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AUGUSTINE'S DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN
IN TWO ANTI-PELAGIAN WRITINGS

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Historical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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CHAPTER I

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Discussion of an ecclesiastical doctrine which opposes modern progressive aspirations has definite relevance to a world that has inherited and still preaches moral positivism. In the nineteenth century the Western mind propounded a positive outlook toward life through the idea of progress in the world. This progressive positivism filtered into nearly every rational discipline of the day. Historians spoke of a culmination of events in men's lives in the political achievements of their day. Scientists propounded a theory of evolutionary development in the universe that culminated in man. Philosophers developed various types of positivism and renewed their own versions of Renaissance humanism. Some Protestant theologians saw progress in morality despite contrary evidence from history and from the contemporary scene. This progressive positivism seeped into the twentieth century through the many fields that it had influenced in the previous decades and culminated in theories about scientific progress. Despite the later conflicts between nations the First World War was to be the "war to end all wars." The political conflicts of the modern world have not dealt death blows to the positive hope in science. Realists and cynics arise, but the policies of government and the hopes of scholars frequently rest in the natural attainments of man.

The contrary evidence to this optimistic outlook is echoed in the writings of some literary figures of the day, but to the Christian the most convincing material is contained in Scripture and in the writings

of men who explicated these works. In the light of Scriptural testimony man stands as a creature condemned by the effects of sin and as a contributor to the human plight. Such negative air reflects the effects of the Law in the lives of men, but within Scripture also is the declaration of the mercy of a forgiving God in Christ. The sin inherited by man and accentuated in personal action is individually forgiven for the man who has faith in Christ, who died to reconcile all men with God. The relevancy of this thesis thus lies in the fact that the sin inherited from Adam continues to hold sway in the modern world.

In order to understand the early Church's concept of original sin the scholar must delve into the evidence from ancient ecclesiastical history. Primary to any understanding are the theological works of the day. Within the early fifth century definite statements concerning original sin and its effects were formulated by leaders within the church. These pronouncements came as a result of the activities of heretical individuals who had questioned the Scriptural teaching about sin. Through their own search in the writings of earlier churchmen and of Scripture these rebels claimed that man was born without sin. From the same Fathers' writings and from additional writings Augustine drew evidence to explicate the teachings about original sin. He endeavored to refute the erroneous contentions of the Pelagians, as these heretical theologians were known, and to provide additional information from the Church Fathers to clarify his own explanations. During the Pelagian controversy Augustine wrote a number of works that provide bases for an understanding of his doctrine of original sin and of his methodology in appealing to the earlier Church Fathers. With this wealth of material

available from Augustine and other Church Fathers this study could not adequately review the theology in every work. Thus the thesis will concentrate on two of Augustine's writings: (1) Contra Julianum Pelagianum, in which he refutes the Pelagian bishop Julian, who had denied original sin; (2) De Peccato Originali, in which Augustine amplifies his position on this important teaching. The purposes in studying these particular works are, first of all, to ascertain the main features of Augustine's doctrine of original sin and, secondly, to study Augustine's use of the early Church Fathers in support of this doctrine.

Within the course of the study allusions are made to other Augustinian works, but the two works serve as the primary sources for the investigation. Only the aspects of his theology of original sin that are covered in these works thus receive primary consideration. The Church Fathers are discussed generally in terms of the following: their place in church history; the purpose of some of their writings; and their influence on Augustine's teaching on original sin. Another aspect of the scope of this study includes consultation of writings that Augustine did not specifically discuss in Contra Julianum and in De Peccato Originali but that would shed light on the teaching of original sin.

The study is limited, therefore, to Augustine's understanding of original sin in Contra Julianum and De Peccato Originali. A systematic analysis of the doctrine of original sin in the light of Augustine's theology falls outside the limits of this paper. Also the total theological systems of the various Church Fathers considered are not discussed, but only material considered pertinent to this thesis from the works

studied is included. References to Augustine's statements about original sin are limited to those that are considered to have direct significance to his understanding of the doctrine of original sin in the light of the Church Fathers. Research and development of the subject thus centers in the sections of both primary and secondary sources which deal directly with the topic.

When Augustine's doctrine of original sin is considered, the following question must be asked: what was Augustine's teaching on original sin in the light of the writings of the Church Fathers? Augustine accepted the sinfulness of man and saw redemption from original sin in Christ. Augustine could legitimately point to references in the Church Fathers, who taught certain aspects of the Biblical doctrine of original sin. The study begins with a consideration of Augustine's doctrine of original sin in Contra Julianum and De Peccato Originali, then moves into the writings of pertinent Western Fathers, and concludes with a discussion of the Eastern Fathers' emphases. The assumption is that varied aspects of the doctrine of original sin appeared in the writings of Church Fathers prior to Augustine but that the doctrine received more detailed and permanent form in the writings of Augustine. In other words, the teaching received definite shape and fulness of content in the systematization of Augustine's comprehensive mind.

CHAPTER II

ACCENT OF AUGUSTINE

Introduction

During Augustine's lifetime the church concerned itself with Manicheism, Donatism, and Pelagianism. When Augustine entered into the Pelagian controversy in the latter portion of his life, he introduced the major accents of his teaching on original sin. Thus the Pelagian controversy gave rise to Augustine's important writings about original sin. Several councils during the early portion of the fifth century in which Pelagius' views were both accepted and rejected eventually led to Innocent's condemnation of Pelagius and Celestius on January 27, 417.¹ Zosimus, the successor to Innocent I, seemed to some of his contemporaries rather lenient toward the Pelagian group.² In May, 418, this bishop, however, issued Epistola Tractoria, an anti-Pelagian document that eighteen Italian bishops³ under the leadership of Julian, Bishop of Eclanum, refused to sign. Julian, who was excommunicated as a result of his position, later accused Zosimus of prevarication because the Roman bishop did not continue his leniency toward Celestius, who had promised to correct his unacceptable

¹Augustine, "Against Julian," The Fathers of the Church, edited by Roy Joseph Deferrari, translated by M. A. Schumacher (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1957), XXXV, xi.

²Roy W. Battenhouse, A Companion to the study of St. Augustine (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 205.

³Augustine, "Against Julian," edited by Deferrari, xi.

statements.

Augustine inaugurated a controversy with Bishop Julian through the publication of De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia, which dealt with marriage in relation to concupiscence. Augustine answered the reply of Julian to De Nuptiis.⁵ The second answer of Julian to Augustine's publications resulted in Augustine's work, Contra Julianum Pelagianum.⁶ In this work Augustine defended his teachings, particularly his doctrine of original sin, against Julian's theology. Julian's teachings together with other Pelagian and semi-Pelagian tenets came under the condemnation of Augustine. In all of these treatises Augustine developed primarily the following teachings: original sin and the natural inability of man to do good; the grace and the merit of Christ; eternal election; faith and perseverance to the end of time; and marriage.⁷ In opposition to original sin and salvation by grace alone, the Pelagians denied inherited sin and thus overthrew the value of divine grace in Christ.

After the condemnation of Pelagianism in 418, Pinianus and Melania, a Christian couple who had resided in Rome and later left to enter the monastic life, requested Augustine to write a treatise on the doctrine of original sin. The work, De Peccato Originali, set forth Augustine's

⁴Augustine, "Contra Julianum Pelagianum," Opera (Bassano and Venice: Remondini, 1797), vol. XIII, book VI, ch. xii, par. 37. These designations according to book, chapter, and paragraph will apply to all other listings of this work and similar works that require the same listing; otherwise, the capitalized Roman numeral will indicate volume, and the uncapitalized Roman numeral will indicate the page in the preface or the introduction.

⁵Julian's work is not extant except in partial sections. See Augustine, "Against Julian," edited by Deferrari, p. 105.

⁶Augustine, "Against Julian," edited by Deferrari, xiii.

⁷Philip Schaff, Saint Chrysostom and Saint Augustin (London: James Nisbet and Company, 1891), p. 146.

position and simultaneously took another blow at the current heresy.⁸
 This work by Augustine has received acclaim as a thorough exposition of
 the church's position.⁹

To many theologians who did not accept the Christian teaching concerning original sin in Augustine's day the whole concept of the guilt of sin hinged upon the use or misuse of free will. If an individual, such as an infant, did not possess a rationally free will, the person was not really guilty of sin in the same sense that the rationally responsible individual was.

Reduced to its essential elements and as St. Augustine understood it, Pelagius' doctrine defines sin merely as the evil use of free choice. Sin lessens neither the liberty of free choice nor its natural goodness, nor, as a result, its ability to do good.¹⁰

Pelagius thus did not believe in the utter moral helplessness of man until regenerated by divine grace and considered the external assistance given by the Word as the only necessary aid in man's obtaining his own salvation. Augustine understood this Pelagian teaching to mean that Adam would have died even if he had not sinned. On this basis then all misfortune, such as disease and suffering, would have existed in the
 11
 Garden of Eden. To the Pelagian God's justice implied impartial judg-

⁸Augustine, "On the Grace of Christ and on Original Sin," Basic Writings of Saint Augustine, edited by Whitney J. Oates, translated by P. Holmes (New York: Random House, 1948), I, 582.

⁹Ibid., xxxvii-xxxviii.

¹⁰Etienne Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 158.

¹¹Augustine, "Against Julian," edited by Defarrari, xlii.

ment on responsible men who were capable of earning merit.¹² Augustine, in turn, endeavored to convince the Pelagians that the human will was free though impotent and impotent though free.¹³ Augustine, therefore, argued for the truth of original sin and of human insufficiency.¹⁴ Augustine did not wish to have his teachings identified with the heretical doctrine of Pelagius.¹⁵

Augustine brought into doctrinal focus Christianity's teaching concerning original sin. He explicitly taught the oneness of the human race in Adam and developed the results and responsibilities of this sin. He classified Pelagius and his follower, Celestius, as offenders against the teaching of original sin and saw their heresy chopping at the very roots of the Christian faith.¹⁶ Augustine developed his argument against the Pelagian follower, Bishop Julian, on the basis of five accusations that this excommunicated church leader had leveled against Augustine. Julian claimed that the anti-Pelagians propounded the following teachings: (1) the devil is the creator of men who are born; (2) marriage is to be condemned; (3) in baptism all sins are not forgiven; (4) God is unjust; (5) men cannot attain perfection at all. According to Augustine, Julian

¹²John Burnaby, editor and translator, "Augustine: Later Works," The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955), VIII, 183.

¹³Battenhouse, p. 219.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁵Augustine, "De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia," Opera (Bassano and Venice: Remondini, 1797), XII, cols. 375-376.

¹⁶Augustine, "On the Grace of Christ," edited by Oates, p. 620.

contended that these conclusions followed if one claimed that infants are bound by the first man's sin at birth and are, therefore, subject to the devil unless reborn in Christ.¹⁷ Though Augustine directed his attention to a refutation of these Julian theses, a systematic development of his teachings concerning original sin can be constructed on the basis of Contra Julianum with supplementary material from De Peccato Originali. Thus the discussion of Augustine's teaching of original sin on the basis of these two works begins with some general terms used both in this material and in other writings for "original sin" or related concepts. The study then progresses through the effect of original sin in a man's lifetime to a summary statement of the entire Augustinian doctrine.

Terminology

Augustine received a doctrinal heritage that did not contain one technical term for "original sin."¹⁸ Preceding and contemporary theologians had used various phrases or terms in alluding to man's relationship to Adam's sin and to the sin that arose from the heart. Cyprian in "Epistle 64" stated, "Secundum Adam carnaliter natus contagium mortis antiquae prima nativitate contraxit."¹⁹ Ambrose referred to the originis

¹⁷Augustine, "Contra Julianum," II, i, 2.

¹⁸Reginald Stewart Moxon, The Doctrine of Sin (New York: George H. Coran Company, 1922), p. 88.

¹⁹Ibid.

injuriam, and Celestius, who denied the doctrine, spoke of de traduce peccati, a technical phrase for expressing conveyance of original sin by birth.²⁰ Augustine frequently employed the term originale, "original," to describe peccatum, "sin." M. A. Schumacher, in his translation of Contra Julianum, states that "by the way of origin" or "by means of origin" is a better translation of originale than "original," since the Latin term seldom had the same meaning as the English word, "first."²¹ To the earlier Church Fathers peccatum generally implied actual sin, and thus some modern scholars feel that it is unfortunate that Augustine used this Latin term to explain the concept of moral disorder from birth.²² According to the Augustinian concept of peccatum one can distinguish two distinct elements: (1) vitium or macula, the transmitted spiritual disease or taint; (2) reatus, the responsibility or accountability of each person for his sin. Each man from his birth is subject both to vitium and to reatus. The presence of vitium is evident from concupiscentia, the evil desire of the sinful human being. In Augustine's theology reatus is extant because of a seminal identity with Adam. In Adam, mankind's ancestor, all people sinned and were thus partakers of the eternal penalty for that sin. Christ's redemption of

²⁰ Augustine, "De Peccato Originali," Opera (Bassano and Venice: Remondini, 1797), vol. XIII, lli, 3.

²¹ Augustine, "Against Julian," edited by Deferrari, p. 57.

²² Moxon, p. 87.

man and baptism, which brings this redemption to the individual, have delivered the sinner from the reatus of sin. An explanation of baptism's effect on vitium is not as simple, since concupiscence persists in the baptized person. Though concupiscentia remains, the guilt has been²³ abolished.

Parallel expressions from Augustine's theology have cast further light on his doctrine of original sin. Expressions such as massa perditionis, conspersio damnata, and omnes ad damnationem nascuntur further²⁴ explain this teaching.

Satan's Subjects

Augustine began with his explanation of sin in eternity and then proceeded to explain man's subjection to Satan after the fall into sin. The fallen angels were not descended from one angel who had sinned and had been condemned but rather had rebelled against God as a group.²⁵ Diabolical ruin came to the angelic commonwealth through Satan's rebellion and descended to man, who subjected himself and his descendants to sin. The original evil did not chain all angels, like men, to the inheritance

²³Oliver Chase Quick, "Original Sin and Baptism," Anglican Theological Review, XI (April 1929), 323-324.

²⁴Thomas Allin, The Augustinian Revolution in Theology (London: James Clarke and Company, 1911), p. 145.

²⁵Augustine, "Enchiridion de Fide, Spe et Caritate," Opera (Bassano and Venice: Remondini, 1797), vol. XI, xxxviii, 9.

of guilt and did not deliver them to merited punishments.²⁶ Sin, therefore, came from the devil, but this subjectivity to Satan and sin did not imply that mankind found its origin in Satan. That the origin of death was from Satan did not imply that the origin of mortals was through him.²⁷ God had created man, but the corruption of sin had only brought rebellion to the creature. Infants also are in this sinful kingdom at birth and thus are under Satan, who has brought man to death.²⁸

Sharers with Adam

The entire human race traces the origin of its sin against God to Adam.²⁹ Augustine emphasized the significance of Paul's words in Romans 5:12, which attribute the entrance of sin into the world to Adam and describe the consequences of this sin. Augustine alluded to the concepts of this passage frequently also in emphasizing the responsibility of all mankind in Adam's deed.³⁰ Adam laid on all his descendants the penalty of condemnation and death.³¹ The result, of course, was that

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Augustine, "Contra Julianum," III, xxiv, 55.

²⁸Ibid., VI, ix, 27.

²⁹Augustine, "De Diversis Quaestionibus ad Simplicianum," Opera (Bassano and Venice: Remondini, 1797), vol. XI, I, 16.

³⁰Augustine, "Contra Julianum," III, xxii, 51.

³¹Augustine, "Enchiridion de Fide, Spe, et Caritate," xxvi, 8.

all his descendants received the same curse given to him by God. Every human being was, therefore, an accessory in Adam's crime and equally guilty in the sight of God. "By one man sin entered into the world;" this "world," according to Augustine's exegesis, means the whole human race. In this man all people sinned and thus were recipients of the same sentence.

Generation and Regeneration

Augustine wrote extensively concerning the birth of man and the parentage from which he grew to set down explicitly the meaning of original sin. From this sinful origin man can be redeemed, and baptism brings Christ's redemption to the infant. Parents conceive and bear sinful babies, but the Lord has provided forgiveness of this sin through the washing of regeneration, baptism.

Generation

Julian had argued that Christian parents could not transmit sin to their children, since through the parents' redemption the children could not possess sin by origin.³² To repudiate the fallacious thesis Augustine at times went into much detail in explaining the ravages of lust upon the institution of marriage.³³ To explicate his doctrine of original sin from birth Augustine explained in detail his understanding of heathen and Christian marriage and of parental relationships to the child.

³²Augustine, "Contra Julianum," VI, vii, 18.

³³Battenhouse, p. 221.

Augustine would not allow another theologian to accuse him of denying the value of Christian marriage. Despite the presence of concupiscence, marriage remained praiseworthy to Augustine. Marriage and man as creations of God were good, but sin, of course, had corrupted this institution and the creatures who entered into this contract. Conjugal intercourse with the intent of having children was not sin, since this act used well the law of sin, that is, the concupiscence that existed in the members of the body. The act of begetting children made good use of the evil lust, and through this commendable use human beings, who were works of God, were born. The action, however, was not performed

³⁴Augustine, "Contra Julianum," VI, xxii, 69.

³⁵Ibid., III, xxii, 51.

³⁶Ibid., V, xvi, 59.

³⁷Roy W. Battenhouse explains that the marriage relationship provides Augustine both with the best proof of the impotence of the will and with the explanation of its hereditary transmission. According to Battenhouse, On Marriage and Concupiscence has had decisive influence quite apart from the Pelagian controversy in Roman Catholic theology. He states, "It is at once the basis for and the most succinct statement of the ethical teachings of the Roman Catholic Church concerning sex." He continues by stating, "If one wants to know why the Roman Catholic Church holds that the chief and decisive end of marriage is procreation, that divorce and birth control are inadmissible, and that continence is the ideal of sexual self-discipline, the reasons are all given by the bishop of Hippo in his discussion of marriage." See Roy W. Battenhouse, p. 221.

³⁸Augustine, "Contra Julianum," III, vii, 15.

without evil, and children thus had to be regenerated in order to be delivered from evil. The very embrace of a husband and a wife, though honorable and permitted by God, could not escape the flame of concupiscence. The secrecy in which the marriage act was performed indicated the contamination of this act by sin.³⁹ The author of the nature born from conjugal intercourse was God, who had created man and had united male and female under the nuptial law, but the author of the sin was the devil, who deceived and to whom the will of the man had consented.⁴⁰ Julian, of course, did not accept the same understanding of guilt in the conjugal union. Since no guilt existed in the marriage act, the offspring could not be guilty, according to Julian. Augustine, however, counterattacked by emphasizing the guiltlessness of God in making angels and men who eventually rebelled and were guilty in the Creator's sight.⁴¹ Sin, therefore, had ravaged marriage, which as an institution from God was good.

Augustine explained the relationship of parents--heathen and Christian--to the child. Heretical theologians had denied the presence of sin in the children of either Christian or unchristian parents. Augustine maintained that sin existed not only in the children of heathen parents but also in the offspring of Christians. Children of Satan, not children of God, were born from Christian marriage. These

³⁹Augustine, "De Peccato Originali," xxvii, 42.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Augustine, "Contra Julianum," V, xvi, 64.

children were bound in sin and were captive under the devil's power.

Augustine succinctly stated,

For this reason, even of just and legitimate marriage between children of God, not children of God, but children of this world are generated. Although those who generate have been regenerated, they do not generate from that by which they are children of God, but from that by which they are children of this world.⁴³

The infant's sin did not imply that it was possessed by the devil in a way similar to the demoniacs of Christ's time.⁴⁴ The infant, whether born from heathen or Christian parents, had sin and needed regeneration.

Regeneration

The sin contracted through the parents could only be removed through spiritual rebirth. The infant's sin was not contracted from human nature as produced by God but from the wound which the devil inflicted on human nature.⁴⁵ This wound could only be healed through forgiveness in Christ, and baptism brought this remission of sins to the infant. Rumors were spread that Julian himself had been baptized as an infant, and yet this bishop did not make any connection between the significance of baptism in forgiving sin and the infant's need of

⁴²Augustine, "De Nuptiis et Concupiscentia," XII, cols. 347-348.

⁴³Augustine, "Against Julian," edited by Deferrri, p. 345; "Contra Julianum," VI, xiii, 40.

⁴⁴Augustine, "Contra Julianum," III, v, 12.

⁴⁵Ibid., III, xxvi, 63.

46 regeneration. In other words, if the infant did not have sin, what would be the need of baptism? Yet, since baptism was necessary and worked the forgiveness of sins, did not this fact imply that the infant had sin? Pelagius avoided the question as to why baptism was necessary for infants. He refused to admit that there was anything in infants which the laver of regeneration had to cleanse.⁴⁷

Augustine supposed with a certain amount of basis that children were involved not only in the sin of their first parents but also in the sins of their own parents from whom they were born.⁴⁸ The child,⁴⁹ in entering into a covenant relationship with God through baptism, removed the guilt of all sin. Frequently this Church Father reiterated that baptism washed away all past guilt of sin.⁵⁰ Baptism thus removed in the adult the guilt of original sin and wrongs that implied sins of deed by the individual. The guilt of concupiscence, unless removed by baptism,⁵¹ would remain with the man until his death.

In baptism God forgave sin, but the inclination toward sin still

⁴⁶Ibid., I, iv, 14.

⁴⁷Augustine, "De Peccato Originali," xix, 21.

⁴⁸Augustine, "Enchiridion de Fide, Spe, et Caritate," xlvi, 13.

⁴⁹Augustine, "Contra Julianum," VI, vii, 21.

⁵⁰Ibid., VI, xvi, 50.

⁵¹Ibid., VI, xiv, 44.

52 remained. The sin warring against the law or the mind was forgiven in baptism, but not ended.⁵³ The infant thus had to look forward to a struggle in his life after baptism, but this infant had faith in Christ to carry him through the struggle.⁵⁴ Though Julian could argue that baptism was superfluous with infants, Augustine asserted the faith of infants in Christ through the hearts and voices of those who brought them.⁵⁵

Infants who had received the washing of regeneration had been baptized into Christ's death. Augustine insisted on the significance of Paul's teaching in Romans 6, where the apostle emphasized the death to sin and the life in Christ, both in application to the adult and to the infant.⁵⁶ In emphasizing this doctrine, Augustine finally challenged Julian to acknowledge either that infants died to sin in baptism and thus had original sin to which to die or that they were not baptized into the death of Christ. If Julian could not believe that they were not baptized into the death of Christ, he disagreed with the words of Paul in his claim that all who were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death.⁵⁷

Every infant was in need of baptism; this fact Augustine reiterated in many contexts. Infants received baptism not only that they might

⁵²Ibid., II, v, 12.

⁵³Ibid., II, iv, 8.

⁵⁴Ibid., VI, iii, 6.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid., VI, iv, 10.

⁵⁷Ibid., VI, v, 13.

enjoy the good of the Kingdom of Christ but also that they might be delivered from the evil of death.⁵⁸ All unbaptized infants would receive the same damnation that the unbelieving adults experienced. This unbaptized child was properly regarded as born in Adam and was condemned under the "bond of the ancient debt" unless released from the bondage through the redemptive work of Christ.⁵⁹ As all infants were under the bondage of sin at birth, so all infants might be delivered from this slavery in baptism. Christian parents generated sinful infants and were to have their children baptized. Parents could not generate a child different from what they were at birth, and thus the same regeneration⁶⁰ must be applied to their children. Augustine stated:

A regenerate man does not regenerate, but generates, sons according to the flesh; and thus he transmits to his posterity, not the condition of the regenerated, but only of the generated.⁶¹

All children thus might be delivered from sin by a baptism which was a true and faithful mystery.⁶² These infants renounced the rule of Satan through the mouth of those who brought them to baptism.⁶³ Baptism was an antidote against original sin in order that what was contracted by birth might be taken away by a second birth.⁶⁴ The sin generated through

⁵⁸Ibid., II, iv, 4.

⁵⁹Battenhouse, p. 222.

⁶⁰Augustine, "Contra Julianum," III, xxxvi, 66.

⁶¹Augustine, "De Peccato Originali," xxxix, 45; "On Original Sin," edited by Oates, p. 651.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Augustine, "Enchiridion de Fide, Spe, et Caritate," lxiv, 17.

the parents was removed, and the infant was regenerated in the washing provided through Christ's redemptive work.

Succeeding Struggle

The regenerate individual still possessed his concupiscence, but his relationship to this evil desire changed. Prior to his conversion he had submitted to the lust to sin within his heart, but after his baptism he began to war against this concupiscence.⁶⁵ In baptism remission of all sins was given to the individual, but in this baptized person an inclination toward sin remained.⁶⁶ These faults were not the kind to be called sins, that is, provided concupiscence did not draw the person to unlawful works or sins of thought. This inner tendency toward sin had to be the object of the Christian's striving and battling. While being conquered, these passions were dangerous. Though perhaps they were overcome progressively, they did not cease to exist. When the Christian died, these temptations would also die and would not exist in the risen body.⁶⁷ This sin against which the Christian struggled, as stated before, was forgiven by spiritual regeneration but remained in the mortal flesh to produce desires against which the faithful struggled. This succeeding struggle overthrew Julian's theories about the goodness of man,

⁶⁵Augustine, "Contra Julianum," VI, iv, 12.

⁶⁶Ibid., II, iii, 7.

⁶⁷Ibid.

according to Augustine. The Christian, therefore, awaited the ultimate deliverance from this struggle and in the meantime relied on the mercy and strength conveyed by God in baptism.

Sin, Suffering, and Death

Despite the regenerative mercy of God in baptism the Christian still had to live with sin, suffering, and death. This plight, of course, was seen after regeneration in the light of the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Redeemer. Ultimate deliverance from the Christian's struggle was revealed in light of the cross of Christ. Yet, in time the Christian had to bear sin, suffering, and death. If sin had not entered through Adam, every individual would not have had to be exposed to every tempta-⁶⁹ tion, to cares, to bodily ills, to want, to change, and to a frail body.⁷⁰ What was a penalty to the first man was ultimately in the nature of man. Infants even were subjected to suffering and afflictions; such troubles⁷¹ were signs of their need of the forgiveness of sins. Unbaptized⁷² infants were subject to eternal death, and not merely temporal death. A primary sign to infant and to adult that original sin dwelled in him⁷³ was his subjection to death. In eternal death the Lord would provide

⁶⁸Ibid., II, iii, 5.

⁶⁹Augustine, "In Psalmos," Opera (Bassano and Venice: Remondini, 1797), vol. V, Psalmum XXXVII, 5.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Augustine, "Contra Julianum," III, iii-iv.

⁷²Ibid., III, i, 4.

⁷³Augustine, "De Diversis Quaestionibus ad Simplicianum," i, 10.

degrees of punishment for the unbelievers. The individual (also unbaptized infants) who did not add any sin apart from original sin would receive the mildest punishment. For those people who had added sin to their original sin the punishment of each would be the more bearable as his iniquity was less grave.⁷⁴ Thus all men would experience sin, suffering, and death. The Christian was not completely subject to Satan through his deliverance by Christ, but he was to struggle against sin. All men suffer and die, including Christians. This fact is obvious, but Augustine used this death and suffering merely to illustrate the presence of sin and its consequences. He clearly placed sin, suffering, and death then in the light of the atonement of Christ.

The Savior's Solution/

Children born with original sin could be brought through baptism into the Kingdom of God, but baptism is seen in the light of the work of Christ Jesus, according to Augustine. Since men through original sin lay under the wrath of God and added graver and deadlier sins to this guilt, a Mediator, who would be a Reconciler through a unique sacrifice, would have to placate the wrath of God.⁷⁵ Through the redemptive work of the Christ, God's grace existed even among the people of the Old Testament. Christ was latently present then and was not patently visible among all nations.⁷⁶ Pelagius divided history into three periods according

⁷⁴Augustine, "Enchiridion de Fide, Spe, et Caritate," xciii, 23.

⁷⁵Ibid., xxxiii, 10.

⁷⁶Augustine, "De Peccato Originali," xxxiv, 29.

to the relationship of men to God: (1) the period when men lived righteously by nature; (2) the time when they were under the law; (3) the era when they existed under grace.⁷⁷ Augustine rather stressed the validity of Christ's incarnation for the people of the Old Testament, even though His incarnation had not yet occurred.⁷⁸ These people could not have experienced justification by the grace of God, however, without faith⁷⁹ in the one Mediator, in His death, and in His resurrection.

The Mediator, Christ Jesus, came into the world without original sin. According to Augustine, original sin passed by means of the concupiscence of the flesh to all men, and concupiscence could not have passed to the flesh that the virgin conceived, for Christ was not conceived through concupiscence.⁸⁰ Since Christ was not conceived according to the usual laws of nature, he had no original sin in Himself.⁸¹ God begot the Son co-eternal with Himself--the Word that was in the beginning. Augustine summarily stated concerning this Mediator and the purpose of His work that God, who begat the Son co-eternal with Himself, also created man without fault.⁸² This Savior was born of a virgin, not of the seed of man. The

⁷⁷Ibid., xxvi, 30.

⁷⁸Ibid., xxvi, 31.

⁷⁹Ibid., xxiv, 28.

⁸⁰Augustine, "Contra Julianum," V, xv, 54.

⁸¹Ibid., II, iv, 8.

⁸²Ibid.

Church Father frequently and emphatically emphasized that Christ was begotten and conceived without lust of carnal concupiscence.⁸³ By His nature He was united with the Father and, therefore, was without original sin. Due, however, to the likeness of flesh in which He came,⁸⁴ He was destined to be sacrificed to wash away sin. Baptism had meaning in His work, since the baptized person died to the flesh as Christ did and lived by the Spirit as Christ rose again from the sepulchre.⁸⁵ Christ's solution to the problem of original sin thus barred no one--old man or infant--from baptism. Infants, of course, died to original sin, but adults died also to those other sins which by their evil lives they had added to the sin contracted at conception.⁸⁶ Christ, born without sin, took upon Himself the evil of the world and redeemed lost mankind, who through baptism received the benefit of this work.

Christ's solution to the problem of sin thus applied to all people.⁸⁷ He was the Deliverer of infants and of adults. One man brought sin into the world through one offense, but Christ took away not only that one sin but also all others which He found added.⁸⁸ Christ was the Maker of men with the Father and was made man for the healing of the human race.⁸⁹

⁸³Augustine, "Enchiridion de Fide, Spe, Caritate," xli, 13.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid., xlii, 13.

⁸⁶Ibid., xliii, 13.

⁸⁷Augustine, "Contra Julianum," III, 1, 2.

⁸⁸Augustine, "Enchiridion de Fide, Spe, et Caritate," 1, 14.

⁸⁹Augustine, "De Peccato Originali," xxxiii, 38.

God's Goodness

Julian had accused Augustine of teaching that God was unjust in condemning all men on account of their sin and saving only a few according to His grace. The foundation of Julian's accusation, of course, was in the doctrine of original sin. Augustine emphatically claimed that original sin did not ascribe injustice to God but justice, since it was not unjust that even infants suffered the many and great evils that adults constantly experienced.⁹⁰ The plight of man was due neither to the injustice nor to the impotence of God but rather to the offense which came by way of origin.⁹¹ God's justice was reflected in His destining people for eternity. God would adopt at times a son whom He formed in the womb of an unbeliever and would again reject the son of a Christian. Augustine admitted that he did not know by what providence the one was baptized. God, in whose power were all things, received the baptized child but did not take the infant of the Christian.⁹² Thus the one infant entered into the Kingdom of God by grace because God was good. Another infant deservedly did not enter because He was just. Fate was not involved in either case, since God did what He wished. The one was condemned according to judgment, and another was delivered according to mercy. Who is man to ask God why He condemned the one instead of the

⁹⁰Augustine, "Contra Julianum," V, 1, 3.

⁹¹Ibid., IV, xvi, 83.

⁹²Ibid., VI, xiv, 43.

other? Shall the object ask the Molder, "Why have you made me thus?"⁹³
 God's goodness thus continued to hold sway, even though man in his rebellion refused this grace and had to receive the just judgment of God.

The Wayward Will

Frequently in dealing with the doctrine of original sin theologians in the early church did not completely understand their opponents. Often semantics was the primary problem in the initial stages of these controversies. Theologians would be using the same words, but they would be implying different meanings. The word, "sin," was a primary example of such semantic problems. To many of the earlier Church Fathers sin frequently involved the will, and thus an individual had to will an evil in order to be responsible for that sin. Infants who did not possess rational wills according to adult standards were not guilty of an actual sin. They had a tendency toward sin, but sin as such was not a part of them. Some Fathers, therefore, spoke of the innocency of these children. On the other hand, theologians would not consistently hold that the grace of God had to come through the consent of the man's will but rather through the work of the Holy Spirit. Augustine realized, however, that as grace could be given to a man even though by nature he rebelled against this grace so also the will of man could be, in a sense, passive or inactive and still be guilty of sin.

Augustine admitted that evil itself took its rise from the evil will of the first man.⁹⁴ The origin of sin in every man thus was from

⁹³Ibid., IV, viii, 46.

⁹⁴Ibid., III, v, 11.

an evil will. According to him, where no moral freedom existed there could be no sin.⁹⁵ The serpent in the Garden of Eden used the human will to cause man to fall into sin.⁹⁶ Through sin man lost his freedom to choose the good and now was only able to choose evil. One, however, cannot claim that Augustine held that sin was solely a matter of the will, for he emphasized the presence of sin in infants who as yet had no free choice. The Pelagian Celestius held that sin was a fault of the will and, therefore, on this basis could deny the presence of sin in infants.⁹⁷ Augustine, hence, did not hold to the theory that sin was exclusively from the will of the individual but was inherited from Adam through the previous generations. Through the grace of God the will could be sanctified to abide again by the will of God, though imperfectly performed even as a Christian. The wayward will thus found the correct path in the work of God through Christ.

Action from Origin

Sin committed by an individual, or "actual sin" as it is known to systematic theologians today, has already received consideration. The importance of actual sin, however, for Augustine lay in the use for which he employed the concept. Sin of action was prompted by the evil will of a man, but God condemned not only the man guilty of actual sins but also the infant who had not willfully performed a misdeed. Thus

⁹⁵J. B. Reimensnyder, "Original Sin," The Lutheran Quarterly, XVIII (July 1888), 308.

⁹⁶Augustine, "Contra Julianum," I, ix, 42.

⁹⁷Augustine, "De Peccato Originali," v, 5.

Augustine employed the judgment of God against the infant and the actual sins of adults as part of his proof for the presence of original sin in man. Augustine referred to this actual sin, or "one's own sin" (proprium peccatum) and maintained that since an infant had no actual sin this sin had to be original sin that was taken away by baptism. ⁹⁸ Augustine thus moved in his logic from the actual sin of the adult to the lack of actual sin in the infant, to the conclusion that some other sin must exist in the infant, since God condemned even the infant. Actual sin thus formed an important link in Augustine's establishment of the doctrine of original sin.

Augustine, of course, maintained that all actual sin arose from the original sin in the heart of men. ⁹⁹ Frequent references to the "additional ¹⁰⁰ guilt of breaking the law itself" occurred in his writings. The defect in the nature of man resulted in the inability to see that which was right and in doing that which was right. Therefore, though Augustine spoke in terms of actual sin and moved back to original sin, he stressed in his theology that the progression actually was from original sin to actual sin. In other words, Augustine stressed the importance of original sin--inherited sin--in determining the path which natural man would take in his life, namely the path of sin. This sinful action thus arose from the origin of the man.

⁹⁸Augustine, "Contra Julianum," VI, vii, 19.

⁹⁹Ibid., VI, xv, 47.

¹⁰⁰Augustine, "De Peccato Originali," xxiv, 29.

Not Sinful Substance

One of Julian's charges against Augustine was that the latter maintained the origin of man from the devil on the basis of his teaching of original sin. The logical conclusion of such a charge would be that matter was evil, since Satan made man. Augustine, of course, emphatically denied this charge. He did not claim that matter was the origin of evil in the world.¹⁰¹ Man was born as the work of God, and even though he contracted evil, the work of God as manifested in his physical body was still good.¹⁰² The substance of man, of whom God was the Author, was good even in great sinners.¹⁰³ The sinfulness was the fault that was in that nature, not the nature itself.¹⁰⁴ Sin was not material but was manifested in action, and its consequences were seen in the physical realm.¹⁰⁵ Matter in the universe could not be equated with evil.¹⁰⁶ God created the universe and all that was in it; man's sinfulness placed him under the just judgment of God. His sin, however, and his creation by God did not make the Creator the Author of evil.

¹⁰¹Augustine, "Contra Julianum," VI, xxiii, 74.

¹⁰²Ibid., III, xxiv, 56.

¹⁰³Ibid., III, xxiii, 52.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., V, 1, 3.

¹⁰⁶T. E. Clark, "St. Augustine and Cosmic Redemption," Theological Studies, XIX (June 1958), 150.

The material as such was without sin, and thus God did not create something sinful.

Conclusion

Thus according to Augustine's doctrine of original sin all men are born subjects of Satan and sharers in the sin of Adam. This sin is given to man through his conception and birth, and only regeneration in baptism can remove the guilt of this original sin. Though a sinful infant comes from the union of a man and a woman, marriage itself is not evil, since God Himself created the parents and instituted marriage. The results of sin, however, are apparent particularly in marriage. The struggle that follows after being a Christian is evident to the individual in his fight against concupiscence, or evil desire, which remains in his heart even after his regeneration. The struggle with sin, the physical and spiritual suffering, and the death of the body are all evidences that sin still exists. In the Savior's redemptive work man has a solution to his plight. God's goodness is evident in the Savior, even though He must condemn all who die in their original sin. The wayward will of man arises from the original sin that he inherited, and actual sin is evidence of the results of original sin in man. This original and actual sin does not imply that material substance is evil; though God is the Creator of all things, He is not the Author of evil. Augustine, therefore, denied the Pelagian contention that man has a free will to choose the good and to live a pleasing life in the sight of God.

Augustine particularly directed his discussion against the charges of Julian in developing the doctrine of original sin in Contra Julianum.

Augustine stated Julian's charges in terms of his own conclusions.

According to this restatement Julian's accusations were the following:

If God creates men, they cannot be born with any evil. If marriage is good, nothing evil arises from it. If all sins are forgiven in baptism, those born of the reborn cannot contract original sin. If God is just, He cannot condemn in the children the sins of the parents, since He forgives the parents their own sins as well. If human nature is capable of perfect justice, it cannot have natural faults.¹⁰⁷

To this list of charges Augustine replied that God is the Creator of men, that is, of both body and soul. Marriage is good, and through the baptism of Christ all sins are forgiven. God is just and human nature is capable of perfect justice.¹⁰⁸ In such simple thoughts Augustine explained his answers to Julian, but the detail of his presentation indicated the precision which Augustine wished to impress on his readers concerning original sin.

Augustine presented the evidence for this doctrine from what he wished to be a totality of witnesses. He made reference to Old Testament writers whom he felt particularly emphasized original sin.¹⁰⁹ The New Testament, of course, further explained this teaching in terms of the redemptive work of Christ,¹¹⁰ and the Church Fathers after the apostolic period echoed these Scriptural witnesses. All of these witnesses emphasize the depravity of man, but the grace of God that they stress points to the divine remedy. With such evidence Augustine felt that

¹⁰⁷Augustine, "Contra Julianum," II, ix, 31; "Against Julian," edited by Deferrari, pp. 92-93.

¹⁰⁸Augustine, "Contra Julianum," II, ix, 31.

¹⁰⁹Augustine, "Contra Julianum," VI, xxvi, 83.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

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he had refuted Julian and had adequately explained his position. He fully realized original sin in men and fully trusted in the mercy of God in Christ to remove the guilt of this sin.

111 Ibid.

Introduction

Consideration of original sin has generally been divided into two geographically and theologically oriented schools, the Western writers and the Eastern writers. Since Augustine lived in the Western Church, the development of the doctrine of original sin has basically been attributed to the Western writers. Evidence for other teachings about original sin in the Eastern Church fathers has been scanty. A partial explanation for the meager evidence within both the Eastern and the Western schools lies in the fact that these Church Fathers prior to Augustine did not have occasion to discuss in controversy the influence of Adam's sin upon his descendants. Such meager evidence concerning original sin does not mean to imply, however, that these Fathers did not discuss the doctrine of sin. On the contrary, under the influence of such heresies as Gnosticism and certain Hellenistic philosophies these church writers explicitly explained the Christian understanding of sin. Frequently, however, the implications of sin in terms of heredity were only received incidental treatment. From these references within the writings of the East and the West Augustine drew his materials to present historical evidence for the teaching of original sin within the early church.

CHAPTER III

WESTERN WRITERS' WEIGHT

Introduction

Consideration of original sin has generally been divided into two geographically and theologically oriented schools, the Western writers and the Eastern Fathers. Since Augustine lived in the Western Church, the development of the doctrine of original sin has basically been attributed to the Western writers. Evidence for clear teachings about details on original sin in the Eastern Church Fathers has been scanty. A partial explanation for the meager evidence within both the Eastern and the Western schools lies in the fact that these Church Fathers prior to Augustine did not have occasion to discuss in controversy the influence of Adam's sin upon his descendants. Such meager evidence concerning original sin does not mean to imply, however, that these Fathers did not discuss the doctrine of sin. On the contrary, under the influence of such heresies as Gnosticism and certain dualistic philosophies these church writers explicitly explained the Christian understanding of sin. Frequently, however, the implications of sin in terms of hereditary guilt only received incidental treatment. From these references within the writings of the East and the West Augustine drew his materials to present historical evidence for the teaching of original sin within the early church.

¹F. R. Tennant, The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), p. 275.

Augustine's list of Church Fathers who were cited to support his theological formulations concerning original sin included both Eastern and Western writers. Augustine listed in one instance the following men who, in his estimation, were theologians of sound doctrine and supported his teachings concerning original sin: Irenaeus, Cyprian, Reticus, Olympius (fourth century Spanish bishop), Hilary, Ambrose, Innocent, John Chrysostom, Basil, and Jerome.² He purposely mentioned in this context that he did not include in this list those individuals who had already condemned Julian and the Pelagian heresy, for Julian evidently knew these church leaders and the import of their statements. Augustine thus used such a list for a purpose, that is, to collect conclusive evidence from these Church Fathers for the support of the Scriptural doctrine of original sin and for the resulting condemnation of Julian and his camp of followers. From this list Augustine particularly emphasized Basil, Ambrose, and John Chrysostom, whose teachings concerning original sin Julian was denying.³ In Contra Julianum Augustine endeavored, therefore, to refute the claims of Julian and to substantiate his own doctrine on the basis of these Fathers. Christian readers, as a result, were to rate the statements of these men higher than the heretical and unholy novelties which Julian and his followers had propounded.

Within Augustine's writings the following list of Western writers

²Augustine, "Contra Julianum Pelagianum," Opera (Bassano and Venice: Remondini, 1797), vol. XIII, book VI, ch. xii, par. 37. These designations according to book, chapter, and paragraph will apply to all other listings of this work and similar works that require the same listing; otherwise, the capitalized Roman numeral will indicate volume, and the uncapitalized Roman numeral will indicate the page in the preface or the introduction.

³Ibid., I, vii, 30.

received significant treatment in the explanation of the doctrine of original sin: Irenaeus, Cyprian, Reticus of Autun, Hilary, Ambrose, Jerome, and Olympius. Of the Eastern writers whom he mentions as significant are the following Fathers: Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and John Chrysostom. Added to these Western Fathers, who are enumerated by Augustine and who shed some light on the teaching of original sin, are Justin Martyr and Tertullian. Eastern Fathers who may be added to Augustine's list are Ignatius, Melito of Sardis, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Methodius, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Jerusalem, Didymus the Blind, and Theodore of Mopsuestia. Theodore of Mopsuestia is the only man from this list who may have denied the teaching of original sin.⁴ From the vast amount of writings that appeared within the first four centuries of the Christian Church scholars thus have drawn varied lists of men who, in the opinion of these critical analysts, directly or indirectly influenced the church and its conciliar pronouncements in the fifth and sixth centuries. The Western writers have considerable more detail on the subject of original sin than the Eastern Fathers. The weight of evidence for Augustine's contention that the earlier Church Fathers taught original sin lies, therefore, in the West.

The emphatic explanation of the doctrine of original sin proceeded more systematically in the West than in the East. The Western mind required a more practical and definitive treatment of this doctrine.

⁴F. L. Cross, editor, The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 994.

Speculation with regard to the fall and original sin proceeded steadily along the lines established by Tertullian until it culminated in the systematic form of Augustine. The materials for the teaching were in Scripture and within the writings of previous Fathers.⁵ With this detail as background the following study delves first into the writings of Western Fathers mentioned in some detail by Augustine. Secondly, the discussion centers in the works of Fathers in the West who do also contribute to the understanding of original sin but do not predominantly occupy Augustine's attention in Contra Julianum or in De Peccato Originali.

Augustine's Sources

Irenaeus

Irenaeus, a bishop of Lyons in the second century, served as an important connection between Eastern and Western theological thought. This Father, who in Adversus Omnes Haereses launched a detailed attack against Gnosticism,⁶ taught that the Fall was the collective deed of the race.⁷ The way in which Adam and his posterity was actually connected in the first sin remained undefined and was expressed by means of figure rather than concrete fact.⁸ He thus vaguely hinted at the Augustinian emphasis of Adam's sin belonging to all mankind. Irenaeus,

⁵Reginald Stewart Moxon, The Doctrine of Sin (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1922), pp. 45-46.

⁶Gross, pp. 701-702.

⁷Tennant, pp. 290-291.

⁸Ibid.

however, never developed a concept of inherited corruption in man's nature. Death was inherited, but he did not claim that Adam's act was the productive cause of an inherited bias to sinfulness.⁹ The mode of the production of sin in mankind was left open, and sin was traced to the will. Baptismal regeneration was necessary but not in connection with an innate taint of sin originating in the Fall. The universality of sin and man's subjection to this sin received stress from Irenaeus.¹⁰ Irenaeus was one of the first Church Fathers to elaborate on the teaching on original sin and to maintain the unity of the human race with Adam according to St. Paul's treatment of the subject. He did not emphasize the Pauline subjective element of sin as a disease and thus did not seek in the Fall an explanation of human weakness and sinfulness. He, therefore, shared¹¹ the opinion of the Greek Apologists before him.

Within the recapitulation theory of Irenaeus is seen some ideas about his understanding of sin. For the redemptive work that He was to perform, Christ had to recapitulate, that is, to pass through all the states of human existence in order to consecrate these steps with His own presence. Christ thus had to unite the end with the beginning in the life of man¹² and brought to Himself all that originally belonged to human essence.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 291.

¹²Moxon, p. 21.

Christ's recapitulation reflected a sort of organic union of the human race with Adam in which Adam's first sin became a collective deed which involved all men.¹³ Irenaeus stated that infants and babes were saved alone through Christ, and thus Christ had to pass into human life as a baby to sanctify them.¹⁴ Again the specific detail on the sanctification of the type of sin or sins was not explained. The point, however, is that Christ's redemption was also for babies.

Augustine centered his comments from Irenaeus' teaching on the Serpent's effect on mankind. Irenaeus stated that the wound of the Serpent was healed by faith in Christ. According to Augustine, Irenaeus taught that man was bound by original sin as if by chains. Irenaeus, however, was not as explicit about sin of origin in this context as Augustine.¹⁵ By direct quotation from Irenaeus, Augustine emphasized the centrality of Christ in healing the wound of the serpent.¹⁶ The sin of Adam was wiped out by the chastisement of the First-Born Son of the Father.¹⁷ Through this suffering, death, and resurrection man could be released from the chains of death.¹⁸ Thus Augustine's

¹³Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁴Ernst Gerfen, Baptizein and Eucharist (Columbus, Ohio: F. J. Herr Printing Company, 1908), p. 39.

¹⁵Augustine, "Contra Julianum," I, vii, 32.

¹⁶Ibid., I, 1, 3.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

stress lay in the victory of Christ over the effects of the Serpent, Satan. Augustine thus utilized pertinent passages from Irenaeus to stress the origin of sin but did not point out that Irenaeus was not as explicit as the Augustinian explanations.

Cyprian

Cyprian, bishop of Carthage in the middle of the third century, had wished to control the restoration of Christians who under persecution had denied their faith. Cyprian was particularly involved in the question of sin after baptism, which had washed away the guilt of sin.¹⁹ Of more significant importance, however, was the decision of a council that met in Carthage in 255 A. D. and of which Cyprian was the president. Fidus, a country preacher in Africa, had asked whether infant baptism should be administered on the second or third day after birth or whether it should be delayed until the eighth day.²⁰ The council unanimously resolved that no one should be deprived of baptism immediately after birth.²¹ In the letter of this council to Fidus allusion was made to the uncleanness of the child. Later more specific explanation enlightened the import of this statement. The letter confessed that the newly born child had no sin except that which was descended from Adam according to the flesh. From his birth the child had contracted the contagion

¹⁹Cross, pp. 363-364.

²⁰Gerfen, p. 40.

²¹Ibid.

of the death anciently threatened. The child thus was to be baptized to be forgiven the sins which were not his own but others' sins.²² The decision implied that the child acquired sin through birth. Through carnal descent from Adam the infant had contracted the ancient death but as a baby was not guilty of actual sin. Cyprian, therefore, in contrast to Tertullian, who recommended the postponement of baptism until the children were old enough to know Christ, encouraged the use of the regenerative waters of baptism for infants.²³

In this document Cyprian did not emphasize eternal damnation for the unbaptized child, but Augustine carried the implications to, what Augustine considered, their logical conclusion, that infants perished unless baptized.²⁴ Augustine correctly stated that Cyprian held the sins to be the fault not of the infant but of other people. The guilt of the infant in relation to Adam's sin thus was not explained by the Carthaginian council, but the council was concerned with the inherited result of this act, death. To Augustine the struggle of the flesh and the spirit reflected the presence of the tendency toward sin that still remained in the heart. In support of this teaching of concupiscence remaining within the heart Augustine quoted Cyprian, who spoke of the daily warfare between these two forces within man.²⁵ Thus Cyprian stood as a link in the Western interpretation

²²William Wall, The History of Infant-Baptism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1844), I, 130-132.

²³Johannes Quasten, Patrology (Westminster, Maryland: The New Press, 1950), II, 378-379.

²⁴Augustine, "Contra Julianum," I, vii, 32.

²⁵Ibid., II, iii, 6.

of the Biblical teaching concerning original sin.

Reticus of Autun

Reticus, bishop of Autun in the early part of the fourth century, apparently wrote Scriptural commentaries that were lost in antiquity but remained for Augustine's analysis. Augustine quoted a pertinent passage regarding original sin from a work that seemed to be against Novatian.²⁶ Reticus maintained that the old man stripped off by the Christian had not only old, but innate sins.²⁷ Reticus believed that baptism put away the whole weight of the ancient crime, blotted out the former evil deeds of man's ignorance, and stripped off the old man with his innate crimes.²⁸ Augustine stressed the following phrases of Reticus: "the weight of the ancient crime," "the former evil deeds," and "the old man with his innate crimes." Against such implicit statements Julian, according to Augustine, would not dare to set up a destructive novelty. Reticus, who as a bishop sat on a council in the early part of the fourth century, provided Augustine with one more link in his chain of references to the teaching concerning inherited sin in the writings of his predecessors.

²⁶ Quasten, II, 414.

²⁷ Augustine, "Contra Julianum," I, vii, 32.

²⁸ Ibid., I, iii, 7.

Hilary

Hilary, anti-Arian bishop of Poitiers in Gaul during the middle of the fourth century and confidante of Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, explained that sin accompanied birth through the union of the soul with the flesh. Adam represented the human race, and his sin was their wickedness.²⁹ By the sin of Adam man lost the characteristics of the first creation.³⁰ Man was born under original sin and under the law³¹ of sin. From one man the sentence of death and punishment descended upon all men.³² Sin, therefore, remained in man,³³ and the human race was under the wrath of God.

Augustine stressed Hilary's contention that all flesh came from sin. Christ was the one exception, for He came in the likeness of flesh but without sin.³⁴ Hilary did not thereby imply that God did not create man.³⁵ All flesh came from sin according to Hilary, and this statement meant to Augustine that all flesh was descended from the ancestral sin

²⁹Tennant, pp. 337-338.

³⁰Hilary, "Tractatus Super Psalmos," Patrologiae: Patrum Latinorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Granier Fratres, 1844), IX, col. 644.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., IX, col. 385.

³³Ibid., IX, col. 376.

³⁴Augustine, "Contra Julianum," I, vii, 32.

³⁵Ibid., II, iv, 8.

of Adam.³⁶ Hilary, in an exposition of Psalm 118, interpreted the allusion of the psalmist to his origin as meaning a birth of sinful origin and under the law of sin.³⁷ Hilary as a church leader had lived recently enough to cause Augustine to dare Julian to accuse this bishop, who had been known to many people, of heresy. Hilary, therefore, accepted an explicit understanding of man's original guilt as a descendant of Adam. In Augustine's interpretation this Church Father further substantiated the Scriptural teaching concerning original sin.

Ambrose

Ambrose, influential bishop of Milan in the latter part of the fourth century, had personally presented the Christian message to Augustine and also wrote treatises that served as extensive source material for Augustine. Ambrose contributed a definite step toward the fulness of the Augustinian doctrine of original sin. He dealt with hereditary sin caused by Adam's sin, described mankind's union with Adam, and explained the participation of each human being in Adam's sin and guilt.³⁸ In his emphasis on sin as a state rather than only an act Ambrose prepared the way for the Augustinian interpretation of hereditary corruption.³⁹ According to Ambrose, by the succession of nature the succession

³⁶Ibid., I, iii, 9.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Tennant, p. 340.

³⁹Ibid.

of guilt was transfused from one man, Adam, to all men.⁴⁰ Heredity was
 the method by which the sinful taint was propagated.⁴¹ The innate taint
 toward sin was separate from sin. In baptism sin was washed away, but
 the taint remained.⁴² This contention implies the Augustinian emphasis
 on the tendency toward sin remaining in the heart after baptism.

Ambrose thus emphasized that Adam's guilt was the guilt of all
 mankind and that the transgression of the first man was the sin of human
 nature in general. Man was ejected from paradise in Adam.⁴³ Adam
 transmitted the hereditary guilt to all mankind.⁴⁴ Unless the Lord
 would forgive the sin, no one would be saved, for the inheritance of the
 injurious guilt was attached to them.⁴⁵ Before a baby was born, he was
 stained by the contagion of Adam, and before he saw light, he received
 the injury.⁴⁶ Ambrose's explicit statements regarding original sin thus
 provided material for Augustine in his writings against the Pelagian
 denial of original sin.

⁴⁰Moxon, p. 44; Ambrose, "Apologia Prophetæ David," Patrologiæ: Patrum Latinorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1882), XIV, col. 914.

⁴¹Moxon, p. 44.

⁴²Ibid., p. 45.

⁴³Ambrose, "Epistolæ in Duas Classes Distributæ," Patrologiæ: Patrum Latinorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1880), XVI, col. 1317.

⁴⁴Ambrose, "Enarratio in Psalmum XL," Patrologiæ: Patrum Latinorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1882), XIV, col. 1125.

⁴⁵Ambrose, "Enarratio in Psalmum XXXVI," Patrologiæ: Patrum Latinorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1882), XIV, col. 1053.

⁴⁶Ambrose, "De Interpellatione Job et David," Patrologiæ: Patrum Latinorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1882), XIV, col. 872.

Augustine's treatment of the Ambrosian teaching on original sin developed into very lengthy material in Contra Julianum in comparison to his references to other Church Fathers. In summary form Augustine initially picked the following Ambrosian teachings: that those infants who were baptised were reformed from wickedness at the beginning of their lives; that only Christ did not experience the contagion of earthly corruption in the newness of His immaculate birth; and that in Adam all men died, since his guilt was the death of all men.⁴⁷ In his explication of Ambrose's teaching, Augustine implied that previous writers were not as explicit as the bishop of Milan.⁴⁸ Ambrose, according to Augustine, declared that original sin was, from where it came, the significance of the first confusion which was the disobedience of the flesh disagreeing with the soul, and the healing of this disagreement by the grace of God through Christ.⁴⁹ On the basis of Ambrose's argument that all men were born under sin Augustine argues that the devil was not the creator of mankind but rather God Himself.⁵⁰ Under Augustinian interpretation the Ambrosian emphasis of all men sinning in Adam and all perishing by nature with him received a correct perspective.⁵¹ Augustine followed

⁴⁷Augustine, "Contra Julianum," I, vii, 32.

⁴⁸Ibid., II, v, 11.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid., II, iii, 5.

⁵¹Ibid., I, iii, 10.

Ambrose's interpretations about the sin of Adam in a number of instances. For example, in the explication of Romans 5:12, Augustine held the Ambrosian interpretation of "in him," that is, in Adam, all men died.⁵² In the fall sin affected both body and soul.⁵³ Christ, however, was not subject to the chains of sinful generation but came as the Mediator to redeem mankind.⁵⁴ The Savior was born without the usual human conception, since He was born of the Spirit.⁵⁵ Man was capable of justification through the work of this Mediator.⁵⁶ This redemption also included the state of marriage which was holy and good.⁵⁷ From marriage, of course, came children generated with sin.⁵⁸ Baptism, however removed this guilt of sin.⁵⁹ Through baptism man died to sin and was completely acquitted of sin.⁶⁰ Even the Christian after baptism had to struggle against sin--a battle between the flesh and the strength

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., II, v, 10.

⁵⁴Ibid., II, ix, 32.

⁵⁵Ibid., I, iv, 11.

⁵⁶Ibid., II, viii, 22.

⁵⁷Ibid., II, vii, 20.

⁵⁸Ibid., II, vi, 15.

⁵⁹Ibid., II, viii, 22.

⁶⁰Ibid., II, v, 13.

of grace in Christ. ⁶¹ Even the flesh of Paul was a body of death and experienced this struggle of Satan against Spirit. ⁶² Augustine, therefore, alluded to Ambrose in many of his important arguments in support of the doctrine of original sin. Augustine admitted his indebtedness to his teacher, Ambrose, in many instances of his development of this Scriptural teaching.

In summary Augustine considered Ambrose as a man to be quoted in his teachings on original sin. ⁶³ Pelagius seemingly admired Ambrose as a writer in the Latin Church, and Augustine utilized this respect to present an effective argument against Julian. ⁶⁴ According to Augustine's interpretation, Ambrose refuted all five of Julian's arguments. Augustine succinctly stated the Ambrosian theses in terms of Julian's points: (1) the souls and bodies of men are the work of God; (2) God honors marriage; (3) in baptism all sins are forgiven; (4) God is just; (5) hu- ⁶⁵ man nature is capable of virtue and perfection through the grace of God. The devil did not in his goodness create man but corrupted him in his evil. The evil of concupiscence did not take away the good of marriage. The guilt of no sin was left unremitted in the sacrament of holy baptism. God was not unjust in condemning by the law of justice the individual

⁶¹ Ibid., II, v, 13.

⁶² Ibid., II, iv, 8.

⁶³ Augustine, "De Peccato Originali," Opera (Bassano and Venice: Remondini, 1797), vol. XIII, xli, 48.

⁶⁴ Ibid., vol. XIII, xli, 47.

⁶⁵ Augustine, "Contra Julianum," II, vii, 19.

who was made guilty by the law of sin. Augustine, therefore, could carry the Ambrosian arguments systematically from conception in sin, through the redemption in Christ, to the resulting struggle between the flesh and the spirit.

Since the time when Erasmus critically studied the writings of Ambrose in the sixteenth century, opinions about the authenticity of certain writings traditionally attributed to Ambrose have varied.⁶⁷ A Latin commentary on the epistles of St. Paul for centuries had been attributed to Ambrose, but since Erasmus' scholarly discussions the commentary has been frequently referred to as "Ambrosiaster." Speculation about the actual author of this work has arisen within recent centuries, but the significant element of this commentary for a discussion of original sin lay in its interpretation of Romans 5:12. Since the work undoubtedly dates from Augustine's day, the commentary sheds important light on the understanding of original sin. The author interpreted the passage according to a Latin reading and rendered the latter portion of the passage to mean that in Adam all men sinned. Alternate translations and readings from the original text have rendered the phrase with a causal meaning, "For all have sinned." Ambrose and Augustine followed the Latin reading in their understanding of the

⁶⁶Ibid., II, iv, 9.

⁶⁷Alexander Souter, The Earliest Latin Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1927), p. 39.

solidarity of man in Adam's sin. Ambrosiaster, on the basis of this passage, stated that Adam gave his sin to his descendants. All men sinned in Adam, and thus all men were generated in sin. In him all sinners were united because all men were from Adam. Augustine apparently made reference to this passage for the first time in Two Epistles against the Pelagians about 420 A. D. The important point, therefore, is that Ambrose, Ambrosiaster, and Augustine agree generally in the doctrine of inherited sin and arrived at the conclusion that all men sinned in Adam apparently on the basis of the interpretation of the same Scriptural version.

Jerome

Jerome, the fourth and fifth century Biblical scholar who wrote the Vulgate and various commentaries on the Bible, acquainted himself thoroughly with theology of the East and West. He worked in Rome and eventually settled in Palestine to carry on his work. Augustine admired this man for his scholarship and alluded to his extensive reading of

⁶⁸ Ambrose, "Commentaria in XII Epistolas Beati Paul," Patrologiae: Patrum Latinorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1879), XVII, col. 97.

⁶⁹ Alexander Souter, "A Study of Ambrosiaster," Texts and Studies, edited by J. Armitage Robinson (Cambridge: University Press, 1905), VII, 3.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 81.

⁷¹ Cross, p. 82.

Greek and Latin Church Fathers. ⁷² Jerome reflected an opinion similar to Augustine's doctrine in his teaching concerning original sin. ⁷³ In his commentary on Jonah, Jerome plainly stated that infants were held subject to the sin which Adam committed. ⁷⁴ Jerome thus received commendable comment from Augustine both as a church scholar and as an expositor of the doctrine of original sin. The references within Augustine's writings to Jerome are limited, but the Biblical translator merited mention as a contemporary in support of Augustine's theses.

Olympius

The Spanish bishop, Olympius, who had attended the Council of Toledo in 400 A.D., wrote a work that is no longer extant on original sin. Augustine quoted from this writing of Olympius. Olympius, according to Augustine, claimed that the fault of Adam was scattered in the seed and that thus sin was born in every man. ⁷⁵ If man had remained perfect, the transgression of Adam would not have been scattered upon all men. ⁷⁶ Olympius accounted for original sin in terms of the sin of Adam. Adam's guilt was the guilt of all mankind. Such contentions fall exactly into the line of argument that Augustine presented to Julian.

⁷² Augustine, "Contra Julianum," I, vii, 34.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., I, vii, 32.

⁷⁶ Ibid., I, iii, 8.

Additional Sources not Quoted by Augustine

Justin Martyr

Among the fathers to whom Augustine did not particularly allude in his discussion of original sin was Justin Martyr, the second century Christian apologist. According to Justin, man prior to the fall was capable of perfection, but after sin entered, man brought death upon himself. Through God, however, man was again capable of attaining perfection. All men were deemed worthy of becoming gods now and had power to become sons of the Highest.⁷⁷ Justin, on the other hand, spoke of the universality of sin and alluded to an evil inclination, which was in the nature of every man. Through baptism the child of necessity and ignorance became the child of choice and knowledge.⁷⁸ Therefore, though sin passed on all men, the liberty of choice was not completely impaired, and man had a chance to again attain perfection.⁷⁹ Justin reflected the thoughts of some of the early Christian Church Fathers but did not follow the Pauline emphasis of sin in Adam and the sin of all mankind as a result.

⁷⁷Quasten, I, 213.

⁷⁸Tennant, pp. 275 ff.

⁷⁹Jeremy Taylor, The Whole Works of the Right Rev. Jeremy Taylor, D. D. (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1844), II, 566.

Tertullian

Of the Church Fathers considered important by modern scholars in a consideration of the history of teachings on original sin Tertullian stands as an important figure. Tertullian, a prolific African writer of the second and very early third centuries, struggled in his understanding of sin and grace with the natural knowledge of God and the effects of original sin, as they are known in modern theological terms. He admitted that an antecedent evil arose in the soul from its corrupt origin. Yet, within this same individual a divine and genuine good derived from God was obscured rather than extinguished.⁸⁰ Tertullian admitted the corruption of human nature, but simultaneously could not see the significance of baptism in removing the guilt of sin from infants. He advocated a postponement of the baptism of children, for he felt that the faith of the recipient had to be examined carefully. Why did the "innocent period of life" have to hasten to the "remission of sins"?⁸¹ Tertullian accepted a corporeity of the soul. From this theory he asserted that "original sin" was a positive corruption and⁸² not merely an infirmity.

Despite the recommendation to postpone baptism Tertullian may be

⁸⁰Roy, W. Battenhouse, A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 333-334.

⁸¹Quasten, II, 279.

⁸²Norman Powell Williams, The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin (London, New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1929), p. xviii.

considered as the father of Western Latin theology and the precursor of Augustine.⁸³ Origen, who taught that every man brought with him some kind of defilement, did not always identify this taint with sin and hardly ever attributed it to Adam's fall, but Tertullian explicitly explained both points. Tertullian's reasoning and the results of this reasoning were used by the other Church Fathers, but his presuppositions⁸⁴ were rejected. Tertullian assumed the corporeity of all existence-- including souls, as was mentioned. The soul and the body of a child were produced simultaneously within the mother. The soul inherited from its parents their spiritual characteristics and qualities. With this inheritance came an unclean nature, which required rebirth in⁸⁵ Christ. Tertullian thus endeavored to explain the passage of Adam's sin to all mankind through his theory of the corporeity of souls. In his conclusion that mankind inherited sin and corruption of nature he paved the way for Augustine. His conclusions served as background for⁸⁶ Augustine's detailed treatment.

Tertullian propounded his materialistic outlook and believed

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Tennant, p. 328.

⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 329-330.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 335.

that the child inherited the sinful taint of his parents.⁸⁷ The child received the sinful qualities of Adam, but these sinful qualities did not completely exclude all goodness. Tertullian more fully explicated original sin and set a background for Augustinian theology. Augustine did not directly quote from Tertullian in his argument with Julian, but he reflected many of the thoughts of this early Western writer.

Conclusion

Scholars have claimed that explicit statements concerning original sin after the Pauline references first appeared in the writings of Tertullian. Though Augustine did not utilize the writings of Tertullian in his detailed references to early Church Fathers in either Contra Julianum or De Peccato Originali, he reflected Tertullian's theological principle of inherited taint. He chose writers from various centuries in the Western Church to substantiate his doctrine of original sin, but he seems to have stressed his references to writers of the fourth century. Perhaps the availability of these materials and the heat of controversy that began to arise over the relationship of contemporary individuals with the original man caused Augustine to choose these writers. Augustine was a theologian who chose with discretion portions of works from Western

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 334.

writers that agreed clearly with his thesis. Augustine avoided the problematic passages from the Fathers and did not indicate that his references were meager and scattered in comparison to the volumes written on other subjects. Pelagianism, particularly in the hands of Julian, could also appeal to the early Church Fathers for some support of its arguments. From this same material Augustine had to draw his material carefully to establish his point. The weakness, therefore, in Augustine's treatment of Western writers on original sin lies in his methodology. He frequently picked isolated passages without explaining the total concept of sin in each writer and concentrated detailed material only on writers who particularly supported his doctrine of original sin in a number of details. Thus he dealt extensively with Ambrose and avoided some of the misconceptions of Tertullian, even though Tertullian was in agreement on many issues. Though he explained portions of the works of these writers, he would still conclude with allusions to the many Church Fathers who--according to his implication--completely and explicitly supported his views and would then use this to attack Julian. The implication seemingly was that all of these Western Fathers supported Augustinian theology in much of its detail on original sin, when in actuality these Church Fathers never spoke or had the occasion to speak on the exact implications of Adam's sin in terms of the individuals around them. Augustine, therefore, was a theologian who picked the pertinent passages that supported his thesis and avoided a complete explanation of the

theology of sin from each writer that he considered sufficiently important for quoting.

EASTERN WRITERS' EMPHASIS

Introduction

Studies about original sin in the writings of the Eastern Fathers have appeared from the pens of scholars who either supported or rejected the thesis that these Fathers spoke of original sin. The scholars who were in favor of this thesis have generally seen an interrelation between Eastern and Western writers, whereas the theologians who have rejected the thesis have not definite distinctions between the Eastern and Western attacks on the subject. It is frequently the case in certain Biblical discussions, an intermediary position may be the answer to the controversy. The Eastern Fathers did not see original sin as an inherited defect in human nature due to Adam's fall. Adam fell into temptation, but in the writings of a number of the Eastern Fathers the act did not have the same deleterious effects that it attained in Augustinian theology. Man inherited a lack of communion with God, and from this inherited defect Christ redeemed mankind. The Greek Fathers have generally taken the words from Romans 5:12, "all have sinned," to refer to personally committed sins, but adults have sinned because

¹ Oliver Chase Dickson, "Original Sin and Baptism," *Anglican Theological Review* (April 1929), XI, no. 4, 335.

CHAPTER IV

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¹Oliver Chase Quick, "Original Sin and Baptism," Anglican Theological Review (April 1929), XI, no. 4, 323.

²Ibid.

they inherited from their first parent a nature already corrupted
by sin.³

The theologians, who completely deny any presence of a doctrine of original sin in the Eastern writers, rest a portion of their evidence on the meager references to such sin in comparison to the material at Augustine's time. Reginald Moxon, for instance, claims that the greater part of the Greek Fathers prior to Augustine denied original sin. The solidarity of the human race, according to this theologian implied only corporeal connection to Adam in the Greek Fathers.⁴ Julius Gross also feels that the Greeks of the second and third centuries indicated little evidence for teaching original sin.⁵ This same author correctly indicates, however, that until the beginning of the fifth century the Greek Fathers paid little attention to original sin, since in their fight against Gnosticism they were especially concerned with demonstrating the moral strength and personal responsibility of each man.⁶ Gross concludes that generally these Greek writers did not have opinions parallel to later Augustinian ideas about inheritance or transmission of the sin of Adam to his descendants.⁷ F. R. Tennant con-

³P. P. Saydon, reviewer of S. Lyonnet's "Le péché originel en Rom. 5, 12," *New Testament Abstracts*, V, 301.

⁴Reginald Stewart Moxon, The Doctrine of Sin (New York: George H. Coran Company, 1922), pp. 40-41.

⁵Julius Gross, Entstehungsgeschichte des Erbsündendogmas (Basel: Ernst Reinhardt, 1960), p. 124.

⁶Ibid., p. 214.

⁷Ibid., p. 112.

tends that the Greek apologists, such as Theophilus of Antioch, had not really advanced towards the later ecclesiastical doctrine of original sin. ⁸

Thus the denial of a Greek concept of original sin still continues. Ernest V. McClear admits the diversity of opinion in regard to this doctrine of original sin in contemporary studies and illustrates his point with a number of specific references to competent scholars. ⁹ The varied opinions continue to appear, but the scholars who deny the doctrine of inherited sin in the Eastern Fathers have been confronted with some passages, with which Augustine agreed, to indicate some kind of concept of original sin. Sins of action, of course, received due consideration from the Eastern Fathers. ¹⁰ Augustine did not feel that an appeal by Julian to the Eastern writers would find any different ¹¹ doctrine on original sin than an appeal to the Western Fathers.

⁸F. R. Tennant, The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), p. 282.

⁹Ernest V. McClear, "The Fall of Man and Original Sin in the Theology of Gregory of Nyssa," Theological Studies, IX (June 1948), 175-176.

¹⁰G. W. H. Lampe, A Patristic Greek Lexicon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 82.

¹¹Augustine, "Contra Julianum Pelagianum," Opera (Bassano and Venice: Remondini, 1797), vol. XII, book I, ch. iv, par. 14. These designations according to book, chapter, and paragraph will apply to all other listings of this work and similar works that require the same listing; otherwise, the capitalized Roman numeral will indicate volume, and the uncapitalized Roman numeral will indicate the page in the preface or the introduction.

Augustine appealed to the Eastern writers as supporters of his Biblical teachings and emphasized that they also believed in the import of the Pauline message concerning original sin.¹² This group of Fathers included the following: Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and John Chrysostom. To the list of Eastern writers that he quoted in his work against Julian Augustine added a number of Eastern bishops who in some way agreed with aspects of his doctrine of inherited sin.¹³ With this material as background the following analysis delves first into the writings of Eastern Fathers mentioned in some detail by Augustine and secondly into the work of writers in the East who do contribute to the understanding of original sin but do not receive Augustine's attention.

Augustine's Sources

Basil

Basil, a fourth century bishop in Caesarea and one of the three Cappadocian Fathers, wrote comparatively little material concerning the fall of Adam and its consequences.¹⁴ He attributed the origin of sin to Adam, of course, and indicated the affect of this sin upon all posterity.¹⁵ Adam transmitted death and his sin to mankind, and the

¹²Ibid., I, v, 20.

¹³Ibid., I, v, 19.

¹⁴Tennant, pp. 316 ff.

¹⁵Basil, "Homilia Dicta Tempore Famis et Siccitatis," Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1885), XXXI, col. 324.

parent's transgression was imputed to all men. Basil never precisely defined the mode in which all men had a solidarity with Adam or the nature of the sin which he vaguely stated to have been transmitted to mankind. He also did not elaborate in detail on how this transmission was finally effected.

Augustine, on a number of occasions in Contra Julianum, explained his understanding of Basil's theology of sin. Augustine pointed out that Basil advocated fasting as a discipline for returning to the state from which man had fallen. To Basil evil was not a substance. Evil could easily be separated from matter, and thus matter was not sinful. The will was the source of the first sin, and the will could not separate itself from evil. The body could be sanctified by God and could be made a temple of the Holy Spirit. The body thus could not be called evil--a fact which denies the Manichaeian contention of creation from a race of darkness. Julian apparently had quoted statements from Basil in support of his beliefs, for Augustine railed against the Julian misuse of passages irrelevant to the point. The discussion from Julian at

¹⁷Augustine, "Contra Julianum," I, vii, 32.

¹⁸Ibid., I, v, 16.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., I, v, 17.

least partially centered in Basil's concept of fasting and sin in the Garden of Eden.²² If Eve had fasted from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, man would not have fallen into sin. Augustine, therefore, emphasized Basil's theology about the fall in paradise and stressed his denial of matter as being evil. Through Augustine's silence he indicated that Basil was not specific about the transmission of Adam's sin to mankind.

Gregory of Nazianzus

Gregory, a fourth century Cappadocian Father and bishop of Constantinople for a short time, only hinted at transmitted sin in the subjective sense. He implied that fleshly birth transferred a moral taint to an individual. He did regard infants who died without baptism as excluded from everlasting bliss, although they were not to suffer pains. These small children had not actually committed sin and thus were considered innocent. Gregory obviously did not teach the depravity of man in the later Augustinian sense. On account of Adam's sin,²³ however, man had passed into a state of condemnation. He spoke of Adam's sin as man's sin and implied that it involved man in condemnation²⁴ and punishment. Under the influence of Augustine this material from Gregory received more explicit significance than some modern scholars

²²Ibid., I, v, 18.

²³Tennant, p. 319.

²⁴Moxon, p. 35.

wish to admit that it contains for them.

At Augustine's time Gregory's reputation was so well established that his works had been translated from the Greek into Latin.²⁵ According to Augustine, Gregory taught that through the washing of regeneration the stains of the first birth were washed away.²⁶ Gregory realized that it would have been better that man had not fallen into sin than for man now to have to go through this purging. Yet, it was better to be cured and corrected after the fall than to remain in sin.²⁷ Allusion was made again to Romans 5:12 with an emphasis on dying in Adam and being brought to life through Christ. Augustine's quotations from Gregory abound with Scriptural phraseology in reference to justification and grace, but the passage from Romans 5 basically applied to adults as Gregory presented it. He encouraged the Christian to revere the birth by which he was set free from the first birth. Such exhortations went to adults and did not directly imply infants, as Augustine was constantly emphasizing in the work.²⁸ The nearest that Gregory came to a reference to original sin in this series of quotations in Augustine's review was an allusion to Psalm 51, where the psalmist confessed that he was conceived and brought forth in sin.²⁹ The element of personal

²⁵Augustine, "Contra Julianum," I, v, 15.

²⁶Ibid., I, vii, 32.

²⁷Ibid., I, v, 15.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

struggle in Gregory's life echoed the detailed treatment that Augustine gave to the battle of the flesh against the spirit.³⁰ Thus Gregory realized the presence of concupiscence within the heart, even though baptism had washed away the guilt of original and actual sin. Again Augustine concluded a review of Gregory's teachings with an inclusion of this Father in the voice of the church in support of original sin.³¹ The specific references to many of Augustine's points concerning original sin are absent in Gregory's writings, but the few that are present in this Cappadocian's writings he uses effectively.

John Chrysostom

John, bishop of Constantinople in the latter fourth and early fifth centuries, wrote many sermons from which Augustine quoted or to which he referred extensively. Modern scholarship again has shed much and varied light on John Chrysostom's doctrine of sin. In explaining the effects of baptism, John stated that little children had no sins. This particular reference has caused two opposite opinions about his concept of original sin. Thomas Allin claims that John completely denied original sin and takes this reference to sin in children literally without understanding or explaining fully the semantics involved.³² F. R. Tennant assumes that Chrysostom did

³⁰Ibid., II, iii, 7.

³¹Ibid., I, v, 15.

³²Thomas Allin, The Augustinian Revolution in Theology (London: James Clarke and Company, 1911), pp. 94-95.

not appear to have recognized any doctrine of inherited sinfulness in man. Tennant admits that the aforementioned statement of Chrysostom could be interpreted in varied ways and argues that Chrysostom frequently left his statements unexplained.³³

The problem for Augustine was the fact that the Pelagians had picked up this statement by Chrysostom and had interpreted it in support of their denial of original sin. Augustine, of course, took issue with this interpretation, as will be shown later. Johannes Quasten feels that Augustine was justified in reinterpreting Chrysostom in the light of other references in his writings. The language of Chrysostom's day was not as refined in systematic terms as they were during and after the Pelagian controversy. According to Quasten, Augustine rightly replied to Julian that the plural "sins" and the context proved that Chrysostom meant one's own sins. The passages quoted by Augustine do indicate that Chrysostom did accept a teaching of original sin, but Chrysostom's concept did not coincide exactly with the ideas and terminology of Augustine. John never explicitly stated that the sin itself was inherited by posterity and was inherent in man's nature. In his comments on a passage from Romans 5 John indicated that his concept of sin included only liability to punishment and condemnation to death.³⁴ He accepted the universal mortality of mankind, and argued that the will was responsible for personally committed sins.

³³Tennant, p. 326.

³⁴Johannes Quasten, Patrology (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1950), III, 478.

He indicated that the function of man in redemption was to choose or³⁵
to will and that God finished and brought the action to completion.

He, therefore, definitely accepted a concept of an active rather than
a passive will in man's responsibility for sin and in his choosing
salvation. Some of his more or less unguarded statements could at
times lead men to claim that Chrysostom held conflicting opinions, but
the fact remains that Chrysostom did accept the consequences of sin
and no where directly denied inherited sin.

Chrysostom believed that the sin of Adam condemned the whole³⁶
race of man. When sin entered into the world, it destroyed liberty.³⁷
The devil caused sin to enter into the world, and man suffered the
consequences of the fall from obedience to God.³⁸ Through Christ baptism
washed away this sin, and man could again live under God.³⁹ Despite
this evidence scholars who doubt that Chrysostom taught this sin
from Adam still pick other passages to condemn Augustine's positive treat-
ment of Chrysostom's teaching concerning this sin.⁴⁰ A misconception

³⁵Moxon, pp. 38-39.

³⁶John Chrysostom, "Epistolae," Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum,
edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1859), LII, col. 574.

³⁷John Chrysostom, "Homiliae in Genesin," Patrologiae: Patrum
Graecorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier Fretres, 1862),
LIII, cols. 269-270.

³⁸John Chrysostom, "Homilia in Romans 7:19," Patrologiae: Patrum Grae-
corum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1857), LIX, cols.
663-664.

³⁹John Chrysostom, "Homiliae in Matthaeum," Patrologiae: Patrum
Graecorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1862), LVII,
cols. 280-281.

⁴⁰Tennant, pp. 324-425.

by the Pelagians required Augustine to enter into a detailed discussion about a single passage in his interpretation of Chrysostom's teaching on original sin.

Augustine probably used Latin translations for studying Chrysostom.⁴¹ Chrysostom admitted that Adam sinned the great sin that condemned the whole human race. Augustine carried this statement to the point of asking the following question, "If Adam by his great sin condemned all the human race in common, can an infant be born otherwise than condemned?"⁴² In describing the effects of sin Chrysostom entered into discussion about beasts' harming men. Augustine interpreted this conflict between animals and man to indicate that through sin fear, particularly in this instance of beasts, was common to all men. Beasts did not spare anyone in their attack on man--not even infants. This fact indicated that infants were also held by the bonds of the ancient sin.⁴³ Augustine in this instance was illustrating how he could drain a passage of almost every conceivable interpretation to support his thesis.

Augustine in one instance made use of John's reference to the de-⁴⁴filement of all mankind through Adam's sin to attack Julian. In

⁴¹Quasten, III, 442.

⁴²Augustine, "Contra Julianum," I, vi, 23; "Against Julian," edited by Deferrari, p. 28.

⁴³Augustine, "Contra Julianum," I, vi, 25.

⁴⁴Ibid., I, vi, 27.

another quotation which Augustine utilized Chrysostom pointed out that Christ found man subject to the "paternal handwriting which Adam wrote."⁴⁵ Christ pointed to the beginning of the debt, and through each individual's sins the interest increased. Augustine again was quick to apply this statement to the sins of infants. Augustine endeavored to point out that Chrysostom was not merely dealing with sins of action by individual descendants of Adam but that the Father was also considering the effects of the one sin upon all mankind.⁴⁶ In Christ all men live, and through baptism they die with Him to sin. Again Augustine applied this fact to the infants and indicated that they died to sin also in baptism. In connection with a discussion on the significance of baptism to the infant, Augustine then entered into his own interpretation of Chrysostom's claim that infants did not have sin. Augustine interpreted these "sins" to mean voluntary sin, or in more modern systematic theology, willful sins. When Chrysostom compared the infants with the adults who had committed actual sins, he could state that babies did not have sins. In this passage Julian read the term "sins" as "sin," and thus with the singular form of the noun applied the term to Adam's sin, the fall. Augustine blamed this on the translator and indicated that he had manuscripts which supported his reading, "sins."⁴⁷ Thus Augustine

⁴⁵Ibid., I, vi, 26; "Against Julian," edited by Deferrari, p. 31.

⁴⁶Augustine, "Contra Julianum," I, vi, 28.

⁴⁷Ibid., I, vi, 22.

not only carried Chrysostom's claims one step farther to support his own teachings, but he also endeavored on the basis of textual evidence and exegesis to refute a primary patristic support of the Pelagian heresy. Augustine carried the discussion to technical detail in order to establish his logical and legitimate interpretation.⁴⁸

John stated that baptism was administered to infants and thus claimed the children for the Kingdom.⁴⁹ Chrysostom discussed Christ's redemptive act in terms of this baptism, and then Augustine again carried these thoughts to his own conclusions. He indicated that since infants were baptized, this baptism must be for a purpose. Since they did not possess their own actual sin, it must be the sin of another individual, that is, original sin, which had become common to all men.⁵⁰ Thus Augustine coped with an exegetical problem from the writings of this Church Father and showed through reference to clearer passages and to a discussion of the effect of Adam's sin on mankind that Chrysostom did not actually deny that a child was in need of forgiveness through baptism. If the child was in need of fellowship in the Kingdom and in need of baptism to come into this Kingdom, according to Chrysostom, why did the child not receive forgiveness of sins as baptized adults received? Augustine presented a convincing argument in this instance, even though he carried many of John's statements to logical ends within his own theology.

⁴⁸Ibid., I, vi, 22.

⁴⁹Ibid., I, vi, 21.

⁵⁰Ibid., I, vii, 33.

Additional Sources not Quoted by Augustine

Ignatius

Ignatius, bishop of Antioch and Christian martyr in the early second century, wrote letters to seven congregations in Asia Minor. From these letters modern scholars have drawn much material to understand the thoughts of Christian leaders immediately after the early apostolic period of the church. Ignatius, of course, added to the Pauline theology concerning original sin, but he reflected early in the church's history the concern about sin after baptism. Augustine had accounted for the struggle between flesh and spirit in the Christian on the basis of concupiscence or the tendency toward sin, even though the guilt was removed in baptism. Ignatius also was concerned about the sins that resulted from the struggle between Satan and God in the hearts of men. He emphatically stated that an individual who professed to have faith did not sin nor did he who possessed love hate.⁵¹ The Christian or unbelieving confession of an individual was determined by the work that he performed. A man's faith was demonstrated by that which he did.⁵² Thus early in the church's history the concern for the remaining struggle after becoming a Christian was a growing problem.

⁵¹Ignatius, "Epistola ad Ephesios," Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1894), V, col. 656.

⁵²Ibid.

Melito of Sardis

Melito, bishop of Sardis in the second century, was a prolific writer, most of whose works are lost today. From the few remaining works theologians have been able to draw fragmentary ideas of the theology of this Eastern Father. Melito emphasized the binding quality of sin. Upon every soul sin placed its mark and destined every man to death. Thus all flesh fell into the power of sin, and everyone was subject to the power of death.⁵³ Again Melito had some thoughts parallel to the later thoughts of Augustine, for this early Eastern Father realized the effect of Adam's sin. Death passed on all men--infants and adults. Such universality of death and of sin's power was a theme in Augustine's treatment of original sin. The detailed exposition of how this sin passed on all men, of course, was not outlined by Melito, but one more element in Augustinian theology was pronounced in definite terms.

Clement of Alexandria

Clement, philosophical theologian of the second and third centuries and head of the Alexandrian Catechetical school, wrote works on Christian education and in opposition to Gnosticism. Clement had little to say about the relation of the first sin and the contemporary Christian. The causes of sin were ignorance and weakness, and he, too, placed great emphasis on the voluntary nature of sin and the responsibility

⁵³Quasten, I, 245.

of the individual. In this appeal to personal responsibility the overtones of sin committed by will and in action are quite obvious. He propounded the theory that man lies under the sin of Adam in respect to man's sin being like the sin of Adam. He did not explain an inherited sin. On the contrary, he asked one of his gnostic opponents, Julius Cassianus, who had condemned the conception of children as evil, how infants could have fallen under the curse of Adam, since they had not performed any actions of their own. ⁵⁴ Again the emphasis is on sins of action and will rather than on inherited guilt.

The idea of Adam as representing or including the human race and the idea of inherited sin are generally absent from the writings of Clement. He accepted the fall of Adam as a fact. ⁵⁵ He realized that a tendency toward sin still existed after baptism, and like Ignatius he dealt with the struggle of the Christian against sin. Clement was very strict with anyone who sinned grossly after baptism, and he spoke in serious terms about penitence. ⁵⁶ For this theologian the things outside the will which most likely caused human sin were the weakness of matter, the involuntary impulses of ignorance, and irrational

⁵⁴Tennant, pp. 294-295.

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 291 ff.

⁵⁶Clement of Alexandria, "Stromatum," Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1857), VIII, cols. 993-994.

57 necessities. His philosophical orientation led Clement to place much emphasis on human will in accounting for sin in the world. Each man fell into sin through lust as Adam had, and Christ delivered 58 the sinner through His redemptive work.

Origen

Origen, pupil and successor to Clement of Alexandria as director of the Catechetical School, wrote many commentaries on Scripture. His De Principiis was an early systematic exposition of Christian doctrine and again indicated the thorough, scholarly background which Alexandrian leaders of the Church generally had. Like Clement, Origen emphasized human will but was more acutely aware of the inherent sinfulness of human nature. Origen believed in the pre-existence of souls, who enter this life in a sinful condition from sin acquired in a former state. Hereditary pollution thus was attached to all mankind, but in his philosophical separation of the human being into body, soul and spirit he claimed that prenatal sin did not exist in the rational spirit. The indefiniteness of his teaching on prenatal sin arrived at a conclusion which Augustine later emphasized. With his doctrine of the pre-existence of souls Origen treated his ideas about prenatal sin as a condition inseparable from man's environment. This kind of inherited sin was a positive type of physical pollution to which in some

57 Tennant, p. 295.

58 Moxon, p. 26.

inexplicable way guilt attached itself. To Origen a tendency toward
 sin was not wrong in the sight of God, but the voluntary consent consti-
 tuted sin. The consequence of prenatal sin thus was a corrupting of
 man's relationship with God. Sin began with the woman, but the origin
 of sin in the individual came from prenatal existence. He recognized
 the possibility of sin after baptism but saw in Christ the deliverance
 from all sin. In explaining the existence of this sin in children, he
 appealed to apostolic infant baptismal practice. Due to this stain of
 sin in children baptism was to be administered to infants.

⁵⁹Norman Powell Williams, The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin (London, New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1929), p. xviii.

⁶⁰Tennant, pp. 297-298.

⁶¹Origen, "Contra Celsum," Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1857), XI, col. 1476.

⁶²Origen, "In Lucam Homilia VIII," Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Turnholti, Belgium: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, n. d.), XIII, cols. 1819-1822.

⁶³Origen, "De Principiis," Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1857), XI, cols. 115-182.

⁶⁴Origen, "Homiliae in Jeremiam," Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Turnholti, Belgium: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, n. d.), XIII, col. 445.

⁶⁵Tennant, p. 300

⁶⁶Ernst Gerfen, Baptizein and Eucharist (Columbus, Ohio: F. J. Herr Printing Company, 1908), p. 50.

Origen, therefore, testified to a kind of original sin and infant baptism. He did account for prenatal sin in Augustine's way, but he did not account for the practice of infant baptism in a way similar to Augustine.⁶⁷ Infant baptism for the removal of original sin sounded the note by which Augustine argued for original sin.

Methodius

Methodius, bishop of Lycia around the beginning of the fourth century, wrote a number of works, only one of which is still extant. As a theologian he did little to shed bright light on pre-Augustinian teaching concerning original sin except that he did refer in at least one instance to the result of Adam's sin. When man had disobeyed, sin was established in mankind. Man thus deprived himself of the divine breath given to him in creation, and since that time man has been under the passions which the serpent put into him.⁶⁸ He thus approached a teaching on inherited passions.

Athanasius

Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria and leader of opposition against the Arians, was one of the most famous of the persecuted church leaders of the early church. This bishop, who was exiled five times, held some of the more important ideas essential to an understanding of

⁶⁷Quasten, II, 83.

⁶⁸Tennant, p. 310.

sin from Adam in Eastern theology.

Though Athanasius did not emphasize the subjective quality of sin from Adam as much as Augustine did, he still provided much more detailed theological statements than did Methodius. Adam had fallen into sin, and this sin passed on to all mankind. Athanasius frequently expressed himself in general terms, which did not explain the precise manner in which Adam's sin passed to all mankind. Ordinary inheritance would probably be the implied means of descent of sin. In his Incarnation of the Word of God Athanasius referred to the original innocence of Adam and Eve. Despite this innocence they could, of course, come under the natural law of death and live in corruption. Baptism wiped out this sin which came from the sin of Adam and Eve. Communicated through baptism were the benefits of Christ's work. The Redeemer took on Himself a pure body that was unstained by the sin of man. He, therefore, realized that man by nature had sin and that this sin did not corrupt Christ. Man had inherited sin, and Christ came to remove this sin.

Athanasius explicitly stated that the corruption which was in man

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 314.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 313.

⁷¹ Athanasius, The Incarnation of the Word of God (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946), ch. i, par. 3.

⁷² Ibid., i, 8.

⁷³ Ibid., ii, 17.

was not external to the body but established within it. No direct statements, therefore, set down an Augustinian doctrine of original sin, but many of the elements of the doctrine of original sin in Athanasius' work agree with the later writings of Augustine.

Cyril of Jerusalem

Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem during the fourth century, wrote a number of instructional works for catechumens. Cyril made several allusions to a sinful wound in man. The transgression of the first parents was the sin of every man. The universality of sin was a result of the fall.⁷⁵ Man had fallen and had been blinded by sin. A very great wound existed in the nature of man. Cyril defined sin basically in terms of voluntary action. On the basis of this definition of sin infants could not be guilty of evil, but they did fall under the blinding quality of sin.⁷⁶ When man came into the world he was without voluntary sin,⁷⁷ but as he lived he contaminated his life with evil. All of this sin,⁷⁸ of course, arose from the devil, who was the author of sin. He thus believed in the universal effect of Adam's sin on each person. Such

⁷⁴Ibid., vii, 43.

⁷⁵Tennant, p. 315.

⁷⁶Moxon, pp. 34-35.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Cyril, "Catecheses Illuminandorum," Patrologiae: Patrum Graecorum, edited by J. P. Migne (Paris: Garnier Fratres, 1857), XXXIII, col. 385.

an emphasis stands well in the line of pre-Augustinian theology in the effect of Adam's sin.

Gregory of Nyssa

Gregory, one of the Cappadocian Fathers who was bishop of Nyssa during the fourth century, was more concerned in his theology with the doctrine of Christ than with the doctrine of sin. His Oratio Catechetica Magna was the first attempt after Origen's De Principiis to write a systematic theology. In the second portion of this work⁷⁹ Gregory proceeded from the creation of man to redemption in Christ. Gregory rejected Origen's theory about the pre-existence and migration of souls. Added to this rejection was a denial of sins committed in a⁸⁰ previous world. Gregory used categories of thought more akin to Augustinian organization. With his rejection of some of Origen's un-accepted theories about the origin of sin Gregory took a step forward toward Augustine's fuller declaration of the doctrine of original⁸¹ sin. Gregory was the most systematic of the Cappadocian fathers and in his consistent treatment of theology had a definite conception of an inherited sin in the subjective sense, the inheritance of a moral taint⁸² traceable to Adam's fall. To partake of Adam's nature was to partake⁸³ of his fall. This innate sin was removed by baptism. Gregory,

⁷⁹Quasten, III, 262.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 289.

⁸¹Tennant, pp. 323-324.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

therefore, held that all men, whether they committed sins of action or not, had inherited an alienation from God with the nature that they had inherited from Adam. Every man thus possessed a sinful nature. However, Gregory's theology does contain an explanation of Adam's sin and of the fall of man which agrees closely with what was later defined in the church.⁸⁴ In the estimation of many modern scholars Gregory was the first Greek Father in whose writings are distinct descriptions of sin from Adam.⁸⁵

Didymus the Blind

Didymus, a fourth century theologian who was blind from infancy, had been director of the Catechetical School in Alexandria and had instructed Gregory of Nazianzus, Jerome, and Rufinus. He spoke of the fall of the first parents as the ancient sin from which Christ cleansed man in His baptism in the Jordan River. All children of Adam inherited this sin by transmission through the intercourse of their parents. Jesus, who was born of a virgin, was thus not stained by this sin. Baptism cleansed from original sin and made sons of God from rebellious men. Baptism was essential for eternal life, for in it man's sin was washed away.⁸⁶ The significance of baptism in Didymus' theology and the importance of baptismal removal of sin cannot be stressed too strongly. Such emphasis was parallel to

⁸⁴ McClear, pp. 211-212.

⁸⁵ Moxon, p. 35.

⁸⁶ Quasten, III, 97-98.

Augustine's later insistence on baptism's removal of sin in men.

Theodore of Mopsuestia

Theodore, bishop of Mopsuestia in the latter fourth century and early fifth century, wrote a work entitled Adversus Defensores Peccati Originalis,⁸⁷ "Against the Defenders of Original Sin." He, therefore, became the first Eastern theologian explicitly to deny an Augustinian doctrine of original sin. He was an avowed Pelagian in the doctrine of original sin and maintained that the will of each man was absolutely free, possessing the ability to choose either good or evil.⁸⁸ Issue has been taken with the claim that he completely denied original sin. A part of the problem, of course, centers in the fact that the work is not extant, and that some modern scholars have pronounced certain historical references to this work by Theodore as forgeries.⁸⁹ Therefore, Theodore set a part of the background for Augustine's positive assertions. Augustine did not take issue with the writings of this man explicitly, but in his opposition to Julian, Augustine set up an explicit statement of the Scriptural doctrine of original sin.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 413.

⁸⁸ Moxon, pp. 39-40.

⁸⁹ Quasten, III, 419.

Conclusion

Augustine's purpose in appealing to Eastern and Western Fathers was, first of all, to indicate from their writings evidence for his position in opposition to the Pelagian false teachings. Augustine wished to accumulate as many writings and references as he felt necessary to speak against Pelagian attacks on Christian orthodoxy. With this group of Church Fathers he set out to overcome the Julian heresies and related false teachings about original sin. In Contra Julianum Augustine specifically employed references from the Church Fathers to refute Julian's five points of attack. In his refutation Augustine simultaneously established many of the basic points concerning his doctrine of original sin.

Augustine, therefore, proposed by the weight of the authority of these Church Fathers, many of whom were bishops before him, to defend his teaching on original sin.⁹⁰ These Church Fathers, according to Augustine, had strenuously defended the correct view by their words⁹¹ while living and by their writings that they left for posterity. On the basis of evidence from Eastern Fathers Augustine again emphasized God as the Creator of men, the blessedness of marriage, the forgiveness of all sins through baptism in Christ, the justice of God, and the

⁹⁰Augustine, "Contra Julianum," II, ix, 31.

⁹¹Ibid.

Christian's ultimate perfection in heaven.⁹² Despite these truths men were still born as subjects to sin and would be lost eternally unless reborn in Christ. These teachings of an inherited sin were asserted by the Church Fathers and, according to Augustine, substantiated⁹³ the validity of all five of his theses.

The purpose of Augustine in Contra Julianum was to appeal to as many different Fathers as he deemed necessary to support his point. He, therefore, picked both Eastern and Western Fathers and indicated that the Western Fathers offered sufficient testimony in support of original⁹⁴ sin to substantiate the doctrine. Julian's attacks against Augustine were directed against these Fathers, and Augustine felt honored to be placed into such an illustrious camp.⁹⁵ Julian's denial of⁹⁶ original sin was a defamation of the names of these great teachers. To Augustine these references were neither from works whose authors⁹⁷ were unimportant and unknown nor from writings of poor literary value. Posterity had preserved many of these authorities, and thus material from them would reflect the church's teachings generally. Besides the authors whom he quoted, Augustine also listed numerous ecclesiastical

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid., I, iv, 13.

⁹⁵Ibid., I, iv, 12.

⁹⁶Ibid., I, iv, 11; I, iv, 12.

⁹⁷Ibid., I, vii, 32.

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 leaders whom he felt also agreed with his authorities. Of particular
 note was Innocent, the predecessor of Bishop Zosimus, since this bishop
 had taken a definite position against Pelagianism.⁹⁹ Augustine em-
 ployed scholarly methodology to gather the supporting material for
 his writings against the Pelagians. He consulted Latin translations
 of the Greek works, to which he referred, since he was not proficient
 in Greek. The "cloud of witnesses" which he gathered were to form an
 impressive group of scholars who reflected Christian theology. Augustine,
 of course, drew those sections from these writings which he felt best
 supported his contentions.

Modern scholars have looked with critical eyes on the general
 treatment of the doctrine of original sin in the writings of all these
 Church Fathers. Their conclusions have varied from ambivalence to
 complete certainty of the Fathers' correctness or error in their
 teachings about original sin. The problem centers in the fact that the
 Fathers prior to Augustine did not have occasion to analyze and to defend
 the position which Augustine later had to establish against heresy.
 Such men as Tertullian, Cyprian, and Ambrose in the West made definite
 statements which agreed generally with later Augustinian doctrine.
 Irenaeus was one of the first Church Fathers to define more explicitly
 the teaching of sin from Adam. Origen had a conception of man's fallen
 state, but he got lost in speculations about prenatal sins of souls.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

Methodius argued that the full effects of the fall were seen in man's sinfulness. Athanasius emphasized the loss of the grace of conformity to God's image. Didymus taught that the stain of original sin descended by propagation. Chrysostom indicated the consequences of concupiscence, while Theodore of Mopsuestia appears to be the only Father who really denied an Augustinian doctrine of original sin. From the writings of these various Fathers one or several Augustinian emphases could be drawn to reflect the progression of clearer explication of Scripture's doctrine of original sin.

Conclusions of modern scholars on the basis of the scattered references from the writings of these Fathers have also differed. F. R. Tennant holds that the development of the doctrine of original sin was less the outcome of strict exegesis than it was due to the exercise of speculation. This speculation worked along Scriptural lines but applied current scientific and philosophical materials to the explications.¹⁰⁰ These scholars have divided early Church Fathers into two categories: (1) the camp which considered original sin as an impaired moral constitution, a natural infirmity, and not truly sin; (2) the group which believed it to involve guilt and a corrupt will deserving of punishment. These same men have asserted that the Church Fathers inclined to the view that original sin was not sin. Such conclusions must be radically contested or clarified. The Church Fathers differentiated frequently, as Augustine did, between one's own sins and the sins of another

¹⁰⁰Tennant, p. 345.

individual. Sometimes these sins of the individual were referred to as one's own sins or sins that an individual had voluntarily committed. For such sins the infant was not guilty. However, these same Fathers realized that these infants who were "innocent" of the voluntary sins still bore the consequences of sin, that is, death, suffering, and want. They did not go into as much detail as Augustine and claim that infants were damned. Furthermore, these same Church Fathers struggled with the problem of the effects of original sin even after baptism. This inclination toward sin stayed with the Christian even after baptism, and such problems as the "lapsed" in North Africa and sin after baptism entered into the writings of these Fathers. Thus they were more concerned with the effects of sin than with the transmission of this sin. They cannot be branded as rejectors of various aspects of a doctrine of inherited sin parallel to much of Augustine's doctrine because their theological vocabulary and thought patterns were not always the same as in the later church. They did speculate on the transmission of this sin at times, and sometimes they got lost in their own philosophies and theological concerns. The emphasis on will frequently led them to claim a free will for man and an ability to choose between good and evil. Such speculation, of course, caused them to tread on thin ice in the light of later theological formulations.

Augustine used the sections from the Church Fathers that he felt agreed with his theological position while he omitted the problematic areas. His purpose was not to refute the past Church Fathers. In his position as a Christian theologian he was convinced that these early

Fathers were teaching the truth. He can be criticized for not explaining that there was much speculation in the early church or at least varied interpretations on the transmission of sin. However, he cannot be criticized for showing the areas where these men taught important areas of the general doctrine of original sin. For instance, some of the Fathers were concerned with the presence of concupiscence in the heart after baptism; other men dealt with the effects of sin on the child. Some of these same Fathers completely avoided these topics, since that was not the purpose of their writings. Augustine's purpose was to appeal to these Fathers for evidence of a united and progressive explanation of the doctrine of original sin. He fulfilled this purpose and supported his material with evidence from the writings of both Eastern and Western Fathers. Individual passages may be debated on the basis of context, but the general tone of their writings indicated a concern for sin, as Julian and other Pelagians did not want to admit.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

In the theology of Augustine the doctrine of original sin received detailed explanation which had come partly from the progressive understanding of aspects of similar teachings in the writings of previous Church Fathers. The Pelagian controversy from which this Augustinian material arose provided the impetus for much of the church to make conciliar proclamations within the succeeding century. Prior to these ecclesiastical statements Fathers of the church had reflected pertinent aspects of this doctrine within their writings, which particularly contained theological concerns of their day. They spoke to the theological emphases of their day and thereby provided grounds for later churchmen to develop the limited references to other subjects in these works into other doctrinal formulations.

According to Augustine's doctrine of original sin, all men entered into the world as rebellious creatures formed by a just God. As sharers in the crime of Adam man inherited sin through his conception and birth. The regenerative work of Christ through baptism removed this guilt of sin. Despite the fact that a sinful infant arose from the union of man and woman, marriage was considered good, for God created the parents and established marriage. Sin's consequences were particularly apparent in marriage, and the struggle against Satan after the Christian entered God's Kingdom had an effect on the Christian home. The conflict with sin, suffering, and death was present proof that sin continued to exist.

In Christ man had received a solution to his problem. God's goodness appeared in the light of the Savior's work, despite the fact that He must condemn all who die in their original sin. God's acts of creation did not establish Him as the Author of evil. Rather, the rebellious will of man arose from the original sin that he received from his parents.

Augustine refuted the opposition of his Pelagian opponents by establishing the source of evil in Satan, the goodness of marriage, the forgiveness of all sins in baptism, the justice of God, and the Christian's ultimate attainment of perfection. To establish the validity of this Scriptural doctrine within the church since the early apostolic period, Augustine picked pertinent passages from Eastern and Western Church Fathers. He reflected his theological abilities in picking Fathers who agreed with aspects of his interpretation. He did not deal with the problematic areas in order to present a more systematic list of allusions or references from the Fathers. He, therefore, emphasized the pertinent passages, but simultaneously he created the impression that all the Church Fathers agreed with him in every detail. He did not propose to review the unorthodox teachings of some Church Fathers. For instance, he did not delve into the theology of Tertullian, who maintained a teaching on original sin but arrived at his conclusion through a philosophical theory that later was rejected by the church. Augustine was an able theologian in carefully picking the pertinent passages that supported his interpretation and in avoiding an overly comprehensive explanation of the theology of sin from each writer quoted.

Augustine's purpose in appealing to these Fathers was partially to acquire from their writings some evidence for his theology in opposition to the Pelagian heresies. Augustine further desired to collect a group of Fathers' writings which would support his attack against misconceptions about the doctrine of original sin. He picked Eastern and Western writers to illustrate his points from their works. This appeal to the Eastern Fathers is contrary to much modern scholarship which feels that little or no evidence for original sin existed in the Eastern Church. Julian's denial of the Biblical doctrine of original sin placed Augustine in the camp of the many Church Fathers who in some way reflected thoughts with which Augustine agreed.

Augustine's general procedure in collecting relevant material from the Fathers was valid despite the sharp criticism which such a method meets in modern scholarship. Many of the critics of Augustine have maintained that the majority of the Church Fathers prior to Augustine considered original sin as only a taint and not damning sin. Such a claim indirectly attacks Augustine's purpose of appealing to these writings and is dangerous to maintain. In the theology of Augustine original sin did not merely include the participation of mankind in Adam's sin and the guilt that resulted in this participation but also covered the results of the act and the solution of the problem. The doctrine through the pen of Augustine had implications for the Christian home and for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. The Church Fathers did have relevant statements concerning these interrelated matters. Augus-

tine realized this connection, and in order to refute the opposition appealed to these writers. Augustine wished to use these Fathers as witnesses to a united and progressive explication of the Scriptural truths about original sin. He fulfilled his purpose and supported this material with evidence from the writings of Eastern and Western Fathers. Individual references may be questioned on the basis of theological context, but the general tone of these writings indicated a concern for sin, a concern which Augustinian opposition does not wish to readily admit.

Augustine thus could legitimately point to references in the Fathers who taught certain aspects of the Biblical doctrine. The material from the Fathers arose historically from the theological concerns of their day. Their teachings concerning various aspects of sin consequently did receive detailed attention by Augustine. The doctrine of original sin underwent a progressive explanation which in a sense culminated in the teachings of Augustine and later received conciliar recognition.

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