the Lord Jesus Himself teaches us that the whole law and the prophets hang upon the two precepts of love to God and love to our neighbour. Concerning these two commandments the following is written in the Gospel according to St. Mark: “And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him: Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him: The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (Mark 12:28-31, Deuteronomy 6:4-5) Leviticus 19:18) There is none other commandment greater than these.” Also, in the Gospel according to St. John, He says, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love to one another. (John 13:34-35)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Moreover, the Lord Jesus Himself teaches us that the whole law and the prophets hang upon the two precepts of love to God and love to our neighbour. Concerning these two commandments the following is written in the Gospel according to St. Mark: “And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him: Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him: The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (Mark 12:28-31, Deuteronomy 6:4-5) Leviticus 19:18) There is none other commandment greater than these.””

He refers to **Mark 12 (KJV):28** And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? **29** And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: **30** And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. **31** And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

And to **Deuteronomy 6 (KJV):4** Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: **5** And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

And to **Leviticus 19 (KJV):18** Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord.

He continues, “Also, in the Gospel according to St. John, He says, “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love to one another. (John 13:34-35)

He refers to **John 13 (KJV):34** A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Augustine quotes the Scripture well here.

Chapter 37 [XVIII.]—The Love Which Fulfills the Commandments is Not of Ourselves, But of God.

All these commandments, however, respecting love or charity (which are so great, and such that whatever action a man may think he does well is by no means well done if done without love) would be given to men in vain if they had not free choice of will. But forasmuch as these precepts are given in the law, both old and new (although in the new came the grace which was promised in the old, but the law without grace is the letter which killeth, but in grace the Spirit which giveth life), from what source is there in men the love of God and of one's neighbour but from God Himself? For indeed, if it be not of God but of men, the Pelagians have gained the victory; but if it come from God, then we have vanquished the Pelagians. Let, then, the Apostle John sit in judgment between us; and let him say to us, “Beloved, let us love one another.” (1 John 4:7) Now, when they begin to extol themselves on these words of John, and to ask why this precept is addressed to us at all if we have not of our own selves to love one another, the same apostle proceeds at once, to their confusion, to add, “For love is of God.” (1 John 4:7) It is not of ourselves, therefore, but it is of God. Wherefore, then, is it said, “Let us love one another, for love is of God,” unless it be as a precept to our free will, admonishing it to seek the gift of God? Now, this would be indeed a thoroughly fruitless admonition if the will did not previously receive some donation of love, which might seek to be enlarged so as to fulfill whatever command was laid upon it. When it is said, “Let us love one another,” it is law; when it is said, “For love is of God,” it is grace. For God's “wisdom carries law and mercy upon her tongue.” (Proverbs 3:16) Accordingly, it is written in the Psalm, “For He who gave the law will give blessings.” (Psalm 84:6)

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “All these commandments, however, respecting love or charity (which are so great, and such that whatever action a man may think he does well is by no means well done if done without love) would be given to men in vain if they had not free choice of will. But forasmuch as these precepts are given in the law, both old and new (although in the new came the grace which was promised in the old, but the law without grace is the letter which killeth, but in grace the Spirit which giveth life), from what source is there in men the love of God and of one's neighbour but from God Himself? For indeed, if it be not of God but of men, the Pelagians have gained the victory; but if it come from God, then we have vanquished the Pelagians. Let, then, the Apostle John sit in judgment between us; and let him say to us, “Beloved, let us love one another.” (1 John 4:7)”



He refers to **2 Corinthians 3 (KJV):6** Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

And to **1 John 4 (KJV):7** Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

He continues, “Now, when they begin to extol themselves on these words of John, and to ask why this precept is addressed to us at all if we have not of our own selves to love one another, the same apostle proceeds at once, to their confusion, to add, “For love is of God.” (1 John 4:7) It is not of ourselves, therefore, but it is of God. Wherefore, then, is it said, “Let us love one another, for love is of God,” unless it be as a precept to our free will, admonishing it to seek the gift of God? Now, this would be indeed a thoroughly fruitless admonition if the will did not previously receive some donation of love, which might seek to be enlarged so as to fulfill whatever command was laid upon it.”

Indeed, for God first loved us as we read in **1 John 4 (KJV):19** We love him, because he first loved us.

The love of God proves that we are born of God as we read again in **1 John 4 (KJV):7** Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

He continues, “When it is said, “Let us love one another,” it is law; when it is said, “For love is of God,” it is grace. For God’s “wisdom carries law and mercy upon her tongue.” (Proverbs 3:16)”

He refers in context to **Proverbs 3 (Septuagint):13** Blessed is the man who has found wisdom, and the mortal who knows prudence. 14 For it is better to traffic for her, than for treasures of gold and silver. 15 And she is more valuable than precious stones: no evil thing shall resist her: she is well known to all that approach her, and no precious thing is equal to her in value. 16 For length of existence and years of life are in her right hand; and in her left hand are wealth and glory: out of her mouth proceeds righteousness, and she carries law and mercy upon her tongue.

He continues, “Accordingly, it is written in the Psalm, “For He who gave the law will give blessings.” (Psalm 84:6)”

He refers in context to **Psalm 84 (Septuagint):5** Blessed is the man whose help is of thee, O Lord; in his heart he has purposed to go up 6 the valley of weeping, to the place which he has appointed, for there the lawgiver will grant blessings.

Chapter 38.—We Would Not Love God Unless He First Loved Us. The Apostles Chose Christ Because They Were Chosen; They Were Not Chosen Because They Chose Christ.

Let no one, then, deceive you, my brethren, for we should not love God unless He first loved us. John again gives us the plainest proof of this when he says, “We love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19) Grace makes us lovers of the law; but the law itself, without grace, makes us nothing but breakers of the law. And nothing else than this is shown us by the words of our Lord when He says to His disciples, Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” (John 15:16) For if we first loved Him, in order that by this merit He might love us, then we first chose Him that we might deserve to be chosen by Him. He, however, who is the Truth says otherwise, and flatly contradicts this vain conceit of men. “You have not chosen me,” He says.

If, therefore, you have not chosen me, undoubtedly you have not loved me (for how could they choose one whom they did not love?). “But I,” says He, “have chosen you.” And then could they possibly help choosing Him afterwards, and preferring Him to all the blessings of this world? But it was because they had been chosen, that they chose Him; not because they chose Him that they were chosen. There could be no merit in men’s choice of Christ, if it were not that God’s grace was prevenient in His choosing them. Whence the Apostle Paul pronounces in the Thessalonians this benediction: “The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men.” (1 Thessalonians 3:12) This benediction to love one another He gave us, who had also given us a law that we should love each other. Then, in another passage addressed to the same church, seeing that there now existed in some of its members the disposition which he had wished them to cultivate, he says, “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth.” (2 Thessalonians 1:3) This he said lest they should make a boast of the great good which they were enjoying from God, as if they had it of their own mere selves. Because, then, your faith has so great a growth (this is the purport of his words), and the love of every one of you all toward each other so greatly abounds, we ought to thank God concerning you, but not to praise you, as if you possessed these gifts of yourselves.

**Commentary:** Augustine continues as he says, “Let no one, then, deceive you, my brethren, for we should not love God unless He first loved us. John again gives us the plainest proof of this when he says, “We love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)”

He refers to **1 John 4 (KJV):19** We love him, because he first loved us.

He continues, “Grace makes us lovers of the law; but the law itself, without grace, makes us nothing but breakers of the law. And nothing else than this is shown us by the words of our Lord when He says to His disciples, Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” (John 15:16)”

He refers to **John 15 (KJV):16** Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

He continues, “For if we first loved Him, in order that by this merit He might love us, then we first chose Him that we might deserve to be chosen by Him. He, however, who is the Truth says otherwise, and flatly contradicts this vain conceit of men. “You have not chosen me,” He says. If, therefore, you have not chosen me, undoubtedly you have not loved me (for how could they choose one whom they did not love?). “But I,” says He, “have chosen you.” And then could they possibly help choosing Him afterwards, and preferring Him to all the blessings of this world? But it was because they had been chosen, that they chose Him; not because they chose Him that they were chosen. There could be no merit in men’s choice of Christ, if it were not that God’s grace was prevenient in His choosing them.”

The word “prevenient” means “ANTECEDENT, ANTICIPATORY” (**Merriam Webster**)

So we could say it means “preceding in time or order; antecedent”.

He continues, “Whence the Apostle Paul pronounces in the Thessalonians this benediction: “The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and

toward all men.” (1 Thessalonians 3:12)”

He refers to **1 Thessalonians 3 (KJV):12** And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

He continues, “This benediction to love one another He gave us, who had also given us a law that we should love each other. Then, in another passage addressed to the same church, seeing that there now existed in some of its members the disposition which he had wished them to cultivate, he says, “We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth.” (2 Thessalonians 1:3)”

He refers to **2 Thessalonians 1 (KJV):3** We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

He concludes, “This he said lest they should make a boast of the great good which they were enjoying from God, as if they had it of their own mere selves. Because, then, your faith has so great a growth (this is the purport of his words), and the love of every one of you all toward each other so greatly abounds, we ought to thank God concerning you, but not to praise you, as if you possessed these gifts of yourselves.”

Augustine has rightly divided the Scripture. Love is of God as we read in **1 John 4 (KJV):7** Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

## Summary

Augustine refers first to **1 John 4 (KJV):19** We love him, because he first loved us.

And then to **John 15 (KJV):16** Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Augustine says, “But it was because they had been chosen, that they chose Him; not because they chose Him that they were chosen. There could be no merit in men’s choice of Christ, if it were not that God’s grace was prevenient in His choosing them.”

Augustine has correctly said that the love we have for one another is the gift of God, for love is of God and everyone that loves is born of God and knows God. Love is a fruit of the Spirit. And by our love, all will know that we are His disciples as we read in **John 13 (KJV):35** By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

## Sin unto Death

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Augustine

Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Chapter XXII, paragraph 73, page 30-31

Chapter XXII.

73. But the question before us is rendered more urgent by what the Apostle John says: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and the Lord shall give him life for him who sinneth not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." (1 John 5:16) For he manifestly shows that there are certain brethren for whom we are not commanded to pray, although the Lord bids us pray even for our persecutors. Nor can the question in hand be solved, unless we acknowledge that there are certain sins in brethren which are more heinous than the persecution of enemies. Moreover, that brethren mean Christians can be proved by many examples from the divine Scriptures. Yet that one is plainest which the apostle thus states: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother." For he has not added the word our; but has thought it plain, as he wished a Christian who had an unbelieving wife to be understood by the expression brother. And therefore he says a little after, "But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart: a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases." (1 Corinthians 7:14-15) **Hence I am of opinion that the sin of a brother is unto death, when any one, after coming to the knowledge of God through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, makes an assault on the brotherhood, and is impelled by the fires of envy to oppose that grace itself by which he is reconciled to God. But the sin is not unto death, if any one has not withdrawn his love from a brother, but through some infirmity of disposition has failed to perform the incumbent duties of brotherhood.** And on this account our Lord also on the cross says, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do;" (Luke 23:34) for, not yet having become partakers of the grace of the Holy Spirit, they had not yet entered the fellowship of the holy brotherhood. And the blessed Stephen in the Acts of the Apostles prays for those by whom he is being stoned, (Acts 7:60) because they had not yet believed on Christ, and were not fighting against that common grace. And the Apostle Paul on this account, I believe, does not pray for Alexander, because he was already a brother, and had sinned unto death, viz. by making an assault on the brotherhood through envy. But for those who had not broken off their love, but had given way through fear, he prays that they may be pardoned. For thus he expresses it: "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord will reward him according to his works. Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words." Then he adds for whom he prays, thus expressing it: "At my first defense no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." (2 Timothy 4:14-16)

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "But the question before us is rendered more urgent by what the Apostle John says: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and the Lord shall give him life for him who sinneth not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it." (1 John 5:16)"

He refers to **1 John 5 (KJV):16** If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

He continues, “For he manifestly shows that there are certain brethren for whom we are not commanded to pray, although the Lord bids us pray even for our persecutors.”

He refers to **Luke 6 (KJV):28** Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

And to **Matthew 5 (KJV):44** But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

He continues, “Nor can the question in hand be solved, unless we acknowledge that there are certain sins in brethren which are more heinous than the persecution of enemies. Moreover, that brethren mean Christians can be proved by many examples from the divine Scriptures. Yet that one is plainest which the apostle thus states: “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother.” For he has not added the word our; but has thought it plain, as he wished a Christian who had an unbelieving wife to be understood by the expression brother. And therefore he says a little after, “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart: a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases.” (1 Corinthians 7:14-15)”

He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 7 (KJV):12** But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

He seems to misquote verse 14, as he says, “...the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother.” The word “brother is actually “husband”, which in the Greek is **ἀνὴρ** (pronounced ä-nā'r), and means “a primary word (compare G444); a man (properly as an individual male):—fellow, husband, man, sir.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G435.**

The word for “brother” in verse 15 in the Greek is **ἀδελφός** (pronounced adelphos), “from G1 (as a connective particle) and **δελφός** delphýs (the womb); a brother (literally or figuratively) near or remote (much like G1):—brother.” **Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, G803.**

Paul is speaking of a Christian brother or sister in a marriage where one of the spouses is a believer, and one is not. Augustine seems to understand this, though he uses the word brother for husband.

Augustine then defines the sin unto death, in his opinion, as he continues, “Hence I am of opinion that the sin of a brother is unto death, when any one, after coming to the knowledge of God through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, makes an assault on the brotherhood, and is impelled by the fires of envy to oppose that grace itself by which he is reconciled to God. But the sin is not unto death, if any one has not withdrawn his love from a brother, but through some infirmity of disposition has failed to perform the incumbent duties of brotherhood. And on

this account our Lord also on the cross says, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do:” (Luke 23:34) for, not yet having become partakers of the grace of the Holy Spirit, they had not yet entered the fellowship of the holy brotherhood.”

He refers to **Luke 23 (KJV):34** Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

He continues, “And the blessed Stephen in the Acts of the Apostles prays for those by whom he is being stoned, (Acts 7:60) because they had not yet believed on Christ, and were not fighting against that common grace.”

He refers to **Acts 7 (KJV):60** And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

So in other words, the ones Jesus forgave, and those Stephen forgave, had not committed the sin unto death because they were not of the brotherhood yet.

He continues, “And the Apostle Paul on this account, I believe, does not pray for Alexander, because he was already a brother, and had sinned unto death, viz. by making an assault on the brotherhood through envy. But for those who had not broken off their love, but had given way through fear, he prays that they may be pardoned. For thus he expresses it: “Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord will reward him according to his works. Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.” Then he adds for whom he prays, thus expressing it: “At my first defense no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.” (2 Timothy 4:14-16)”

He refers in context to **2 Timothy 4 (KJV):14** Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: 15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. 16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. 17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

There is another mention of the name, Alexander, in **1 Timothy 1 (KJV):18** This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; 19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: 20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

But no mention of the sin unto death is given in regards to Alexander.

Also, there is no context for speaking of the sin unto death in 1 Corinthians 7:12-15. Paul is simply instructing believers who have unbelieving spouses, that is, spouses who are not believers, as to their responsibility before the Lord.

In 1 Corinthians 7:1-7 and 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, Paul speaks to believers who are married, and in 1 Corinthians 7:8-9 he speaks to unmarried believers, and in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16 Paul speaks to those who are believers who have spouses who are unbelievers. Nothing is being spoken of as an “assault on the brotherhood”, as Augustine asserts.

So what is “the sin unto death”? Let us read in context in **1 John 5 (KJV):11** And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.



The apostle John is very clear here. In verse 12, he who has the Son has life. In verse 13, He who believes “on the name of the Son of God” has eternal life.

We continue to read in **1 John 5 (KJV)**:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. 16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

The “brother” in verse 16 is a believer. John is speaking of a specific sin here, as he says, “There is a sin unto death”.

We continue to read in **1 John 5 (KJV)**:18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

The one who is born of God is a “brother” to others who are born of God. So if anyone sees a “brother” commit a sin unto death, he should not pray for him. Are there examples of this sin in the Bible?

In the Old Testament we read of Saul, who was the first king of Israel. Samuel gave an order to Saul as we read in **1 Samuel 15 (KJV)**:1 Samuel also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord. 2 Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. 4 And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. 5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. 6 And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. 7 And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt. 8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

Saul disobeyed the order of the Lord by Samuel as we continue to read in **1 Samuel 15 (KJV)**:10 Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying, 11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the Lord all night. 12 And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal. 13 And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord. 14 And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? 15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed. 16 Then

Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. 17 And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel? 18 And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. 19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord? 20 And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal. 22 And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king. 24 And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. 25 Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord. 26 And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. 27 And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. 28 And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. 29 And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent. 30 Then he said, I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God. 31 So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the Lord. 32 Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. 33 And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal. 34 Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul. 35 And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

Now Saul later also sought a medium as we read in **1 Samuel 28 (KJV)**: 3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. 4 And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. 5 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. 6 And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. 7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. 8 And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee. 9 And the woman said unto him,

Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? 10 And Saul sware to her by the Lord, saying, As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. 11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. 12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? For thou art Saul. 13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. 14 And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. 15 And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. 16 Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? 17 And the Lord hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David: 18 Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day. 19 Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines. 20 Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.

Samuel's prophecy was fulfilled in **1 Samuel 31 (KJV)**:1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. 2 And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchishua, Saul's sons. 3 And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers. 4 Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. 5 And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. 6 So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together.

Saul did not go to the Hell part of Sheol, but to Abraham's bosom where Samuel was, for Samuel told Saul in 1 Samuel 28:19 above, "tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me".

So Saul's death was not a spiritual death, but physical. We read of Saul's sin unto death in **1 Chronicles 10 (KJV)**:13 So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it;

Another instance of the sin unto death is found in the New Testament. We read of Ananias and Saphira as we begin reading in **Acts 4 (KJV)**:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them

all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. 36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, 37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

In verse 33 above we read that, “with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all”. Where there is great grace, there is great responsibility.

We continue to read in **Acts 5 (KJV)**: 1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. 6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. 12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

Then also we read of those who ate the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. The Corinthians were temples of the Spirit of God, who dwelt in them as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**: 16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

But if we continue in sin, we will come under the discipline of the Lord, which may include physical death as we read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV)**: 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

In verse 30 above, many were weak, and some were sickly, because of the discipline of the Lord. Some even slept, that is, they died because of the chastening of the Lord, in order that they “should not be condemned with the world”.

Jesus promised to build His church in **Matthew 16 (KJV)**: 18 And I say also unto thee,

That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

We need to build wisely as we read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):**10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. 16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

If after we are saved, all we build is wood, hay, and stubble, we will suffer loss, but we will still be saved, “yet so as by fire”. The fire would relate to the consequences of our bad choices in this life, and even the sin unto death. But it has nothing to do with purgatory as Augustine supposed. Purgatory is not mentioned in the Scriptures. It is an invention of man.

## Summary

Augustine did not understand the “sin unto death” in the Scripture. He did understand that it could only be committed by someone in the “brotherhood”, that is, in Christ, as he says, “Hence I am of opinion that the sin of a brother is unto death, when any one, after coming to the knowledge of God through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, makes an assault on the brotherhood, and is impelled by the fires of envy to oppose that grace itself by which he is reconciled to God. But the sin is not unto death, if any one has not withdrawn his love from a brother, but through some infirmity of disposition has failed to perform the incumbent duties of brotherhood.”

According to Scripture, the “sin unto death” is the result of God’s discipline on His children who do not judge themselves, that is, confess their sins and forsake them. It is not spiritual death but physical death. The one who commits this sin is still saved.

## Confession of Sin

**Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine**

**First Epistle of John, Homily I. 1 John I. 1–II. 11, paragraphs 7-8, page 464-465**

7. And lest haply he should seem to have given impunity for sins, in that he said, “He is faithful and just to cleanse us from all iniquity;” and men henceforth should say to themselves, Let us sin, let us do securely what we will, Christ purgeth us, is faithful and just, purgeth us from all iniquity: He taketh from thee an evil security, and putteth in an useful fear. To thine own hurt thou wouldest be secure; thou must be solicitous. For “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,” provided thou always displease thyself, and be changing until thou be perfected. Accordingly, what follows? “My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not.” (1 John 2:1) But perchance sin overtakes us from our mortal life: what shall be done then? What? Shall there be now despair? Hear: “And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiator for our sins.” (1 John 2:1-2) He then is the advocate; do thou thine endeavor not to sin: if from the infirmity of this life sin shall overtake thee, see to it straightway, straightway be displeased, straightway condemn it; and when thou hast condemned, thou shalt come assured unto the Judge. There hast thou the advocate: fear not to lose thy cause in thy confession. For if oftentimes in this life a man commits his cause to an eloquent tongue, and is not lost; thou committest thyself to the Word, and shalt thou be lost? Cry, “We have an advocate with the Father.”

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “And lest haply he should seem to have given impunity for sins, in that he said, “He is faithful and just to cleanse us from all iniquity;” and men henceforth should say to themselves, Let us sin, let us do securely what we will, Christ purgeth us, is faithful and just, purgeth us from all iniquity: He taketh from thee an evil security, and putteth in an useful fear.”

He refers to **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

He continues, “To thine own hurt thou wouldest be secure; thou must be solicitous. For “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,” provided thou always displease thyself, and be changing until thou be perfected. Accordingly, what follows? “My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not.” (1 John 2:1)”

He refers to **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

He continues, “But perchance sin overtakes us from our mortal life: what shall be done then? What? Shall there be now despair? Hear: “And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiator for our sins.” (1 John 2:1-2)”

He refers in context to **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

He continues, “He then is the advocate; do thou thine endeavor not to sin: if from the



infirmity of this life sin shall overtake thee, see to it straightway, straightway be displeased, straightway condemn it; and when thou hast condemned, thou shalt come assured unto the Judge. There hast thou the advocate: fear not to lose thy cause in thy confession. For if oftentimes in this life a man commits his cause to an eloquent tongue, and is not lost; thou committest thyself to the Word, and shalt thou be lost? Cry, "We have an advocate with the Father."

We can agree with Augustine here, that he is in accordance with the Scripture.

8. See John himself observing humility. Assuredly he was a righteous and a great man, who from the Lord's bosom drank in the secrets of His mysteries; he, the man who by drinking from the Lord's bosom indited of His Godhead, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God:" he, being such a man as this, saith not, Ye have an advocate with the Father; but, "If any man sin, an advocate," saith he, "have we." He saith not, ye have; nor saith, ye have me; nor saith, ye have Christ Himself: but he puts Christ, not himself, and saith, also, "We have," not, ye have. He chose rather to put himself in the number of sinners that he might have Christ for his advocate, than to put himself in Christ's stead as advocate, and to be found among the proud that shall be condemned. Brethren, Jesus Christ the righteous, even Him have we for our advocate with the Father; "He," even He, "is the propitiation for our sins." This whoso hath held fast, hath made no heresy; this whoso hath held fast, hath made no schism. For whence came schisms? When men say, "we" are righteous, when men say, "we" sanctify the unclean, "we" justify the ungodly; "we" ask, "we" obtain. But what saith John? "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." But some man will say: then do the saints not ask for us? Then do bishops and rulers not ask for the people? Yea, but mark the Scriptures, and see that rulers also commend themselves to the prayers of the people. Thus the apostle saith to the congregation, "Praying withal for us also." (Colossians 4:3) The apostle prayeth for the people, the people prayeth for the apostle. We pray for you, brethren: but do ye also pray for us. Let all the members pray one for another; let the Head intercede for all. Therefore it is no marvel that he here goes on and shuts the mouths of them that divide the Church of God. For he that has said, "We have Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins:" having an eye to those who would divide themselves, and would say, "Lo, here is Christ, lo, there;" (Matthew 24:23) and would show Him in a part who bought the whole and possesses the whole, he forthwith goes on to say, "Not our sins only, but also the sins of the whole world." What is this, brethren? Certainly "we have found it in the fields of the woods," (Psalm 132:6) we have found the Church in all nations. Behold, Christ "is the propitiation for our sins; not ours only, but also the sins of the whole world." Behold, thou hast the Church throughout the whole world; do not follow false justifiers who in truth are cutters off. Be thou in that mountain which hath filled the whole earth: because "Christ is the propitiation for our sins; not only ours, but also the sins of the whole world," which He hath bought with His blood.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, "See John himself observing humility. Assuredly he was a righteous and a great man, who from the Lord's bosom drank in the secrets of His mysteries; he, the man who by drinking from the Lord's bosom indited of His Godhead, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God:""

The word "indited" means "The verb *indite*, rarely used today, means "compose" or "put

down in writing," like when you find a quiet place to sit down with your notebook and pen and *indite* a journal entry or a first draft of a short story."

<https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/indite#:~:text=To%20indite%20is%20to%20write,critics%20won't%20indict%20you.>

He refers to **John 1 (KJV):1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He means that John "indited" or affirmed with emphasis His deity.

He continues, "he, being such a man as this, saith not, Ye have an advocate with the Father; but, "If any man sin, an advocate," saith he, "have we." He saith not, ye have; nor saith, ye have me; nor saith, ye have Christ Himself: but he puts Christ, not himself, and saith, also, "We have," not, ye have."

He refers in context to **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

He continues, "He chose rather to put himself in the number of sinners that he might have Christ for his advocate, than to put himself in Christ's stead as advocate, and to be found among the proud that shall be condemned. Brethren, Jesus Christ the righteous, even Him have we for our advocate with the Father; "He," even He, "is the propitiation for our sins." This whoso hath held fast, hath made no heresy; this whoso hath held fast, hath made no schism. For whence came schisms? When men say, "we" are righteous, when men say, "we" sanctify the unclean, "we" justify the ungodly; "we" ask, "we" obtain. But what saith John? "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." But some man will say: then do the saints not ask for us? Then do bishops and rulers not ask for the people? Yea, but mark the Scriptures, and see that rulers also commend themselves to the prayers of the people. Thus the apostle saith to the congregation, "Praying withal for us also." (Colossians 4:3)"

He refers in context to **Colossians 4 (KJV):2** Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; 3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: 4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

He continues, "The apostle prayeth for the people, the people prayeth for the apostle. We pray for you, brethren: but do ye also pray for us. Let all the members pray one for another; let the Head intercede for all. Therefore it is no marvel that he here goes on and shuts the mouths of them that divide the Church of God. For he that has said, "We have Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins:" having an eye to those who would divide themselves, and would say, "Lo, here is Christ, lo, there;" (Matthew 24:23) and would show Him in a part who bought the whole and possesses the whole, he forthwith goes on to say, "Not our sins only, but also the sins of the whole world.""

He refers in context to **Matthew 24 (KJV):23** Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

And to **1 John 2 (KJV):2** And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

He continues, “What is this, brethren? Certainly “we have found it in the fields of the woods,” (Psalm 132:6) we have found the Church in all nations.”

He refers in context to **Psalm 132 (KJV)**:1 Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions: 2 How he swore unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob; 3 Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; 4 I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, 5 Until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. 6 Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood. 7 We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool. 8 Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.

He concludes, “Behold, Christ “is the propitiation for our sins; not ours only, but also the sins of the whole world.” Behold, thou hast the Church throughout the whole world; do not follow false justifiers who in truth are cutters off. Be thou in that mountain which hath filled the whole earth: because “Christ is the propitiation for our sins; not only ours, but also the sins of the whole world,” which He hath bought with His blood.”

He refers to **1 John 1 (KJV)**:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Let us remember also in **1 John 1 (KJV)**:6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm LI, paragraph 11, page 193**

11. “For, behold, truth Thou hast loved: uncertain and hidden things of Thy wisdom, Thou hast manifested to me” (ver. 6). That is, Thou hast not left unpunished even the sins of those whom Thou dost pardon. “Truth Thou hast loved:” so mercy Thou hast granted first, as that Thou shouldest also preserve truth. Thou pardonest one confessing, pardonest, but only if he punisheth himself: so there are preserved mercy and truth: mercy because man is set free; truth, because sin is punished. “Uncertain and hidden things of Thy wisdom Thou hast manifested to me.” What “hidden things”? What “uncertain things”? Because God pardoneth even such. Nothing is so hidden, nothing so uncertain. For this uncertainty the Ninevites repented, for they said, though after the threatenings of the Prophet, though after that cry, “Three days and Nineve shall be overthrown:” (Jonah 3:4) they said to themselves, Mercy must be implored; they said in this sort reasoning among themselves, “Who knoweth whether God may turn for the better His sentence, and have pity?” (Jonah 3:9) It was “uncertain,” when it is said, “Who knoweth?” on an uncertainty they did repent, certain mercy they earned: they prostrated them in tears, in fastings, in sackcloth and ashes they prostrated them, groaned, wept, God spared. Nineve stood: was Nineve overthrown? One way indeed it seemeth to men, and another way it seemed to God. But I think that it was fulfilled that the Prophet had foretold. Regard what Nineve was, and see how it was overthrown; overthrown in evil, builded in good; just as Saul the persecutor was overthrown, Paul the preacher builded. (Acts 9:4) Who would

not say that this city, in which we now are, was happily overthrown, if all those madmen, leaving their triflings, were to run together to the Church with contrite heart, and were to call upon God's mercy for their past doings? Should we not say, Where is that Carthage? Because there is not what there was, it is overthrown: but if there is what there was not, it is builded. So is said to Jeremiah, "Behold, I will give to thee to root up, to dig under, to overthrow, to destroy," and again, "to build, and to plant." (Jeremiah 1:10) Thence is that voice of the Lord, "I will smite and I will heal." (Deuteronomy 32:39) He smiteth the rottenness of the deed, He healeth the pain of the wound. Physicians do thus when they cut; they smite and heal; they arm themselves in order to strike, they carry steel, and come to cure. But because great were the sins of the Ninevites, they said, "Who knoweth?" This uncertainty had God disclosed to His servant David. For when he had said, before the Prophet standing and convicting him, "I have sinned:" straightway he heard from the Prophet, that is, from the Spirit of God which was in the Prophet, "Thy sin is put away from thee." (2 Samuel 12:13) "Uncertain and hidden things" of His wisdom He manifested to him.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, **"For, behold, truth Thou hast loved: uncertain and hidden things of Thy wisdom, Thou hast manifested to me" (ver. 6)."**

He refers to **Psalm 51 (KJV):6** Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

He continues, **"That is, Thou hast not left unpunished even the sins of those whom Thou dost pardon. "Truth Thou hast loved:" so mercy Thou hast granted first, as that Thou shouldst also preserve truth. Thou pardonest one confessing, pardonest, but only if he punisheth himself: so there are preserved mercy and truth: mercy because man is set free; truth, because sin is punished."**

Nothing is said in the Scriptures about the need to punish ourselves when we confess our sins. The Scripture simply says that if we confess our sins He is faithful to forgive us and cleanse us, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

But it is understood that we must also forsake them as we read in **Proverbs 28 (KJV):13** He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Augustine continues, **"Uncertain and hidden things of Thy wisdom Thou hast manifested to me."** What "hidden things"? What "uncertain things"? Because God pardoneth even such. Nothing is so hidden, nothing so uncertain. For this uncertainty the Ninevites repented, for they said, though after the threatenings of the Prophet, though after that cry, "Three days and Nineveh shall be overthrown:" (Jonah 3:4) they said to themselves, Mercy must be implored; they said in this sort reasoning among themselves, "Who knoweth whether God may turn for the better His sentence, and have pity?" (Jonah 3:9)"

He refers in context to **Jonah 3 (KJV):4** And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. 5 So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. 6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king

and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. 9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? 10 And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

He continues, “It was “uncertain,” when it is said, “Who knoweth?” on an uncertainty they did repent, certain mercy they earned: they prostrated them in tears, in fastings, in sackcloth and ashes they prostrated them, groaned, wept, God spared. Nineve stood: was Nineve overthrown? One way indeed it seemeth to men, and another way it seemed to God. But I think that it was fulfilled that the Prophet had foretold. Regard what Nineve was, and see how it was overthrown; overthrown in evil, builded in good; just as Saul the persecutor was overthrown, Paul the preacher builded. (Acts 9:4)”

He refers in context to **Acts 9 (KJV)**:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. 6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

He continues, “Who would not say that this city, in which we now are, was happily overthrown, if all those madmen, leaving their triflings, were to run together to the Church with contrite heart, and were to call upon God’s mercy for their past doings? Should we not say, Where is that Carthage? Because there is not what there was, it is overthrown: but if there is what there was not, it is builded. So is said to Jeremiah, “Behold, I will give to thee to root up, to dig under, to overthrow, to destroy,” and again, “to build, and to plant.” (Jeremiah 1:10)”

He refers to **Jeremiah 1 (KJV)**:10 See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

He continues, “Thence is that voice of the Lord, “I will smite and I will heal.” (Deuteronomy 32:39)”

He refers to **Deuteronomy 32 (KJV)**:39 See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.

He continues, “He smiteth the rottenness of the deed, He healeth the pain of the wound. Physicians do thus when they cut; they smite and heal; they arm themselves in order to strike, they carry steel, and come to cure. But because great were the sins of the Ninevites, they said, “Who knoweth?” This uncertainty had God disclosed to His servant David. For when he had said, before the Prophet standing and convicting him, “I have sinned:” straightway he heard from the Prophet, that is, from the Spirit of God which was in the Prophet, “Thy sin is put away from thee.” (2 Samuel 12:13) “Uncertain and hidden things” of His wisdom He manifested to

him.”

He refers to **2 Samuel 12 (KJV):13** And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

## **Punishment for Sin**

### **Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 8, Augustine On the Psalms, Psalm LIX, paragraph 12, page 239**

12. All iniquity, be it little or great, punished must needs be, either by man himself repenting, or by God avenging. For even he that repenteth punisheth himself. Therefore, brethren, let us punish our own sins, if we seek the mercy of God. God cannot have mercy on all men working iniquity as if pandering to sins, or not rooting out sins. In a word, either thou punishest, or He punisheth....

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “All iniquity, be it little or great, punished must needs be, either by man himself repenting, or by God avenging. For even he that repenteth punisheth himself. Therefore, brethren, let us punish our own sins, if we seek the mercy of God. God cannot have mercy on all men working iniquity as if pandering to sins, or not rooting out sins. In a word, either thou punishest, or He punisheth...”

The word “punishment” in the New Testament is used solely in reference to unbelievers or evil doers as we read in **2 Thessalonians 1 (KJV):8** In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

And in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):29** Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

And in **2 Peter 2 (KJV):9** The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

But for believers, the word “discipline” is used, as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):3** For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous,



but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

In Augustine's time, repentance was interpreted as doing penance. This could involve harsh treatment of one's self. It was thought that one had to make up for a debt that one owed to God. But our God is a good, good Father who "chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth", in verse 6 above. If we would have mercy, we must forsake the sin as we read in **Proverbs 28 (KJV):13** He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Our focus must be on Jesus as we read in **Hebrews 12 (KJV):1** Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

We must lay aside every weight in verse 1. Sin is a weight on us. We must set our affections on things above as we read in **Colossians 3 (KJV):1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

We must love ourselves as God loves us, and so we must love one another as in **John 13 (KJV):34** A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

Beating up on ourselves is not what our Father wants us to do.

## Summary

Augustine is very logical in his thinking, as he reasons from Psalm 51, **“For, behold, truth Thou hast loved: uncertain and hidden things of Thy wisdom, Thou hast manifested to me” (ver. 6).** That is, Thou hast not left unpunished even the sins of those whom Thou dost pardon. **“Truth Thou hast loved:”** so mercy Thou hast granted first, as that Thou shouldest also preserve truth. Thou pardonest one confessing, pardonest, but only if he punisheth himself: so there are preserved mercy and truth: mercy because man is set free; truth, because sin is punished.”

And Augustine says, “All iniquity, be it little or great, punished must needs be, either by man himself repenting, or by God avenging. For even he that repenteth punisheth himself. Therefore, brethren, let us punish our own sins, if we seek the mercy of God. God cannot have mercy on all men working iniquity as if pandering to sins, or not rooting out sins. In a word, either thou punishest, or He punisheth....”

But the Scriptures teach us to confess and forsake our sins as in **Proverbs 28 (KJV):13** He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

When we confess, He is faithful to forgive, as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV):9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Paul says in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):**31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

The word “judge” in the Greek is **διακρίνω** (pronounced dē-ä-krē'-nō), from G1223 and G2919; to separate thoroughly, i.e. (literally and reflexively) to withdraw from, or (by implication) oppose; figuratively, to discriminate (by implication, decide), or (reflexively) hesitate:—contend, make (to) differ(-ence), discern, doubt, judge, be partial, stagger, waver.

The Scripture is not saying to chasten ourselves, but to judge ourselves. To judge ourselves, we must discern what is sin, and then confess it. The sooner we do this, the less chastening of the Lord we will have to endure.

## Life Is the Same as Faith

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine  
Tractate XLV. Chapter X. 1–10, paragraph 15, page 255

15. But what is this, “He shall go in and out, and find pasture”? To enter indeed into the Church by Christ the door, is eminently good; but to go out of the Church, as this same John the evangelist saith in his epistle, “They went out from us, but they were not of us,” (1 John 2:19) is certainly otherwise than good. Such a going out could not then be commended by the good Shepherd, when He said, “And he shall go in and out, and find pasture.” There is therefore not only some sort of entrance, but some outgoing also that is good, by the good door, which is Christ. But what is that praiseworthy and blessed outgoing? I might say, indeed, that we enter when we engage in some inward exercise of thought; and go out, when we take to some active work without: and since, as the apostle saith, Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith, (Ephesians 3:17) to enter by Christ is to give ourselves to thought in accordance with that faith; but to go out by Christ is, in accordance also with that same faith, to take to outside works, that is to say, in the presence of others. Hence, also, we read in a psalm, “Man goeth forth to his work;” (Psalm 104:23) and the Lord Himself saith, “Let your works shine before men.” (Matthew 5:16) But I am better pleased that the Truth Himself, like a good Shepherd, and therefore a good Teacher, hath in a certain measure reminded us how we ought to understand His words, “He shall go in and out, and find pasture,” when He added in the sequel, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” For He seems to me to have meant, That they may have life in coming in, and have it more abundantly at their departure. For no one can pass out by the door—that is, by Christ—to that eternal life which shall be open to the sight, unless by the same door—that is, by the same Christ—he has entered His church, which is His fold, to the temporal life, which is lived in faith. Therefore, He saith, “I am come that they may have life,” that is, faith, which worketh by love; (Galatians 5:6) by which faith they enter the fold that they may live, for the just liveth by faith: (Romans 1:17) “and that they may have it more abundantly,” who, enduring unto the end, pass out by this same door, that is, by the faith of Christ; for as true believers they die, and will have life more abundantly when they come whither the Shepherd hath preceded them, where they shall die no more. Although, therefore, there is no want of pasture even here in the fold,—for we may understand the words “and shall find pasture” as referring to both, that is, both to their going in and their going out,—yet there only will they find the true pasture. where they shall be filled who hunger and thirst after righteousness, (Matthew 5:6)—such pasture as was found by him to whom it was said, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43) But how He Himself is the door, and Himself the Shepherd, so that He also may in a certain respect be understood as going in and out by Himself, and who is the porter, it would be too long to inquire today, and, according to the grace given us by Himself, to unfold in the way of dissertation.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But what is this, “He shall go in and out, and find pasture”? To enter indeed into the Church by Christ the door, is eminently good; but to go

out of the Church, as this same John the evangelist saith in his epistle, “They went out from us, but they were not of us,” (1 John 2:19) is certainly otherwise than good.”

He refers to **1 John 2 (KJV):19** They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

But nothing about the Church is mentioned in this verse. John was talking about some who left their fellowship. Those John was speaking of “were not all of us”. In Augustine’s thinking, the Catholic Church was the true Church, and so anyone who went out from the Catholic Church “were not all of us”. Augustine did not realize that a lot of tradition had crept in to the doctrine of the Catholic Church in his time.

Augustine continues, “Such a going out could not then be commended by the good Shepherd, when He said, “And he shall go in and out, and find pasture.””

He refers to **John 10 (KJV):9** I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

He continues, “There is therefore not only some sort of entrance, but some outgoing also that is good, by the good door, which is Christ. But what is that praiseworthy and blessed outgoing? I might say, indeed, that we enter when we engage in some inward exercise of thought; and go out, when we take to some active work without: and since, as the apostle saith, Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith, (Ephesians 3:17) to enter by Christ is to give ourselves to thought in accordance with that faith; but to go out by Christ is, in accordance also with that same faith, to take to outside works, that is to say, in the presence of others.”

He refers in context to **Ephesians 3 (KJV):17** That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

He continues, “Hence, also, we read in a psalm, “Man goeth forth to his work;” (Psalm 104:23) and the Lord Himself saith, “Let your works shine before men.” (Matthew 5:16)”

He refers to **Psalm 104 (KJV):23** Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.

And to **Matthew 5 (KJV):16** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

He continues, “But I am better pleased that the Truth Himself, like a good Shepherd, and therefore a good Teacher, hath in a certain measure reminded us how we ought to understand His words, “He shall go in and out, and find pasture,” when He added in the sequel, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.””

He refers to **John 10 (KJV):10** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

He continues, “For He seems to me to have meant, That they may have life in coming in, and have it more abundantly at their departure. For no one can pass out by the door—that is, by Christ—to that eternal life which shall be open to the sight, unless by the same door—that is, by the same Christ—he has entered His church, which is His fold, to the temporal life, which is lived in faith.”

It is by Christ, who is the door, that we become part of the Church, which is His body. Augustine does not seem to understand that, when we have faith and believe in Jesus Christ, we

are added to the Church by the Lord, as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):47** Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

We are added to the Church by the Lord the moment we believe. It is God who sets us in a particular place in His body as it pleases Him, as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

When he says that we enter by Christ “to the temporal life, which is lived in faith”, I believe he is referring to the fact that our bodies are mortal.

Let us read further, as he continues, “Therefore, He saith, “I am come that they may have life,” that is, faith, which worketh by love; (Galatians 5:6) by which faith they enter the fold that they may live, for the just liveth by faith: (Romans 1:17)”

He refers to **Galatians 5 (KJV):6** For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

And to **Romans 1 (KJV):17** For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Augustine seems to equate faith with life here. So one might conclude that if you have faith, you have life, but if you don't have faith, you lose life or die. He would still allow that you could get life back again if you repented.

He continues, ““and that they may have it more abundantly,” who, enduring unto the end, pass out by this same door, that is, by the faith of Christ; for as true believers they die, and will have life more abundantly when they come whither the Shepherd hath preceded them, where they shall die no more.”

However, Jesus made no restriction on when we would have life more abundantly. Augustine seems to imply that abundant life is experienced when we die and go to be with Christ. In fact, by living for the Lord now in this life, we really live.

He continues, “Although, therefore, there is no want of pasture even here in the fold,—for we may understand the words “and shall find pasture” as referring to both, that is, both to their going in and their going out,—yet there only will they find the true pasture. where they shall be filled who hunger and thirst after righteousness, (Matthew 5:6)—such pasture as was found by him to whom it was said, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43)”

He refers to **Matthew 5 (KJV):6** Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

And to **Luke 23 (KJV):43** And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

He concludes, “But how He Himself is the door, and Himself the Shepherd, so that He also may in a certain respect be understood as going in and out by Himself, and who is the porter, it would be too long to inquire today, and, according to the grace given us by Himself, to unfold in the way of dissertation.”

Let us read the parable in **John 10 (KJV):1** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from

him: for they know not the voice of strangers. 6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

So the sheep hear His voice in verse 3, and they follow Him: for they know his voice in verse 4, and they follow Him alone for they know not the voice of strangers in verse 5.

It is interesting that the disciples did not at first understand this parable. Let us continue to read in **John 10 (KJV):7** Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

So Jesus explains that He is the door of the sheep, and that if anyone enters in by Him, he or she shall be saved, and they shall go in and out, and find pasture. No mention of the Church is made in this parable. Let us continue to read in **John 10 (KJV):10** The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Jesus has come that the sheep might have life. He is speaking of eternal life that we receive when we are born again of the Spirit of God. Then He adds, that they might have it more abundantly. By this Jesus is speaking of the rest that He came to give us, which He spoke of in **Matthew 11 (KJV):28** Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Sin is a weight on our lives. When we come to Jesus, he takes that weight away. This is the rest He came to give us. Then we can be His servants as we learn to take His yoke upon us. In doing this, we will find even more rest, for His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.

We continue to read in **John 10 (KJV):11** I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

The parable is actually very simple as Jesus explains it. But Augustine seems to want to complicate it by mentioning the Church as the flock, and implying that remaining in the flock is necessary to have life, which he equates to faith, as he says above, **“Therefore, He saith, “I am come that they may have life,” that is, faith, which worketh by love; (Galatians 5:6)”** And then he says, **“For no one can pass out by the door—that is, by Christ—to that eternal life which shall be open to the sight, unless by the same door—that is, by the same Christ—he has entered His church, which is His fold, to the temporal life, which is lived in faith.”** And by saying this, he implies that if one leaves the church, they do not have life.

The Scripture is clear. When we are born again by faith in Jesus Christ, it is by the faith that is given to us by God, as we read again in **Ephesians 2 (ESV):8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.



We are then born of God as we read again in **John 1 (ESV):12** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

Being born of God, we then have eternal life. This eternal life is in our spirit which was born again by the Spirit of God. Jesus is the door to this eternal life. Once we have entered the door by faith, we have life. Jesus is then our Shepherd who will keep us in His hands as we read in **John 10 (KJV):27** My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and my Father are one.

## Summary

Augustine equates life with faith as he says, “Therefore, He saith, “I am come that they may have life,” that is, faith, which worketh by love; (Galatians 5:6) by which faith they enter the fold that they may live, for the just liveth by faith: (Romans 1:17)”

So from what he has said, one may conclude that, if you don't have love, you don't have faith, and if you don't have faith you don't have life. But we don't enter the fold that we may live. Jesus came that we might have life. We have life by faith in Him. That is, we live because we have faith in Him, and faith in Him is given to us by God, who first loved us.

It seems that he is so focused on keeping the unity of the Catholic Church in his time that he oversteps the bounds of the Scripture. Life is not faith. The life that we receive by faith in Jesus Christ is spiritual, and eternal. It comes to us by a birth of the Holy Spirit in our spirits when we, by ourselves, believe in Jesus Christ and confess Him as Lord.

# Heaven

## Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Augustine Tractate LXVII. Chapter XIV. 1–3, paragraphs 2-3, page 321

2. But why have we this that follows, “In my Father’s house are many mansions,” but that they were also in fear about themselves? And therein they might have heard the words, “Let not your heart be troubled.” For, was there any of them that could be free from fear, when Peter, the most confident and forward of them all, was told, “The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice”? Considering themselves, therefore, beginning with Peter, as destined to perish, they had cause to be troubled: but when they now hear, “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you,” they are revived from their trouble, made certain and confident that after all the perils of temptations they shall dwell with Christ in the presence of God. For, albeit one is stronger than another, one wiser than another, one more righteous than another, “in the Father’s house there are many mansions;” none of them shall remain outside that house, where every one, according to his deserts, is to receive a mansion. All alike have that penny, which the householder orders to be given to all that have wrought in the vineyard, making no distinction therein between those who have labored less and those who have labored more: (Matthew 20:9) by which penny, of course, is signified eternal life, whereto no one any longer lives to a different length than others, since in eternity life has no diversity in its measure. But the many mansions point to the different grades of merit in that one eternal life. For there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory; and so also the resurrection of the dead. The saints, like the stars in the sky, obtain in the kingdom different mansions of diverse degrees of brightness; but on account of that one penny no one is cut off from the kingdom; and God will be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:41-42, 28) in such a way, that, as God is love, (1 John 4:8) love will bring it about that what is possessed by each will be common to all. For in this way every one really possesses it, when he loves to see in another what he has not himself. There will not, therefore, be any envying amid this diversity of brightness, since in all of them will be reigning the unity of love.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “But why have we this that follows, “In my Father’s house are many mansions,” but that they were also in fear about themselves? And therein they might have heard the words, “Let not your heart be troubled.” For, was there any of them that could be free from fear, when Peter, the most confident and forward of them all, was told, “The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice”? Considering themselves, therefore, beginning with Peter, as destined to perish, they had cause to be troubled: but when they now hear, “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you,” they are revived from their trouble, made certain and confident that after all the perils of temptations they shall dwell with Christ in the presence of God.”

He refers to **John 14 (KJV):1** Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. **2** In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I

go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

And in context to **John 13 (KJV)**:36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. 37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake. 38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

Augustine continues, “For, albeit one is stronger than another, one wiser than another, one more righteous than another, “in the Father’s house there are many mansions;” none of them shall remain outside that house, where every one, according to his deserts, is to receive a mansion. All alike have that penny, which the householder orders to be given to all that have wrought in the vineyard, making no distinction therein between those who have labored less and those who have labored more: (Matthew 20:9) by which penny, of course, is signified eternal life, whereto no one any longer lives to a different length than others, since in eternity life has no diversity in its measure.”

He refers in context first to **Matthew 20 (KJV)**:1 For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. 2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, 4 And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. 5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? 7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

The workers were then paid as we continue in **Matthew 20 (KJV)**:8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. 9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. 10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. 11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, 12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. 13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? 14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? 16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

The Lord is teaching us that we must have the right motives in our laboring for the kingdom of God. We are not to look for material gain when laboring for the kingdom of God. We must labor because of what Christ has done for us, and because of our love for God, and for others. With the right heart, rewards will be given including position and place in the Kingdom.

Augustine continues, “But the many mansions point to the different grades of merit in that one eternal life. For there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory; and so also the resurrection

of the dead. The saints, like the stars in the sky, obtain in the kingdom different mansions of diverse degrees of brightness; but on account of that one penny no one is cut off from the kingdom; and God will be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:41-42, 28) in such a way, that, as God is love, (1 John 4:8) love will bring it about that what is possessed by each will be common to all.”

Augustine rightly interprets the Scriptures here. He refers in context to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):**40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

And to **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):**28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

And to **1 John 4 (KJV):**8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

He continues, “For in this way every one really possesses it, when he loves to see in another what he has not himself. There will not, therefore, be any envying amid this diversity of brightness, since in all of them will be reigning the unity of love.”

Let us continue to read his thoughts in the next paragraph.

3. Every Christian heart, therefore, must utterly reject the idea of those who imagine that there are many mansions spoken of, because there will be some place outside the kingdom of heaven, which shall be the abode of those blessed innocents who have departed this life without baptism, because without it they cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Faith like this is not faith, inasmuch as it is not the true and Catholic faith. Are you not so foolish and blinded with carnal imaginations as to be worthy of reprobation, if you should thus separate the mansion, I say not of Peter and Paul, or any of the apostles, but even of any baptized infant from the kingdom of heaven; do you not think yourselves deserving of reprobation in thus putting a separation between these and the house of God the Father? For the Lord’s words are not, In the whole world, or, In all creation, or, In everlasting life and blessedness, there are many mansions; but He says, “In my Father’s house are many mansions.” Is not that the house where we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? (2 Corinthians 5:1) Is not that the house whereof we sing to the Lord, “Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; they shall praise Thee for ever and ever”? (Psalm 84:4) Will you then venture to separate from the kingdom of heaven the house, not of every baptized brother, but of God the Father Himself, to whom all we who are brethren say, “Our Father, who art in heaven,” (Matthew 6:9) or divide it in such a way as to make some of its mansions inside, and some outside, the kingdom of heaven? Far, far be it from those who desire to dwell in the kingdom of heaven, to be willing to dwell in such folly with you: far be it, I say, that since every house of sons that are reigning can be nowhere else but in the kingdom, any part of the royal house itself should be outside the kingdom.

**Commentary:** Augustine begins as he says, “Every Christian heart, therefore, must utterly reject the idea of those who imagine that there are many mansions spoken of, because there will

be some place outside the kingdom of heaven, which shall be the abode of those blessed innocents who have departed this life without baptism, because without it they cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Because of the belief of the early Church in regeneration by baptism, Augustine believed that unbaptized infants could not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. But God is rich in mercy. There is good reason to believe that the Lord’s mercy would intervene in the case of children, as he did in **Deuteronomy 1 (KJV):39** Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.

Augustine continues, “Faith like this is not faith, inasmuch as it is not the true and Catholic faith. Are you not so foolish and blinded with carnal imaginations as to be worthy of reprobation, if you should thus separate the mansion, I say not of Peter and Paul, or any of the apostles, but even of any baptized infant from the kingdom of heaven; do you not think yourselves deserving of reprobation in thus putting a separation between these and the house of God the Father?”

He is correct here in his teaching that there is no Limbo, a place where there is no pain, where the unbaptized infants were thought to go. There is no such division in the house of God. However, this is not justification for “reprobation”. Our faith in Jesus Christ saves us. It may take a while for us to have good doctrine, but when we believe in Him we pass from death to life.

He continues, “For the Lord’s words are not, In the whole world, or, In all creation, or, In everlasting life and blessedness, there are many mansions; but He says, “In my Father’s house are many mansions.” Is not that the house where we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? (2 Corinthians 5:1)”

He refers in context to **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):1** For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: 3 If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. 4 For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. 5 Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. 6 Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: 7 (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) 8 We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Paul is speaking here of the body we shall inherit at the resurrection. So the “earthly house of this tabernacle” in verse 1 refers to our physical body here on earth. At the resurrection we shall be “clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life”, as in verse 4.

He continues, “Is not that the house whereof we sing to the Lord, “Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; they shall praise Thee for ever and ever”? (Psalm 84:4)”

He refers in context to **Psalm 84 (KJV):1** How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! 2 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. 3 Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God. 4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.

The house the Psalmist refers to is the tabernacle that Moses built, and which existed in David's time, before Solomon built the temple.

We also read as in **Psalm 84 (KJV)**:10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. 11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. 12 O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

This Psalm speaks of fellowship with the Lord that the righteous experience.

Augustine continues, "Will you then venture to separate from the kingdom of heaven the house, not of every baptized brother, but of God the Father Himself, to whom all we who are brethren say, "Our Father, who art in heaven," (Matthew 6:9) or divide it in such a way as to make some of its mansions inside, and some outside, the kingdom of heaven?"

He refers to **Matthew 6 (KJV)**:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

He concludes, "Far, far be it from those who desire to dwell in the kingdom of heaven, to be willing to dwell in such folly with you: far be it, I say, that since every house of sons that are reigning can be nowhere else but in the kingdom, any part of the royal house itself should be outside the kingdom."

And we have to agree with Augustine here in that he says that there is no place outside of the kingdom of heaven where the righteous will go, and there is no place but Hell where the unrighteous will go.

## Summary

The Father's house is in the kingdom of heaven. And in the Father's house, that is, in heaven, are many mansions, or places to live. And as Augustine says, "the many mansions point to the different grades of merit in that one eternal life." And there will be a "diversity of brightness", as each is rewarded according to his or her own labor, but there will be no "envying amid this diversity of brightness, since in all of them will be reigning the unity of love", for God is love.