

# THE MERCERSBURG REVIEW.

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## INTRODUCTORY ARTICLE.

The publication, which was from 1849 to 1852 the "Mercersburg Review," from 1853 to 1856 the "Mercersburg Quarterly," from 1857 to 1861 again the "Mercersburg Review," but which, under these changes of title, steadily maintained the same spirit and character, and which has been, during the last five years, suspended, is now again resumed. Its suspension was not owing to any loss of interest in the subjects to which its discussions had been devoted, but partly, if not wholly, to the pressure on all publishing interests brought on by the war for the Union, and was always designed to be but temporary.

The reasons which led to its origination are the reasons for its continuance. In resuming the old name, it proposes to lift the old banner. It adopts anew the language of the introductory article of the first number, January, 1849: "The Review is expected to bear a distinctive and peculiar character. As the mere echo of what already exists in this way, it would have no right to challenge any regard. It proposes to represent, in philosophy and religion, the system of thinking which has come to be identified extensively, in this country, with the Institutions at Mercersburg, though of far wider and higher force, in fact, on both sides of the Atlantic. With the same field of survey that is spread out to other Theological Reviews, the stand-point of its observations will be materially different. It

plumes itself on its title to being rational, which instinctively shrinks from the very idea of mysteries, is already on the verge of this gulf. We choose not to be drawn with it into the awful maelstrom. The hoary truths and verities of our holy religion are dearer to us than the insinuating favor of popular applause. Let us stand firm on these tried foundations amid the rocking waves of rationalism and infidelity. Truth must triumph over error, and be crowned at last with glorious victory.

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ART. V.—THE GENIUS AND THEOLOGY OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

BY PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D., NEW YORK.

AUGUSTINE, the man with upturned eye, with pen in the left hand, and a burning heart in the right (as he is usually represented), is, by universal agreement, one of the master minds in the history of Christianity, who have made a profound and lasting impression upon his age and all subsequent generations. He was a philosophical and theological genius of the first order, towering, like a pyramid, above his age, and looking down commandingly upon succeeding centuries. He had a mind uncommonly fertile and deep, bold and soaring; and with it, what is better, a heart full of Christian love and humility. He stands, of right, by the side of the greatest philosophers of antiquity and of modern times. We meet him alike on the broad highways and the narrow footpaths, on the giddy Alpine heights, and in the awful depths of speculation, wherever philosophical thinkers before him or after him have trod. As a theologian, he is *facile princeps*, at least surpassed by no church father, scholastic, or reformer. With royal munificence he scattered ideas in passing, which have set in mighty motion other lands and later times. He combined the creative power of Tertullian with the churchly spirit of Cyprian, the speculative intellect of the Greek Church with the practical tact of the Latin. He was a Christian philosopher and a philosophical theologian to the

full. It was his need and his delight to wrestle again and again with the hardest problems of thought, and to comprehend, to the utmost, the divinely revealed matter of the faith. He always asserted, indeed, the primacy of faith, according to his maxim: *Fides præcedit intellectum*; appealing, with theologians before him, to the well-known passage of Isaiah vii. 9 (in the LXX.): “Nisi credideritis, non intelligetis.” But to him faith itself was an acting of reason, and from faith to knowledge, therefore, there was a necessary transition. He constantly looked below the surface to the hidden motives of actions and to the universal laws of diverse events. The metaphysician and the Christian believer coalesced in him. His *meditatio* passes with the utmost ease into *oratio*, and his *oratio* into *meditatio*. With profundity he combined an equal clearness and sharpness of thought. He was an extremely skilful and a successful dialectician, inexhaustible in arguments and in answers to the objections of his adversaries.

He has enriched Latin literature with a greater store of beautiful, original, and pregnant proverbial sayings, than any classic author, or any other teacher of the Church. We remind the reader of a few of the most striking:

“Novum Testamentum in Vetere latet, Vetus in Novo patet.”

“Distingue tempora, et concordabit Scriptura.”

“Cor nostrum inquietum est, donec requiescat in Te.”

“Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis.”

“Non vincit nisi veritas, victoria veritatis est caritas.”

“Ubi amor, ibi trinitas.”

“Fides præcedit intellectum.”

“Deo servire vera libertas est.”

“Nulla infelicitas frangit, quem felicitas nulla corrumpit.”

The famous maxim of ecclesiastical harmony: “In necessariis unitas, in dubiis (or non necessariis) libertas, in omnibus (in utrisque) caritas,”—which is often ascribed to Augustine, dates in this form not from him, but from a much later period. LUECKE (in a special treatise on the antiquity of the author, the original form, etc., of this sentence, Göttingen, 1850) traces

the authorship to RUPERT MELDENIUS, an irenical German theologian of the seventeenth century.

Augustine had a creative and decisive hand in almost every dogma of the Church, completing some, and advancing others. The centre of his system is the FREE REDEEMING GRACE OF GOD IN CHRIST, OPERATING THROUGH THE ACTUAL, HISTORICAL CHURCH. He is evangelical or Pauline in his doctrine of sin and grace, but catholic (that is, old-catholic, not Roman Catholic), in his doctrine of the Church. The Pauline element comes forward mainly in the Pelagian controversy, the catholic churchly in the Donatist; but each is modified by the other.

Dr. BAUR incorrectly makes *freedom* the fundamental idea of the Augustinian system (it much better suits the Pelagian), and founds on this view an ingenious, but only half true, comparison between Augustine and Origen. "There is no Church teacher of the ancient period," says he, "who, in intellect and in grandeur and consistency of view, can more justly be placed by the side of Origen than Augustine; none who, with all the difference in individuality and in mode of thought, so closely resembles him. How far both towered above their times, is most clearly manifest in the very fact that they alone of all the theologians of the first six centuries, became the creators of distinct systems, each proceeding from its definite idea, and each completely carried out; and this fact proves also how much the one system has that is analogous to the other. The one system, like the other, is founded upon the idea of *freedom*; in both there is a specific act, by which the entire development of human life is determined; and in both, this is an act which lies far outside of the temporal consciousness of the individual; with this difference alone, that in one system the act belongs to each separate individual himself, and only falls outside of his temporal life and consciousness; in the other, it lies within the sphere of the temporal history of man, but is only the act of one individual. If, in the system of Origen, nothing gives greater offence than the idea of the pre-existence and fall of souls, which seems to adopt heathen ideas into the Christian faith, there is in the system of Augustine the same overleaping

of individual life and consciousness, in order to explain from an act in the past, the present sinful condition of man; but the pagan Platonic point of view is exchanged for one taken from the Old Testament. . . . What, therefore, essentially distinguishes the system of Augustine from that of Origen, is only this: the fall of Adam is substituted for the pre-temporal fall of souls, and what in Origen still wears a heathen garb, puts on in Augustine a purely Old Testament form."

The learning of Augustine was not equal to his genius, nor as extensive as that of Origen and Eusebius, but still considerable for his time, and superior to that of any of the Latin fathers, with the single exception of Jerome. He had received, in the schools of Madaura and Carthage, a good theoretical and rhetorical preparation for the forum, which stood him in good stead also in theology. He was familiar with Latin literature, and was by no means blind to the excellencies of the classics, though he placed them far below the higher beauty of the Holy Scriptures. The Hortensius of Cicero (a lost work) inspired him, during his university course, with enthusiasm for philosophy and for the knowledge of truth for its own sake; the study of Platonic and Neo-Platonic works (in the Latin version of the rhetorician Victorinus), kindled in him an incredible fire; though, in both, he missed the holy name of Jesus and the cardinal virtues of love and humility, and found in them only beautiful ideals, without power to conform him to them. With the Greek language and literature he had, in comparison with Jerome, but a superficial acquaintance. Hebrew he did not understand at all. Hence, with all his extraordinary familiarity with the Latin Bible, he made many mistakes in exposition. He was rather a thinker than a scholar, and depended mainly on his own resources, which were always abundant.

The numerous *writings* of Augustine, the composition of which extended through four and forty years, are a mine of Christian knowledge and experience. They abound in lofty ideas, noble sentiments, devout effusions, clear statements of truth, strong arguments against error, and passages of fervid eloquence and undying beauty; but also in innumerable repe-

titions, fanciful opinions and playful conjectures of his uncommonly fertile brain. His style is full of life and force, but not free from wearisome prolixity and from that *vagabunda loquacitas*, with which his adroit opponent, Julian of Eclanum, charged him. He would rather, as he said, be blamed by grammarians, than not understood by the people; and he bestowed little care upon his style, though he many a time rises in lofty poetic flight. He made no point of literary renown, but, impelled by love to God and to the Church, he wrote from the fulness of his mind and heart. The writings, before his conversion, a treatise on the Beautiful (*De Pulchro et Opto*), the orations and eulogies which he delivered, as rhetorician, at Carthage, Rome, and Milan, are lost. The professor of eloquence, the heathen philosopher, the Manichæan heretic, the sceptic and free-thinker, are known to us only from his regrets and recantations in the *Confessions* and other works. His literary career for us commences in his pious retreat, at Cassiciacum, where he prepared himself for a public profession of his faith. He appears first, in the works composed at Cassiciacum, Rome, and near Tagaste, as a Christian philosopher, after his consecration to the priesthood, as a theologian. Yet, even in his theological works, he everywhere manifests the metaphysical and speculative bent of his mind. He never abandoned or depreciated reason; he only subordinated it to faith, and made it subservient to the defence of revealed truth. Faith is the pioneer of reason, and discovers the territory which reason explores.

The following is a classified view of his most important works:

I. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL works. To these belong the *Confessions* and the *Retractations*; the former acknowledging his sins, the latter his theoretical errors. In the one he subjects his life, in the other his writings, to close criticism; and these productions, therefore, furnish the best standard for judging of his entire labors.

The *Confessions* are the most profitable, at least the most edifying, product of his pen; indeed, we may no doubt say, the

most edifying book in all the patristic literature. They were, accordingly, the most read even during his life-time, and they have been the most frequently published since. A more sincere and more earnest book was never written. The historical part, to the tenth book, is one of the devotional classics of all creeds, and second in popularity only to the "Imitation of Christ," by Thomas a Kempis, and Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." Certainly, no autobiography is superior to it in true humility, spiritual depth, and universal interest. Augustine's experience as a heathen sensualist, a Manichæan heretic, an anxious enquirer, a sincere penitent, and a grateful convert, is reflected in every human soul that struggles through the temptations of nature and the labyrinth of error, to the knowledge of truth and the beauty of holiness, and after many sighs and tears, finds rest and peace in the arms of a merciful Saviour. Rousseau's "Confessions" and Goethe's "Truth and Fiction," though written in a radically different spirit, may be compared with Augustine's Confessions, as works of rare genius and of absorbing interest; but by attempting to exalt human nature, in its unsanctified state, they tend as much to expose its vanity and weakness, as the work of the bishop of Hippo, being written with a single eye to the glory of God, raises man from the dust of repentance to a new and imperishable life of the Spirit.

Augustine composed the Confessions about the year 400. The first ten books contain, in the form of a continuous prayer and confession before God, a general sketch of his earlier life, of his conversion, and of his return to Africa in the thirty-fourth year of his age. The salient points in these books are the engaging history of his conversion in Milan, and the story of the last days of his noble mother in Ostia; she, as it were, at the very gate of heaven, and in full assurance of a blessed reunion at the throne of glory. The last three books (and a part of the tenth) are devoted to speculative philosophy; they treat, partly in tacit opposition to Manichæism, of the metaphysical questions of the possibility of knowing God, and the nature of time and space; and they give an interpretation of the Mosaic cosmogony in the style of the typical allegorical exegesis usual

with the fathers, but foreign to our age; they are, therefore, of little value to the general reader, except as showing that even abstract metaphysical subjects may be devotionally treated.

The Retractations were produced in the evening of his life (427), when, mindful of the proverb: "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin," and remembering that we must give account for every idle word, he judged himself, that he might not be judged. He revised, in chronological order, the numerous works he had written before and during his episcopate, and retracted or corrected whatever in them seemed to his riper knowledge false or obscure. In all essential points, nevertheless, his theological system remained the same from his conversion to this time. The Retractions give beautiful evidence of his love of truth, his conscientiousness, and his humility.

To this same class should be added the Letters of Augustine, of which the Benedictine editors, in their second volume, give two hundred and seventy (including letters to Augustine) in chronological order from A. D. 386 to A. D. 429. These letters treat, sometimes very minutely, of all the important questions of his time, and give us an insight of his cares, his official fidelity, his large heart, and his effort to become, like Paul, all things to all men.

When the questions of friends and pupils accumulated, he answered them in special works; and in this way he produced various collections of *Quæstiones* and *Responsiones*, dogmatical, exegetical, and miscellaneous (A. D. 390, 397, &c).

II. PHILOSOPHICAL treatises, in dialogue; almost all composed in his earlier life; either during his residence at the country-seat Cassiciacum, in the vicinity of Milan, where he spent half a year before his baptism in instructive and stimulating conversation, in a sort of academy, with Monica, his son, and Adeodatus, his brother Navigius, his friend Alypius, and some cousins and pupils; or during his second residence in Rome, or soon after his return to Africa.

To this class belong the works: *Contra Academicos libri tres* (386), in which he combats the skepticism and probabilism of the New Academy,—the doctrine that man can never reach the

truth, but can at best attain only probability; *De vita beata* (386), in which he makes true blessedness to consist in the perfect knowledge of God; *De ordine*,—on the relation of evil to the divine order of the world (386); *Soliloquia* (387), communings with his own soul concerning God, the highest good, the knowledge of truth, and immortality; *De immortalitate animæ* (387), a continuation of the *Soliloquia*; *De quantitate animæ* (387), discussing sundry questions of the size, the origin, the incorporeity of the soul; *De musica libri vi* (387–389); *De magistro* (389), in which, in a dialogue with his son Adeodatus, a pious and promising, but precocious youth, who died soon after his return to Africa (389), he treats on the importance and virtue of the word of God, and on Christ, as the infallible Master. To these may be added the later work, *De anima et ejus origine* (419). Other philosophical works on grammar, dialectics (or *ars bene disputandi*), rhetoric, geometry, and arithmetic, are lost.

These works exhibit as yet little that is specially Christian and churchly; but they show a Platonism seized and consecrated by the spirit of Christianity, full of high thoughts, ideal views, and discriminating argument. They were designed to present the different stages of human thought, by which he himself had reached the knowledge of the truth, and to serve others as steps to the sanctuary. They form an elementary introduction to his theology. He afterwards, in his *Retractions*, withdrew many things contained in them, like the Platonic view of the pre-existence of the soul, and the Platonic idea that the acquisition of knowledge is a recollection or excavation of the knowledge hidden in the mind. The philosopher in him afterwards yielded more and more to the theologian, and his views became more positive and empirical, though in some cases narrower also and more confined. Yet he could never cease to philosophize, and even his later works, especially *De Trinitate* and *De Civitate Dei*, are full of profound speculations. Before his conversion he followed a particular system of philosophy, first the Manichæan, then the Platonic; after his conversion he embraced the christian philosophy which is based on the Divine

revelation of the Scriptures, and is the hand-maid of theology and religion; but at the same time he prepared the way for the Catholic ecclesiastical philosophy which rests on the authority of the church, and became complete in the scholasticism of the middle age.

In the history of philosophy he deserves a place in the highest rank, and has done greater service to the science of sciences than any other father, Clement of Alexandria and Origen not excepted. He attacked and refuted the pagan philosophy as pantheistic or dualistic at heart; he shook the superstitions of astrology and magic; he expelled from philosophy the doctrine of emanation, and the idea that God is the soul of the world; he substantially advanced psychology; he solved the question of the origin and the nature of evil more nearly than any of his predecessors, and as nearly as most of his successors; he was the first to investigate thoroughly the relation of divine omnipotence and omniscience to human freedom, and to construct a theodicy; in short, he is properly the founder of a Christian philosophy, and not only divided with Aristotle the empire of the mediæval scholasticism, but furnished also living germs for new systems of philosophy, and will always be consulted in the speculative establishment of Christian doctrines.

III. APOLOGETIC works against Pagans and Jews. Among these the twenty-two books, *De Civitate Dei*, are still well worth reading. They form the deepest and richest apologetic work of antiquity; begun in 413 after the occupation of Rome by the Gothic king Alaric, finished in 426, and often separately published. They condense his entire theory of the world and of man, and are the first attempt at a comprehensive philosophy of universal history under the dualistic view of two antagonistic currents or organized forces, a kingdom of this world is doomed to final destruction, and a kingdom of God which will last forever.

IV. RELIGIOUS-THEOLOGICAL works of a general nature (in part anti-Manichæan): *De utilitate credendi*, against the

Gnostic exaltation of knowledge (392); *De fide et symbolo*, a discourse which, though only presbyter, he delivered on the Apostles' Creed before the council at Hippo at the request of the bishops in 393; *De doctrina Christiana* iv libri (297; the fourth book added in 426), a compend of exegetical theology for instruction in the interpretation of the Scriptures according to the analogy of the faith; *De catechizandis rudibus*, likewise for catechetical purposes (400); *Enchiridion*, or *De fide, spe et caritate*, a brief compend of the doctrine of faith and morals, which he wrote in 421, or later, at the request of Laurentius; hence also called *Manuale ad Laurentium*.

V. POLEMIC-THEOLOGICAL works. These are the most copious sources of the history of doctrine. The heresies collectively are reviewed in the book *De hæresibus ad Quodvultdeum*, written between 428 and 430 to a friend and deacon in Carthage, and giving a survey of eighty-eight heresies, from the Simonians to the Pelagians. In the work *De vera religione* (390) Augustine proposed to show that the true religion is to be found not with the heretics and schismatics, but only in the catholic church of that time.

The other controversial works are directed against the particular heresies of Manichæism, Donatism, Arianism, Pelagianism, and Semi-Pelagianism. Augustine, with all the firmness of his convictions, was free from personal antipathy, and used the pen of controversy in the genuine Christian spirit, *fortiter in re, suaviter in modo*. He understood Paul's ἀλλοθρέβειν ἐν ἀγάπῃ, and forms in this respect a pleasing contrast to Jerome, who probably had by nature no more fiery temperament, than he, but was less able to control it. "Let those," he very beautifully says to the Manichæans, "burn with hatred against you, who do not know how much pains it costs to find the truth, how hard it is to guard against error;—but I who after so great and long wavering came to know the truth, must bear myself towards you with the same patience which my fellow-believers showed towards me while I was wandering in blind madness in your opinions."

1. The ANTI-MANICHÆAN works date mostly from his earlier life, and in time and matter follow immediately upon his philosophical writings. In them he afterwards found most to retract, because he advocated the freedom of the will against the Manichæan fatalism. The most important are: *De moribus ecclesiæ catholicæ, et de moribus Manichæorum*, two books (written during his second residence in Rome, 388): *De vera religione* (390); *Unde malum, et de libero arbitrio*, usually simply *De libero arbitrio*, in three books, against the Manichæan doctrine of evil as a substance, and as having its seat in matter instead of free will (begun in 388, finished in 395); *De Genesi contra Manichæos*, a defence of the biblical doctrine of creation (389); *De duabus animabus*.

These works treat of the origin of evil; of free will; of the harmony of the Old and New Testaments, and of revelation and nature; of creation out of nothing, in opposition to dualism and hylozoism; of the supremacy of faith over knowledge; of the authority of the Scriptures and the Church; of the true and the false asceticism, and other disputed points; and they are the chief source of our knowledge of the Manichæan Gnosticism, and of the arguments against it. Having himself belonged for nine years to this sect, Augustine was the better fitted for the task of refuting it, as Paul was peculiarly prepared for the confutation of the Pharisee Judaism. His doctrine of the nature of evil is particularly valuable. He has triumphantly demonstrated for all time, that evil is not a corporeal thing, nor in any way substantial, but a product of the free will of the creature, a perversion of substance in itself good, a corruption of the nature created by God.

2. Against the PRISCILLIANISTS, a sect in Spain built on Manichæan principles, are directed the book *Ad Paulum Orosium contra Priscillianistas et Origenistas* (411); the book *Contra mendacium*, addressed to Consentius (420); and in part the 190th Epistle (alias Ep. 157), to the bishop Optatus, on the origin of the soul (418), and two other letters, in which he refutes erroneous views on the nature of the soul, the limitation of

future punishments, and the lawfulness of fraud for supposed good purposes.

3. The ANTI-DONATISTIC works, composed between the years 393 and 420, argue against separatism, and contain Augustine's doctrine of the church and church-discipline, and of the sacraments. To these belong: *Psalmus contra partem Donati* (A. D. 393), a polemic popular song without regular metre, intended to offset the songs of the Donatists; *Contra epistolam Parmeniani*, written in 400 against the Carthaginian bishop of the Donatists, the successor of Donatus; *De baptismo contra Donatistas*, in favor of the validity of heretical baptism (400); *Contra literas Petiliani* (about 400), against the view of Cyprian and the Donatists, that the efficacy of the sacraments depends on the personal worthiness and the ecclesiastical status of the officiating priest; *Ad Catholicos Epistola contra Donatistas, vulgo De unitate ecclesiæ* (402); *Contra Cresconium grammaticum Donatistam* (406); *Breviculus collationis cum Donatistis*, a short account of the three-days' religious conference with the Donatists (411); *De correctione Donatistarum* (417); *Contra Gaudentium, Donat. Episcopum*, the last anti-Donatistic work (420).

4. The ANTI-ARIAN works have to do with the deity of Christ and of the Holy Ghost, and with the Holy Trinity. By far the most important of these are the fifteen books *De trinitate* (400–416);—the most profound and discriminating production of the ancient church on the Trinity, in no respect inferior to the kindred works of Athanasius and the two Gregories, and for centuries final to the dogma. This may also be counted among the positive didactic works, for it is not directly controversial. The *Collatio cum Maximino Ariano*, an obscure babbling, belongs to the year 428.

5. The numerous ANTI-PELAGIAN works of Augustine are his most influential and most valuable. They were written between the years 412 and 429. In them Augustine, in his intellectual and spiritual prime, develops his system of anthropology and soteriology, and most nearly approaches the position of evangelical Protestantism: On the Guilt and the Remission of Sins,

and Infant Baptism (412); On the Spirit and the Letter (413); On Nature and Grace (415); On the Acts of Pelagius (417); On the Grace of Christ, and Original Sin (418); On Marriage and Concupiscence (419); On Grace and Free Will (426); On Discipline and Grace (427); Against Julian of Eclanum (two large works, written between 421 and 429, the second unfinished, and hence called *Opus imperfectum*); On the Predestination of the Saints (428); On the Gift of Perseverance (429); &c.

VI. EXEGETICAL works. The best of these are: *De Genesi ad literam* (The Genesis word for word), in twelve books, an extended exposition of the first three chapters of Genesis, particularly the history of the Creation literally interpreted, though with many mystical and allegorical interpretations also (written between 401 and 415); *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (mostly sermons); the hundred and twenty-four Homilies on the Gospel of John (416 and 417); the ten Homilies on the First Epistle of John (417); the Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount (393); the Harmony of the Gospels (*De consensu evangelistarum*, 400); the Epistle to the Galatians (394); and the unfinished commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.

Augustine deals more in lively, profound, and edifying thoughts on the Scriptures than in proper grammatical and historical exposition, for which neither he nor his readers had the necessary linguistic knowledge, disposition, or taste. He grounded his theology less upon exegesis than upon his Christian and churchly mind, saturated with Scriptural truths.

VII. ETHICAL or PRACTICAL and ASCETIC works. Among these belong three hundred and ninety-six Sermones (mostly very short) *de Scripturis* (on texts of Scripture), *de tempore* (festival sermons), *de sanctis* (in memory of apostles, martyrs, and saints), and *de diversis* (on various occasions), some of them dictated by Augustine, some taken down by hearers. Also various moral treatises: *De continentia* (395); *De mendacio* (395), against deception (not to be confounded with the similar work already mentioned, *Contra mendacium*, against the fraud-

theory of the Priscillianists, written in 420); De agone Christiano (396); De opere monachorum, against monastic idleness (400); De bono conjugali adv. Jovinianum (400); De virginitate (401); De fide et operibus (413); De adulterinis conjugis, on 1 Cor. vii. 10 sqq. (419); De bono viduitatis (418); De patientia (418); De cura pro mortuis gerenda, to Paulinus of Nola (421); De utilitate jejunii; De diligendo Deo; Meditations; etc.

As we survey this enormous literary labor, augmented by many other treatises and letters now lost, and as we consider his episcopal labors, his many journeys, and his adjudications of controversies among the faithful, which often robbed him of whole days, we must be really astounded at the fidelity, exuberance, energy, and perseverance of this father of the Church. Surely, such a life was worth the living.

The *influence* of Augustine and his theology upon posterity is almost beyond calculation, and far surpasses that of any other father, Greek or Latin. It extends alike over Catholicism and Protestantism, the middle ages and modern times. Upon the Greek church alone has he exercised little or no influence; for this church stopped with the undeveloped synergistic anthropology of the previous age. "Augustine," says Dr. Huber, (in his instructive work: *Die Philosophie der Kirchenväter*, Munich, 1859, p. 312 sq.), "is a unique phenomenon in Christian history. No one of the other fathers has left so luminous traces of his existence. Though we find among them many rich and powerful minds, yet we find in none the forces of personal character, mind, heart, and will so largely developed and so harmoniously working. No one surpasses him in wealth of perception and dialectical sharpness of thoughts, in depth and fervor of religious sensibility, in greatness of aims and energy of action. He therefore also marks the culmination of the patristic age, and has been elevated by the acknowledgment of succeeding times as the first and the universal church father.—His whole character reminds us in many respects of Paul, with whom he has also in common the experience of being called from manifold

errors to the service of the gospel, and like whom he could boast that he had labored in it more abundantly than all the others. And as Paul among the Apostles pre-eminently determined the development of Christianity, and became, more than all others, the expression of the Christian mind, to which men ever afterwards return, as often as in the life of the Church that mind becomes turbid, to draw from him, as the purest fountain, a fresh understanding of the Bible doctrine,—so has Augustine turned the Christian nations since his time for the most part into his paths, and become pre-eminently their trainer and teacher, in the study of whom they always gain a renewal and deepening of their Christian consciousness. Not the middle age alone, but the Reformation also was ruled by him; and whatever to this day boasts of the Christian spirit, is connected at least in part with Augustine.”

It betrays a very contracted, slavish, and mechanical view of history, when Roman Catholic divines claim the fathers as their exclusive property, forgetting that they taught a great many things which are as inconsistent with the papal as with the Protestant Creed. “I recollect well,” says Dr. Newman, the former intellectual leader of Oxford Tractarianism (in his Letter to Dr. Pusey on his *Eirenicon*, 1866, p. 5), “what an outcast I seemed to myself, when I took down from the shelves of my library the volumes of St. Athanasius or St. Basil, and set myself to study them; and how, on the contrary, when at length I was brought into Catholic communion, I kissed them with delight, with a feeling that in them I had more than all that I had lost, and, as though I were directly addressing the glorious saints, who bequeathed them to the Church, I said to the inanimate pages, ‘You are now mine, and I am yours, beyond any mistake.’” With the same right the Jews might lay exclusive claim to the writings of Moses and the prophets. The fathers were living men, representing the onward progress and conflicts of Christianity at their time, unfolding and defending great truths, but not unmixed with many errors and imperfections which subsequent times have corrected. Those are the true children of the fathers who, standing on the foundation of Christ and the apos-

bles, and kissing the New Testament rather than any human writings, follow them only as far as they followed Christ, and who carry forward their work in the onward march of true catholic Christianity.

1. Augustine, in the first place, contributed much to the development of the doctrinal basis which Catholicism and Protestantism hold *in common* against such radical heresies of antiquity as Manichæism, Arianism, and Pelagianism. In all these great intellectual conflicts he was in general the champion of the cause of Christian truth against dangerous errors. Through his influence the canon of Holy Scripture (including, indeed, the Old Testament Apocrypha) was fixed in its present form by the councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397). He conquered the Manichæan dualism, hylozoism, and fatalism, and saved the biblical idea of God and of creation, and the biblical doctrine of the nature of sin and its origin in the free will of man. He developed the Nicene dogma of the Trinity, completed it by the doctrine of the double procession of the Holy Ghost, and gave it the form in which it has ever since prevailed in the West, and in which it received classical expression from his school in the Athanasian Creed. In Christology, on the contrary, he added nothing, and he died shortly before the great Christological conflicts opened, which reached their ecumenical settlement at the council of Chalcedon, twenty years after his death. Yet he anticipated Leo in giving currency in the West to the important formula: "Two natures in one person."

2. Augustine is also substantially the theological creator of the *Latin-Catholic* system as distinct from the Greek Catholicism on the one hand, and from evangelical Protestantism on the other. He ruled the entire theology of the middle age, and became the father of scholasticism in virtue of his dialectic mind, and the father of mysticism by his glowing heart, without being responsible for the excesses of either system. For scholasticism thought to comprehend the divine with the understanding, and lost itself at last in empty dialectics; and mysticism endeavored to grasp the divine with feeling, and easily strayed into misty sentimentalism; Augustine sought to apprehend the divine with the united power of mind and heart, of bold

thought and humble faith. Anselm, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventura are his nearest of kin in this respect. Even now, since the Catholic Church has become a Roman church, he enjoys greater consideration in it than Ambrose, Hilary, Jerome, or Gregory the Great. All this cannot possibly be explained without an interior affinity.

His very conversion, in which, besides the Scriptures, the personal intercourse of the hierarchical Ambrose and the life of the ascetic Anthony had great influence, was a transition not from heathenism to Christianity (for he was already a Manichæan Christian), but from heresy to the historical, episcopally organized church, as, for the time, the sole authorized vehicle of the apostolic Christianity in conflict with those sects and parties which more or less assailed the foundations of the gospel. It was, indeed, a full and unconditional surrender of his mind and heart to God, but it was at the same time a submission of his private judgment to the authority of the church which led him to the faith of the gospel. In the same spirit he embraced the ascetic life, without which, according to the catholic principle, no high religion is possible. He did not, indeed, enter a cloister, like Luther, whose conversion in Erfurt was likewise essentially catholic, but he lived in his house in the simplicity of a monk, and made and kept the vow of voluntary poverty and celibacy.

He adopted Cyprian's doctrine of the Church, and completed it in the conflict with Donatism by transferring the predicates of unity, holiness, universality, exclusiveness, and maternity directly to the actual church of the time, which, with a firm episcopal organization, an unbroken succession, and the Apostles' Creed, triumphantly withstood the eighty or the hundred opposing sects in the heretical catalogue of the day, and had its visible centre in Rome. In this church he had found rescue from the shipwreck of his life, the home of true Christianity, firm ground for his thinking, satisfaction for his heart, and a commensurate field for the wide range of his powers. The predicate of infallibility alone he does not plainly bring forward; he assumes a progressive correction of earlier counsels by later;

and in the Pelagian controversy he asserts the same independence towards pope Zosimus, which Cyprian before him had shown towards pope Stephen in the controversy on heretical baptism, with the advantage of having the right on his side, so that Zosimus found himself compelled to yield to the African Church.

He was the first to give a clear and fixed definition of the sacrament, as a visible sign of invisible grace, resting on divine appointment; but he knows nothing of the number seven; this was a much later enactment. In the doctrine of baptism he is entirely catholic, though in logical contradiction with his dogma of predestination; but in the doctrine of the holy communion he stands, like his predecessors, Tertullian and Cyprian, nearer to the Calvinistic theory. He also contributed to promote, at least in his later writings, the catholic faith of miracles and the worship of Mary; though he exempts the Virgin only from actual sin, not from original, and, with all his reverence for her, never calls her mother of God.

At first an advocate of religious liberty and of purely spiritual methods of opposing error, he afterwards asserted the fatal principle of the *coge intrare*, and lent the great weight of his authority to the system of civil persecution, at the bloody fruits of which, in the middle age, he himself would have shuddered; for he was always at heart a man of love and gentleness, and personally acted on the glorious principle: "Nothing conquers but truth, and the victory of truth is love."

Thus even truly great and good men have unintentionally, through mistaken zeal, become the authors of much mischief.

3. But, on the other hand, Augustine is, of all the fathers, nearest to *evangelical Protestantism*, and may be called, in respect of his doctrine of sin and grace, the first forerunner of the Reformation. The Lutheran and Reformed Churches have ever conceded to him, without scruple, the cognomen of Saint, and claimed him among the most enlightened witnesses of the truth and most striking examples of the marvellous power of divine grace in the transformation of a sinner. It is worthy of mark, that his Pauline doctrines, which are most nearly akin to Pro-

testantism, are the later and more mature parts of his system, and that just these found great acceptance with the laity. The Pelagian controversy, in which he developed his anthropology, marks the culmination of his theological and ecclesiastical career, and his latest writings were directed against the Pelagian Julian and the semi-Pelagians in Gaul, who were brought to his notice by the two friendly laymen, Prosper and Hilary. These anti-Pelagian works have wrought mightily, it is most true, upon the Catholic Church, and have held in check the Pelagianizing tendencies of the hierarchical and monastic system, but they have never passed into blood and marrow. They waited for a favorable future, and nourished in silence an opposition to the prevailing system.

Even in the middle age the better sects, which attempted to simplify, purify, and spiritualize the reigning Christianity by return to the Holy Scriptures, and the reformers before the Reformation, such as Wiclif, Huss, and Wessel, resorted most, after the apostle Paul, to the bishop of Hippo, as the representative of the doctrines of free grace.

The Reformers were led by his writings into a deeper understanding of Paul, and so prepared for their great vocation. No church teacher did so much to mould Luther and Calvin; none furnished them so powerful weapons against the dominant Pelagianism and formalism; none is so often quoted by them with esteem and love.

All the Reformers in the outset, Melanchthon and Zwingli among them, adopted his denial of free will and his doctrine of predestination, and sometimes even went beyond him into the abyss of supralapsarianism, to cut out the last roots of human merit and boasting. In this point Augustine holds the same relation to the Catholic Church, as Luther to the Lutheran; that is, he is a heretic of unimpeachable authority, who is more admired than censured even in his extravagances; yet his doctrine of predestination was *indirectly* condemned by the pope in Jansenism, as Luther's view was rejected as Calvinism by the Form of Concord. For Jansenism was nothing but a revival of Augustinianism in the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church.

The excess of Augustine and the Reformers, in this direction, is due to the earnestness and energy of their sense of sin and grace. The Pelagian looseness could never beget a reformer. It was only the unshaken conviction of man's own inability, of unconditional dependence on God, and of the almighty power of His grace to give us strength for every good work, which could do this. He who would give others the conviction that he has a divine vocation for the Church and for mankind, must himself be penetrated with the faith of an eternal, unalterable decree of God, and must cling to it in the darkest hours.

In great men, and only in great men, great opposites and, apparently, antagonistic truths live together. Small minds cannot hold them. The catholic, churchly, sacramental, and sacerdotal system stands in conflict with the evangelical Protestant Christianity of subjective, personal experience. The doctrine of universal baptismal regeneration, in particular, which pre-supposes a universal call (at least within the Church), can on principles of logic hardly be united with the doctrine of an absolute predestination, which limits the decree of redemption to a portion of the baptized. Augustine supposes, on the one hand, that every baptized person, through the inward operation of the Holy Ghost, which accompanies the outward act of the sacrament, receives the forgiveness of sins, and is translated from the state of nature into the state of grace, and thus, *qua baptizatus*, is also a child of God and an heir of eternal life; and yet, on the other hand, he makes all these benefits dependent on the absolute will of God, who saves only a certain number out of the "mass of perdition," and preserves these to the end. Regeneration and election, with him, do not, as with Calvin, coincide. The former may exist without the latter, but the latter cannot exist without the former. Augustine assumes that many are actually born into the kingdom of grace only to perish again; Calvin holds that, in the case of the non-elect, baptism is an unmeaning ceremony; the one putting the delusion in the inward effect, the other in the outward form. The sacramental, churchly system throws the main stress upon the baptismal regeneration to the injury of the eter-

nal election; the Calvinistic and Puritan system sacrifices the virtue of the sacrament to the election; the Lutheran and Anglican system seeks a middle ground, without being able to give a satisfactory theological solution of the problem. The Anglican Church allows the two opposite views, and sanctions the one in the baptismal service of the Book of Common Prayer, the other in her Thirty-nine Articles, which are moderately Calvinistic.

It was an evident ordering of God, that the Augustinian system, like the Latin Bible of Jerome, appeared just in that transitional period of history, in which the old civilization was passing away before the flood of barbarism, and a new order of things, under the guidance of the Christian religion, was in preparation. The Church, with her strong, imposing organization and her firm system of doctrine, must save Christianity amidst the chaotic turmoil of the great migration, and must become a training-school for the barbarian nations of the middle age.

In this process of training, next to the Holy Scriptures, the scholarship of Jerome and the theology and fertile ideas of Augustine were the most important intellectual agent.

Augustine was held in so universal esteem, that he could exert influence in all directions, and even in his excesses gave no offence. He was sufficiently catholic for the principle of Church authority, and yet at the same time so free and evangelical, that he modified its hierarchical and sacramental character, re-acted against its tendencies to outward, mechanical, ritualism, and kept alive a deep consciousness of sin and grace, and a spirit of fervent and truly Christian piety, until that spirit grew strong enough to break the shell of hierarchical tutelage, and enter a new stage of its development. No other father could have acted more beneficently on the Catholicism of the middle age, and more successfully provided for the evangelical Reformation than St. Augustine, the worthy successor of Paul, and the precursor of Luther and Calvin.

Had he lived at the time of the Reformation, he would, in all probability, have taken the lead of the evangelical movement.

against the prevailing Pelagianism of the Roman Church. For we must not forget that, notwithstanding their strong affinity there is an important difference between Catholicism and Romanism or Popery. They sustain a similar relation to each other as the Judaism of the Old Testament dispensation which looked, and prepared the way for Christianity, and the Judaism after the crucifixion, and after the destruction of Jerusalem which is antagonistic to Christianity. Catholicism covers the entire ancient and mediæval history of the Church, and includes the Pauline, Augustinian or evangelical tendencies, which increased with the corruptions of the papacy and the growing sense of the necessity of a reformation *in capite et membris*. Romanism proper dates from the Council of Trent, which gave it symbolical expression and anathematized the doctrines of the Reformation. Catholicism is the strength of Romanism, Romanism is the weakness of Catholicism. Catholicism produced Jansenism, popery condemned it. Popery never forgets and never learns anything, and can allow no change in doctrine, without sacrificing the fundamental principle of infallibility, and thus committing suicide. But Catholicism may, ultimately, burst the chains of popery, which have so long kept it confined, and may assume new life and vigor.

Such a personage as Augustine, still holding a mediating place between the two great divisions of Christendom, revered alike by both, and of equal influence with both, is, furthermore, a welcome pledge of the elevating prospect of a future reconciliation of Catholicism and Protestantism in a higher unity, conserving all the truths, losing all the errors, forgiving all the sins, forgetting all the enmities of both. After all, the contradiction between authority and freedom, the objective and the subjective, the churchly and the personal, the organic and the individual, the sacramental and the experimental in religion, is not absolute, but relative and temporary, arising not so much from the nature of things, as from the deficiencies of man's knowledge and piety in the present order of things. They admit of an ultimate harmony in the perfect state of the Church, corresponding to the union of the divine and human natures

which transcends the limits of finite thought and logical comprehension, and yet is completely realized in the person of Christ. They are, in fact, united in the theological system of St. Paul, who had the highest view of the Church as the "body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all," and who was at the same time the chief champion of evangelical freedom and personal responsibility. WE BELIEVE IN AND HOPE FOR ONE HOLY CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH, ONE COMMUNION OF SAINTS, ONE FOLD AND ONE SHEPHERD. The more the different Churches become truly Christian, or draw nearer to Christ, and the more they give real effect to His kingdom, the nearer will they come to one another. For Christ is the common head and vital centre of all believers, and the divine harmony of all discordant human creeds. IN CHRIST, says Pascal, one of the greatest and noblest disciples of Augustine, IN CHRIST ALL CONTRADICTIONS ARE SOLVED.\*

\* **MERCERSBURG THEOLOGY**, so called, has aimed from the beginning to harmonize, from the christological centre, the principle of authority and the principle of freedom, the objective and the subjective, the Catholic and the Evangelical elements of Christianity. *Evangelical Catholicism* was, and is still, its motto. It stands as much opposed to Romanism and Romanizing tendencies, as to radical, unchurchly Protestantism. It strongly defended, at the very beginning of its course, and still maintains the fundamental principle of Protestantism concerning the absolute supremacy of the Bible in matters of faith and practice, and the justification of the sinner by free grace through faith in Christ. It has, moreover, always taught the great law of historical development and steady progress. But, to Romanize is to go backward, to turn the stream up hill, to stultify the history of the last three hundred years, and to give the lie to the Saviour's promise of an unbroken presence with his disciples to the end of time—a promise which is as gloriously and palpably fulfilled in the history of Protestant Churches, as in the palmiest ages of Catholicism, not excluding the age of martyrs and confessors. Holland, alone, has furnished more martyrs, under the terrible reign of Alba, to the Reformed faith, than the whole Christian Church during the second and third centuries. Protestant Germany, alone, has sung more hymns of praise to Christ, than the entire Latin and Greek Churches. The British and American Bible Society, alone, circulate more copies of the Scriptures in one year, than were propagated in fifteen centuries before the Reformation. The free Church of Scotland, or Puritan New England, alone, contribute more money, annually, for the spread of the Gospel, and for Christian education and benevolence, at home and abroad, than the whole of Southern Europe and South America, or the vast Russian empire. It betrays ignorance or prejudice, or theological dyspepsia, to deny or to be insensible to these stubborn facts. "By their fruits ye shall know them." As long as Christ is with Protestantism, it matters very little who is against it.

"He, and no other one,  
Shall conquer in the battle."