The Relationship of the So-Called Semi-Pelagians and Eastern Greek Theology on the Doctrine of Original Sin

An Historical-Systematic Analysis and its Relevance for 21st Century Protestantism.

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (AWARDED BY OU/ABERDEEN)

Award date:
2020

Awarding institution:
University of Aberdeen

‘The Relationship of the So-Called Semi-Pelagians and Eastern Greek Theology on the Doctrine of Original Sin: An Historical-Systematic Analysis and its Relevance for 21st Century Protestantism’

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of Highland Theological College UHI in partnership with the University of Aberdeen in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy

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2020

ABSTRACT

The theological study of the so-called Semi-Pelagians has been minimal relative to the study of Augustine of Hippo. Nevertheless, the monks hailing from the southern portion of Roman Gaul were the first critical respondents to Augustine's doctrine of grace, providing an important perspective for those that had concern over some of his positions, specifically with regard to free will and predestination. This study builds upon the pre-existing work by scholars who have written on the Gallic monks, arguing that they were not building a middle ground between Pelagius and Augustine but instead part of a larger tradition from Eastern Greek theology. It also cautions against recent attempts to reinterpret the Gallic monks as sympathetic to Augustine. Where this study breaks new ground is in couching the source of disagreement between the monks of southern Gaul and the Bishop of Hippo within the doctrine of Original Sin, not over free will and predestination as many scholars to date have done. Scholars who have studied the Gallic monks have noted that their view of grace and free will had strong eastern influence, and in this study it will be shown that the Gallic monks align more closely with the eastern tradition in their statements concerning or even implied from Original Sin.

Because there are many misunderstandings about the Gallic monks, we first provide a thorough historical background to the situation that gave rise to the concerns against Augustine's later writings. Then we describe Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin and its Latin precedent. Next we establish the monolithic view of the Greek patristics on two critical aspects of Original Sin: a denial of the inheritance of the actual guilt of Adam and a rejection that lapsarian humans are unable to do anything toward their own salvation apart from superadded grace. Then we analyze the thought of three voices of the so-called Semi-Pelagians: John Cassian, Vincent of Lérins, and Faustus of Riez. We will argue that these three voices did not have Augustinian sympathies regarding grace, free will, and those two critical aspects of Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin. Finally, we will show that it is important for the 5th century Gallic view to have a place in the contemporary Protestant discourses on Original Sin and *ordo salutis*.

Acknowledgements

An advanced, multi-year project such as this receives the support of many people. First I would like to thank my father, Arthur G. Jaros, Jr., for his foresight, stewardship, and love which afforded me the opportunity to pursue a terminal degree. I would also like to thank my wife, Michaela, for the years of patience and the burden she carried in order that could I undertake this project. To Greg, for your interest in my project and technical guidance. To Jonathan and Catarina, without whom my translations would have sounded too rigid and a hundred years outdated. Finally, a hardy thanks to my friend, Ted, who examined drafts of this manuscript seeking spelling errors, grammatical mistakes, and formatting inconsistencies.

Abbreviations

Ancient Christian Writers	ACW
Ante-Nicene Fathers	ANF
The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Vol. 1: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)	CT1
Corpus Christianorum Series Latina	CCSL
Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum	CSEL
The Fathers of the Church	FOTC
Library of Christian Classics	LCC
Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers – First Series	NPNF1
Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers – Second Series	NPNF2
Works of Saint Augustine – A Translation for the 21st Century	WSA
Answer to the Pelagians I	AP1
Answer to the Pelagians, II: Marriage and Desire, Answer to the Two Letters of the Pelagians, Answer to Julian	AP2
Answer to the Pelagians, III: Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian	AP3
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to analyze the relationship between the so-called Semi-Pelagians and Eastern Greek theology, chiefly as it pertains to the doctrine of Original Sin. Here, "Original Sin" or *peccatum originale* broadly refers to those things that an historical Adam passed on to his posterity as a result of the Fall. While Augustine of Hippo is one of the most respected theologians of church history, whose writings influenced the advent of the Protestant Reformation, he also has had a reputation for defending a controversial position on Original Sin. And while some Augustinian scholars have written on the topic of Original Sin, modern research has paid little-to-no attention to the reception that Augustine's doctrine faced in the Western world. There were two geographical areas of critical response to Augustine: Hadrumentum (modern day Sousse, Tunisia) and southern Gaul, chiefly from Marseille and the Island of Lérins (modern day France). These responses came from different monastic communities, and for our purposes we will be analyzing the response from southern Gaul, the stronger of two responses.

Our interest lay in the writings of John Cassian (c. 360 – 435), Vincent of Lérins (d. c. 445), and Faustus of Riez (d. 490). Cassian is known for demonstrating 'how much the spirit of Eastern monasticism has stimulated and shaped Western monasticism.'[1] Vincent is well known, especially amongst Roman Catholics and high Anglicans, for his canon of orthodoxy: *id teneamus quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est*.[2] Faustus

[1] Hubertus R. Drobner, *The Fathers of the Church: A Comprehensive Introduction*, trans. Siegfreid S. Schatzmann (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 372.

[2] Vincent of Lérins, *Commonitorium* 3, in *The Commonitorium of Vincentius of Lerins*, ed. Reginald Stewart Moxon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), 10, line 6-7.

has not made a name for himself as the other two have, perhaps due to the fact that his writings have remained largely untranslated from the original Latin.[3] However, he was influential in his day as a bishop in the church. These three monks played a crucial role in responding to the Augustinianism of their day.

> It was in the south of Gaul, especially in Marseilles, that the spirit of opposition to Augustine's views on grace and predestination was strongest. We have direct knowledge of that opposition through two letters sent to Augustine by two of his defenders, Prosper of Aquitaine and Hilary of Arles. We also have a number of writings of the leaders of this opposition, such as John Cassian, Vincent of Lérins, and Faustus of Riez.[4]

These monks either were replying to Augustine himself (a point which is continually debated)[5] or, at the very least, the Augustinianism they found in their geographical midst which largely presented itself in the writings of Prosper of Aquitaine and, in the second half of the fifth century, Lucidus.[6] As it will be demonstrated, historical theologians writing on the so-called Semi-Pelagians have made little observation about their view on Original Sin. Furthermore, historical theologians writing topically on Original Sin have largely failed to make mention (much less a thorough presentation) of the so-called Semi-

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[3] Except for, partially, a few of his letters which may be found in an obscure book not written toward large audiences; Ralph W. Mathisen, *Ruricius of Limoges and Friends: A Collection of Letters from Visigothic Gaul* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 92-105; 243-252.

[4] Justo Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought: From Augustine to the Eve of the Reformation*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 58. Here Gonzalez mistakes Hilary the Layman (Prosper's friend) for Hilary of Arles. Hilary of Arles was very likely sympathetic to the Gallic response to Augustine, having spent time and learning at the monastery of Lérins. Also confirming that these three monks are the leaders of the Gallic response to Augustine is Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Vol 1: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 319.

[5] See §6.1

[6] Defending the latter option of Gallic Augustinianism (dubbed a more extreme form of Augustinianism) are Augustine Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*: Responding to Augustine's Legacy in Fifth-Century Gaul,' *Grace for Grace: The Debates after Augustine and Pelagius* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 153, 'Contemporary historiography of fifth-century Gaul retains a strong presumption that there was a dominant, normative reception of Augustinian theology (identified first and foremost as his teachings on grace as exemplified in the subsequent generation in the teachings of Prosper of Aquitaine), and that any divergence whatever from that normative position justifies a modern presumption that those divergences are part of a subversive agenda,' and Dunstan O'Keeffe, 'The *Via Media* of Monastic Theology: The Debate on Grace and Free Will in the Fifth-Century Southern Gaul,' *The Downside Review*, vol. 113, no. 392 (July 1995), 167, 'it is probably true to say that Faustus was targeting an extreme form of Augustinianism that was not entirely faithful to the hermeneutical principles of the Bishop of Hippo.'

Pelagians. Before presenting brief biographical backgrounds of Cassian, Vincent, and Faustus, it is worthwhile to make an excursus regarding their common categorization.

The Semi-Pelagian Moniker

Traditionally, these monks from the fifth century southern Gaul have been labeled "Semi-Pelagian." The idea that "Semi-Pelagianism" was birthed, created, or contrived at a point in time either contemporary to or chronologically after Augustine's writings has been a belief held by many historical theologians. Daniel J. Nodes writes that, 'southern Gaul in the mid-fifth century … was the birthplace of Semipelagianism, the Gallican monastic reaction to what was understood to be Augustine's teaching concerning the effects of the first sin, free will, grace and predestination.'[7] Arminian theologian Roger Olson concurs:

> This ancient heresy stems from the teachings of the so-called Massilians, led especially by John Cassian (d. A.D. 433), *who tried to build a bridge* between Pelagianism, which denied original sin, and Augustine, who argued for unconditional election on the ground that all of Adam's descendants are born spiritually dead and guilty of Adam's sin.[8]

Neander, following suit, 'it was natural that an intermediate and conciliatory tendency between these two opposites should make its appearance.'[9] Finally, Robert Peterson and Michael Williams add, 'The generation after Augustine and Pelagius would give birth to the Semi-Pelagian movement.'[10]

If one were to desire a brief description of Semi-Pelagianism, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* defines it as such: 'while not denying the necessity of grace for salvation, maintained that the first steps towards the Christian life were ordinarily

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[7] Daniel J. Nodes, 'Avitus of Vienne's Spiritual History and the Semipelagian Controversy: The Doctrinal Implications of Books I-III,' *Vigiliae Christianae*, vol. 38 (1984), 185.

[8] Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006), 30, emphasis mine.

[9] Augustus Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, vol. 2, trans. Joseph Torrey (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1855), 687.

[10] Robert A. Peterson and Michael D. Williams, *Why I am Not an Arminian* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 35.

taken by the human will and that grace supervened only later.'[11] The *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* explains, that for the Semi-Pelagians the initial movement could be performed by the 'unaided will.'[12]

While some scholars believe that Semi-Pelagianism was created in the fifth century and that free will could act outside of divine grace, others have noted the problem with the designation. Jaroslav Pelikan wrote, 'The penchant for tagging every doctrinal position with a party label has led to the invention of the name Semi-Pelagianism, which is even less useful than most such designations.'[13]

> The term "Semi-Pelagian" is generally conceded to be a misnomer, as the persons so designated rejected Pelagianism. They have also been labeled anti-Augustinians; yet that designation is inappropriate as well. In fact, these persons accepted Augustine's arguments against the Pelagian heresy. They, too, insisted on the necessity of grace.[14]

From Weaver's description, the so-called Semi-Pelagians insisted on the necessity of grace for salvation; and as it will be shown, their point of view was not created ad hoc as a middle ground between Augustine and Pelagius, but rather was representative of the eastern theological tradition.

Some scholars accept the use of the term 'Semi-Pelagian' while other reject it. Observe how William O'Connor attempts to separate Vincent from the accusation of Semi-Pelagianism in his three chapters: 'St. Vincent of Lerins not the author of the "Objectiones Vincentianae,"' 'The Commonitorium does not betray a Semipelagian Author,' and 'The Commonitorium not a polemic Treatise against Saint Augustine and his doctrine of Grace.'[15] Or consider that Thomas Guarino observes that the atmosphere surrounding the

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[11] 'Semipelagianism,' *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. Eliizabeth. A. Livingstone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 468.

[12] Richard Kyle, 'Semi-Pelagianism,' *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 2nd edition (Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 2001), 1090.

[13] Pelikan, *CT1*, 318.

[14] Rebecca Harden Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 40.

[15] William O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine. Was the Commonitorium of Saint Vincent of Lerins Intended as a Polemic Treatise against Saint Augustine and his Doctrine on Presdestination?,' *Doctor Communis*, vol. 16, facs.. 2-3 (1963), 140.

monasteries of southern Gaul entail that Vincent would be sympathetic to the Semi-Pelagian view.[16] Yet he argues, 'there also exist good arguments defending Vincent against the anti-Augustinian charge.'[17] For writers such as these, the philosophy or concept of Semi-Pelagianism existed as a distinct brand of theology on the doctrines of grace and predestination.

However, others writers, including more recent scholars, such as Augustine Casiday, Alexander Hwang,[18] and Weaver prefer to reject the label altogether … and for good reason. Many of the scholars who are conversant of this era remark that the term "Semi-Pelagian" is a misnomer. After all, 'The opponents of Augustine in Provence were not "part" Pelagian, but in fact anti-Pelagian.'[19] The earliest source for any semblances to Pelagianism comes from an inaccurate claim in the writings of Prosper: *Pelagianae pravitatis reliquiae*. The Latin reads best, 'the remnants of the Pelagian heresy,'[20] which is consistent with Prosper's own belief that one was either a Pelagian or an Augustinian.[21] In *Contra Collatorem*, Prosper described the Gallic monks as 'asserting that our doctors defended the doctrine on grace in the wrong way' and that 'they create the opinion that the condemnation of the enemies of grace was unjust.'[22] Given that Gaul would have been a concern of a re-emergence of Pelagianism,[23] Prosper would have been on the lookout for

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[16] Thomas G. Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), xxii.

[17] Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, xxv.

[18] Alexander Y. Hwang, *Intrepid Lover of Perfect Grace: The Life and Thought of Prosper of Aquitaine* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 2-6.

[19] Hwang, *Intrepid Lover of Perfect Grace*, 3.

[20] Prosper, *Ep*. 225:7, *ACW* 32:45.

[21] Augustine Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian: an Evaluation of Prosper of Aquitaine's Polemic Against the "Semipelagians,"' *Scottish Journal of Theology*, vol. 58, iss. 3, August 2005, 271, 'In two letters and in a long treatise, Prosper makes the case that one must support either the heretic Pelagius or the catholic Augustine, and by implication that any criticism of Augustine is tantamount to an endorsement of Pelagius.'

[22] Prosper, *Contra Cassiani* 1, *ACW* 32:70.

[23] Irena Backus and Aza Goudriaan, '"Semipelagianism": The Origins of the Term and its Passage into the History of Heresy' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 65, no. 1. (2014), 27, 'Prosper of Aquitaine in particular linked these latter questions [about predestination and the monastic lifestyle] rightly or wrongly with a rebirth of Pelagianism.'

continued Augustinian opposition. Thus, in Prosper's eyes, the Gallic monks were Pelagians, not merely partially-Pelagian. Still,

> To apply the term to the monks of Africa or of Gaul who had difficulties with Augustine's views is both anachronistic and unjust. These monks, after all, lived long before the post-Reformation controversies on grace and free will, and they were certainly not heretics or Pelagians, even though they found difficulties with the Augustinian views on grace and predestination, some of which, as a matter of fact, were never in their entirety accepted by the Catholic Church as matters of faith.[24]

Despite the Gallic monks never being declared heretical, the Semi-Pelagian pejorative moniker has stuck around, even though as Augustine Casiday has noted, 'it originated in debates that were twice as far removed from the time of Cassian, Augustine, Prosper, and Pelagius as those four were from the time of Jesus Christ!'[25]

Weaver notes that the term 'first appeared in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century conflict, known as the *de auxilis* controversy, between the Dominicans and the Jesuits over the issue of grace.'[26] While Weaver and Casiday are quite close in identifying its first usage, Backus and Goudriaan soundly illustrate that the term first appeared in Theodore Beza's annotations of the New Testament in 1556 and again in 1558.[27] This places the term roughly thirty years before the Molinist quarrel in the Catholic church where Weaver (and others) believed the moniker first appeared. Fascinating as it may be, Beza's use of the term was not even applied to the Gallic monks of the 5th century, but rather against 16th century Roman Catholics! Fifteen years later (1571) in the *De visibili monarchia ecclesiae* by Nicholas Sanders we finally find the first association of "Semi-

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[24] Roland J. Teske, *Answer to the Pelagians, IV: To the Monks of Hadrumentum and Provence* in *Works of Saint Augustine – A Translation for the 21st Century*, part 1, vol. 26 (Hyde Park: New City Press, 1999), xi.

[25] Augustine Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St John Cassian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 6.

[26] Rebecca Harden Weaver, 'Introduction,' in *Grace for Grace: The Debates after Augustine and Pelagius*, eds. Alexander Hwang, Brain Matz, & Augustine Casiday (Washington, DC: The Catholic University Press, 2014), xiv.

[27] Irena Backus and Aza Gourdriaan, '"Semipelagianism": The Origins of the Term and its Passage into the History of Heresy,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 65, no. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 35-38.

Pelagian" with the Gallic monks.[28] Even still, Sanders rejected the Protestant accusation that the Gallic monks were "Semi-Pelagian." By the time of the Molinist quarrel twenty years later, the term stuck and found its way into history to describe both the anti-Augustinians who were supposedly condemned at the Second Council of Orange in 529 and any Catholics who seemed to flirt with their views.

Though scholars studying the Gallic monks recognize how anachronistic and pejorative the term "semi-Pelagian" is, there has been little consensus on an alternative moniker. Options range from Massilians, semi-Augustinians, anti-Augustinians, to anti-predestinarians, monks of Provence, *doctores Gallicani*[29] etc.

> The theological school which gathered round Cassian and included St Vincent of Lérins has been known since the early seventeenth century by the dubious epithet of semi-Pelagian. The Massilians had no association with the Pelagians: and because they were primarily negative, in that their fundamental tenet and bond of union consisted of opposition to doctrinal innovation, a more accurate term which of recent years has been winning favour is "anti-Augustinian."[30]

Because 'anti-Augustinian' functions as a value moniker, instead for our present purposes we shall henceforth refer to the monks of fifth and sixth century who rejected both Pelagianism and Augustianians as the "Gallic monks." Some scholars prefer this label for interpreting the monks on their own while this geographic indicator also allows us to interpret their views as compatible with that of the eastern theological tradition. This will be further investigated in the second chapter.

Instead of referring to this era as the Semi-Pelagian controversy, a better descriptor is "The Augustinian Contention," because the positions of Augustine were quietly challenged and yet we have reason to believe both sides found this disagreement to be

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[28] Backus and Goudriaan, '"Semipelagianism,'" 42.

[29] Donato Ogliari, *Gratia et Certamen: The Relationship between Grace and Free Will in the Discussion of Augustine with the So-Called Semipelagians* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 5-7.

[30] Owen Chadwick, *John Cassian: A Study in Primitive Monasticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 113.

amongst Christian brothers.[31] This period does not qualify as a controversy, properly speaking, contra one view,[32] because no formal charges were brought against either of the two parties. Augustine is never mentioned by name in the Gallic monks' writings (which has led some to reconsider whether they even were in opposition to Augustine) and neither Cassian nor Vincent are named by Augustine as heretics. Perhaps more importantly, the Second Council of Orange (529), which many consider to be the end of this period of supposed controversy, never names any of the three in its canons. 'This provides a telling contrast with another "semi"-heresy, Semi-Arianism, the partisans of which did form a coherent group and espoused the common doctrine of *homoiousios* which at least hinged on the issues that had been raised by Arius.'[33] This lack of any formal charges surely means that the Gallic monks ought not to be considered as heretics, but instead orthodox Christian thinkers who were concerned about some of Augustine's doctrine.

Brief Biographical Backgrounds

While lengthier descriptions of the lives of Cassian, Vincent, and Faustus will be presented in their respective chapters, it behooves us to go no further without first providing some details about these monks.

John Cassian was born into a wealthy Christian family from Scythia (the traditionally believed location of his birth) around 360. He received a good education, becoming fluent in both Greek and Latin. When he was a boy he spent time in a monastery in Bethlehem with his friend, Germanus. From there, at a 'youthful age'[34] they travelled to Egypt to learn more about the monasticism there. It was here that he became committed to

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[31] Augustine explicitly refers to the Massilians as 'those brethren of ours,' *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 2, *NPNF1* 5:498.

[32] Hwang, *Intrepid Lover of Perfect Grace*, 4; Peter Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition*, vol. 15 in *Message of the Fathers of the Church* (M. Glazier, 1988), 291.

[33] Backus and Goudriaan, '"Semipelagianism,"' 26.

[34] John Cassian, *Collationes* 14.9, *NPNF2* 11:439.

the ascetic teachings of the East, as is evident in his *Institutis* and *Collationes*. There remain disagreements as to why he left,[35] but he, along with Germanus, eventually moved to Constantinople where he was ordained by John Chrysostom. The two then spent several years in Rome where Germanus died. Cassian had become friends with Leo, who would eventually become Pope. In the final stretch of his life, Cassian moved to southern Gaul where he founded two monasteries in Massilia (modern day Marseilles). The three surviving works that we have from Cassian were written during this period of his life: *Institutis*, *Collationes*, and *De Incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium*. He died sometime after 432.

Vincent of Lérins is perhaps the most famous of individuals to come out of the monastery at Lérins. The monastery's reputation included 'the charge of Semipelagianism which has been laid against some of her sons, and notably against Vincent.'[36] It was there that 'The monastery of Lerins was illustrious from the fifth century onwards as the home of some of the most famous saints and scholars of the age.'[37] What little we know about Vincent's personal life is from Gennadius's *De Virus Inlustribus* (*Illustrious Lives*), written at the end of the 5th century.[38] From that we discover that he was a native of Gaul who dwelt at the monastery on Lérins. He was well learned in grammar, literature, and theology, and had great oratorical skill. He pseudonymously published a work entitled *Peregrinus against Heretics*, which is now commonly referred to as his *Commonitorium*. The cause of this is that we know Vincent published the work (and not the pseudonym) and his purpose for doing so was 'to make amends for the weakness of my memory' and 'to have provided

[35] Drobner, *The Fathers of the Church*, 372, believes it was the start of the Origenist Constroversy that led to his departure from Egypt while F. Bordolani posits that it was violent religious warring that resulted from Theophilus of Alexandria's letter against the anthropomorphists (F. Bordolani in *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, ed. by A. di Berardino, trans. A Walford, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press 1991) 149).

[36] A. C. Cooper-Marsdin, *The History of the Islands of the Lerins: The Monastery, Saints and Theologians of S. Honorat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913), 71.

[37] Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins*, xiii.

[38] Gennadiius, *De Virus Inlustribus* 65, trans. Ernest Cushing Richardson, *NPNF2*, vol. 3, 396.

a Commonitory (or Remembrancer) for myself.'[39] From within the *Commonitorium* itself we learn more about Vincent, such as his worldly pursuits and possible military service.[40] He is believed to have retired to the monastery (contra a lifestyle chosen earlier in his life), where he published at least three surviving works: *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones Vincentianae*, and *Excerpta Vincentii Lirinensis*. He died sometime during the reign of Theodosius and Valentinianus, which means he did not live past A.D. 450.

Faustus of Riez was born in Britain. He was trained at Lérins and became its abbot in 433; though he was forced into exile by the Visigoths for eight years, he eventually returned and became the bishop of Riez some time around 460. At the Council of Arles in 473 and the Council of Lyons in 474, he was responsible for condemning Lucidus who held to a (supposedly) extreme version of Augustinianism. Afterward, Faustus penned *De Gratia* in order to defend the results of those local councils. This work, in addition to his letters, provide for us the source material to analyze his view on Original Sin.

Challenging Assumptions about Monastic Writings

Some scholars have had a tendency to dismiss the theology of monks, Cassian in particular, on the basis that their writings were not theological treatises (like Augustine wrote), but rather about monastic living.[41] Cassian 'gave more importance to the teachings of teachers and spiritual guides who taught from their own personal experience of

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[39] Vincent of Lérins, *Commonitorium* 1, *NPNF2*, vol. 11, 131 & 132.

[40] Scholars disagree whether '*secularis militia'* is literal or metaphorical, though this bit of information is nonessential to understanding Vincent's theology. Cf. Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincentius of Lerins*, xii.

[41] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 109, 'They were not interested in theories and doctrines of grace and free will, but only with the practical and moral consequences, and thus did not observe the inconsistency.'; Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' in *Gracce for Grace: The Debates after Augustine and Pelagius* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 141, 'A contrast between theological rigor and moral exhortation has often been proposed to distinguish "Augustinians" from "Augustine's critics"; the monastic inclinations of the latter are usually, and perhaps not incidentally, frequently signaled as though this for some reason sets them apart from Augustine, himself a monastic founder.'

Christianity than to the *uaniloqua disputatio* of those thinkers who, like Pelagius, tried to show the way to *consummatio uirtutum* through pure theological speculation.'[42] This has led some scholars to dismiss, a priori, the doctrinal beliefs of monks as less than serious. For example, Dunstan O'Keeffe has written, 'Whatever Cassian's ultimate view, we have here a question of personal temperament and outlook, not one of doctrine.'[43] Gerald Bonner, using slightly different language, remarks, 'The difference between the views of the Semi-Pelagians and Augustine might be explained as being due to their different pastoral experience: Cassian and the Messalians looked to the Egyptian Desert,' whereas Augustine's was theological and sacramental in nature.[44] While the Gallic monks may have had different audiences, dismissing their theological beliefs on monastic grounds appears to be unhelpful and unwarranted. Doing this 'leaves the readers with the impression that there is an irreconcilable difference between the systematic concerns of the theologians and the practical concerns of the monks' which lead some to think that miscommunication was inevitable.[45] Peter Munz's description of Cassian's writing appears descriptive and non-judgmental: 'But as he was exclusively concerned with giving practical instruction and advice, his style was discursive and his method of writing, from a theological and philosophical point of view, both unsystematic and non-technical.'[46] Anthony Kenny observes a distinction between being 'a preacher and an ascetic, rather than a speculative theologian. …' and that the 'Massilienses were afraid that Augustine's doctrine might cause negligence or despair in the faithful… .'[47] Finally, in simplistic terms, Neander

[42] Raúl Villegas Marín, 'Original Sin in Provençal Ascetic Theology: John Cassian' in *Studia Patristica* LXIX, 290.

[43] O'Keeffe, 'The *Via Media* of Monastic Theology,' 159.

[44] Gerald Bonner, 'Augustine and Pelagianism,' *Augustinian Studies*, vol. 24 (1993), 38-39.

[45] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 142.

[46] Peter Munz, 'John Cassian,' *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 11, iss. 1 (April 1960), 1.

[47] Anthony Kenny, 'Was St. John Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?' *Irish Theological Quarterly*, vol. 27, iss. 1 (1960), 27.

writes, 'Cassian sought to grasp the doctrines of religion with the heart, rather than with speculative and systematizing thought.'[48]

Augustine Casiday rightly observes two patterns of interpreting Cassian: the theoretical perspective and the practical perspective.[49] The theoretical perspective treats Cassian's style in the same manner as Pelagius: an intellectual critic of Augustine and a theologian. The lens for reading Cassian this way is through the writings of Prosper. One might say that this way of reading Cassian is more analytical and systematic. The practical perspective, on the other hand, takes Cassian *merely* as an ascetic saint who made a strong contribution to western monasticism. The lens of reading Cassian this way is through Cassian's own writings; that is, interpreters take Cassian upon his literary intent and purpose, and not through the lens of his contemporary critic. By reading Cassian through Prosper, as many scholars have traditionally done, Cassian has become, 'Tarnished by suspicions of doctrinal heterodoxy, his writings have been expurgated, and the theological dimensions of his thought have not been fully appreciated.'[50] Chadwick similarly notes, 'To many his moralizing and homiletic instructions have appeared interesting only to monks, while the monks themselves have been circumspect in their dealings with one whose name is tinged with the faint flavour of semi-Pelagian heresy.'[51] Interpreting Cassian's writings as ascetic and practical, and thereby rejecting them as theological or doctrinal does a disservice to the position that the practical is the application of the theological. Thus, dismissing the position on the practical alone, without further analysis to the theological beliefs that informed the practice, is an uncharitable method.

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[48] Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, 687.

[49] A.M.C Casiday, 'Cassian, Augustine, and De Incarnatione,' *Studia Patristica,* vol. 38 (2001), 41-47.

[50] Casiday, 'Cassian, Augustine, and De Incarnatione,' 43.

[51] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 5. Casiday, 'Cassian, Augustine, and De Incarnatione,' 42, observes that Chadwick's last clause indicates his Prosper-Augustinian bent in interpreting Cassian.

Further against the theological/monastic distinction, the fact of the matter is that both Augustine and his Gallic opposition were monks. So their vocations cannot be the contingent factor that set apart their theological differences. The Gallic monks did think theologically about many topics. By way of example, Vincent's *Commonitorium* is a treatise on how to determine which beliefs constitute as orthodoxy. His *Excerpta* is a synthesis of Christology (almost exclusively from Augustine's own pen). Consider that Cassian's twenty-third conference, "On Sinlessness," is a robust reflection on the sinfulness of man and the necessity of divine grace for salvation. Background, audience, and genre do not serve as a basis for belittling the theological merit of writings from certain monks. Besides, this attempt to distinguish between them cannot explain why some monks (at Hadrumetum) were convinced of Augustine's view while others (at Gaul) were not.

Instead, we ought to understand their doctrine in light of their contexts and upon their own standards, not through the eyes of another thinker. Given that we know some of the Gallic monks objected to Augustine's doctrine of predestination and grace, why would an Augustinian standard be the standard to understand what their position was? Some scholarly attempts to understand the doctrinal beliefs of the Gallic monks have come from self-admittedly Augustinian viewpoints. For example, Dunstan O'Keeffe writes that he will interpret the monks 'Using Augustine's doctrine of grace and free will as a yardstick.'[52] Also see §6.2 on William O'Connor's clear support of the Bishop of Hippo in his novel interpretation of Vincent's writings. Marianne Djuth interprets Faustus through an Augustinian lens, who often times associates him with 'Pelagius' sympathizers,'[53] asserts that Faustus held to the same view on free will as Pelagius, and considers 'That the De gratia dei is in some measure a Pelagian treatise ….'[54] However, we are quite skeptical that

[52] O'Keeffe, 'The *Via Media* of Monastic Theology,' 157.

[53] Marianne Djuth, 'Faustus of Riez: Initium bonae voluntatis,' *Augustinian Studies*, vol. 21 (1990), 39.

[54] Djuth, 'Faustus of Riez,' 40.

Faustus should be viewed along the Augustinian-Pelagian spectrum, given the explicit condemnation that Faustus has for Pelagius in the first two chapters of *De Gratia*, among other places.[55]

Thankfully, it seems that many authors of recent theological scholarship from the past twenty years or so have not prematurely dismissed Cassian's, Vincent's, or Faustus's theological beliefs on the basis of their ascetic nature. To the contrary, many have argued that their theological beliefs should be interpreted within their own right, without coming to their works with an Augustinian standard. When they are understood in this way, these monks are seen not as Semi-Pelagian (whatever that might mean) but rather more accurately in the same branch as the Eastern Church Fathers. O'Keeffe remarks, 'recent philological work is beginning to establish a more direct link between some of the Provencal masters and the Greek Fathers.'[56] For our purposes, we will follow this new approach in extracting theological data without reading them through the lens of Augustine's or Prosper's pen, but their own.

Main Sources Used for this Investigation

Over the past few decades there has been an emergence of interest by a select number of scholars in the Gallic monks from the 5th century. This interest has largely been focused upon their views on divine grace and human agency, but not their view of the Fall. This project is unique for the following reasons. First, to date there have been no studies that attempt to formulate a synthetic understanding of their view on Original Sin. Second, and as a result of the lack of the scholarship in this precise area, there are no studies

[55] The first two chapter titles '*Quod Pelagii sensus, qui gratiam negauit, primo loco necesse sit destrui*' ('On the understanding of Pelagius, who denied grace, which must be refuted above all') and '*Contra objectionem Pelagii, qua dicit paruulos baptismo non egere*' ('Against the objection of Pelagius, in which he says that babies do not need baptism'). See also, Rebecca Harden Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 165-166.

[56] O'Keeffe, 'The *Via Media* of Monastic Theology,' 163.

attempting to illustrate a correlation, if not causal relationship, between the Gallic monks and eastern Greek theology on Original Sin. Third, no work exists that explains how the Gallic view, frequently misunderstood and dismissed offhand for its linguistic association with the heresy of Pelagianism, is valuable to the contemporary evangelical Protestant discussions on Original Sin or *ordo salutis*.

The work that has been done on the Gallic monks is either from a theological or monastic perspective. As addressed in the previous section, there has been a tendency among scholars to dismiss monastic writings as being purely practical, as if devoid of theological doctrine. This position is unwarranted, as scholars fail to explain why they are permitted to dismiss the monks' writings as obtaining theo-ontological truth (i.e., theological truths that really exist). Though the purpose of this writing is to analyze the theological beliefs of the monks, it is of utmost importance to recognize the monks in their historical and cultural contexts, concluding that their monastic writings do have ontological merit.

Studies of the Gallic monks can be divided into two categories: surveys and individual studies. Survey or survey-like work attempts to analyze the view of numerous monks, collectively, on any given topics whereas individual studies analyze the (many) thought(s) of one particular monk. Of the secondary literature reviewed for the purpose of this disquisition, most of the scholarship is of the latter category.

The subject for most of the scholarship on the Gallic monks is on their views on free will, grace, and predestination. If anything is noted regarding their view on Original Sin (or some sub-tenet thereof) it receives relatively little attention. Raúl Villegas Marín writes,

> Modern research has not paid too much attention to the way how Cassian incorporated the concept of original sin in his theological system, conceived as a theoretical basis for

> Christian ascetic life. This is perhaps due to the fact that the transmission of Adam's sin was not a point of discussion between Cassian and the "Augustinian faction" in Provence.[57]

Not only has modern scholarship paid little attention to Cassian's hamartiology but even less attention to the hamartiological beliefs of Vincent and Faustus. It might be more accurate, to amend Marin's statement, to say that, 'the transmission of Adam's sin was not a [*direct*] point of discussion' between the Gallic monks and the Augustinians. This finer point is more descriptive because the debates after the Pelagian controversy were regarding the issues of grace and free will. Contrary to the view of Backus and Goudriaan,[58] we think that juxtaposition entails, or better yet, is presupposed by one's view of the doctrine of Original Sin. For example, David J. McQueen writes, 'Cassian's seeming inconsistency about the relative priority of grace and free will is inextricably bound up with the question: how did he understand the nature of sin?'[59] McQueen, being one of the few authors to explore this area, piques our interest to see what has been written on the subject. Also, Australian historian and sociologist James Boyce unexpectedly (because he is not a trained theologian) identifies Cassian as an opponent of Augustine's on the basis of Original Sin.[60]

John Cassian, Vincent of Lérins, and Faustus of Riez had their respective views on the consequences of the Fall. These three monks will serve as the basis of our study insofar as they were leaders of a monastic movement in southern Gaul in the fifth century A.D. that found its monastic way of life threatened by the aftermath of the Pelagian controversy, specifically due to the writings of Augustine on grace, faith, free will, and predestination.

Studying these three writers is also in our interest for the contemporary discussions on grace, free will, predestination, original sin, etc. In his *Historical Theology: An*

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[57] Raúl Villegas Marín, 'Original Sin in Provençal Ascetic Theology,' 289-90, ftnt 1.

[58] Backus and Goudriaan, '"Semipelagianism,'" 27-28, 'The debates with the Massilians, it is important to note, focused on justification. The issue of original sin did not enter into them, in contrast with the Pelagian quarrel.'

[59] David J. McQueen, 'John Cassian on Grace and Free Will: With Particular Reference to Institutio xii and Collatio xiii,' *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales*, vol. 44 (1977), 12.

[60] James Boyce, *Born Bad: Original Sin and the Making of the Western World* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2015), 22-23.

Introduction to Christian Doctrine, Gregg Allison begins the chapter on election and reprobation with definitions of the Calvinist and (classical) Arminian positions.[61] This indicates that the debates on predestination have raged on through the centuries and studying the response to Augustine would provide a missing contemporary perspective that rejected the Augustinian model (which the Calvinist and Arminian models accept to varying degrees). Therefore, in order to present a coherent Gallic position on Original Sin we must peruse their writings, which we will now introduce.

Primary Sources

This survey will consider a select number of works from three authors: John Cassian, Vincent of Lérins, and Faustus of Riez. In this section we will briefly introduce these works and save in-depth analyses for later chapters.

John Cassian

Within the writings of John Cassian there are three relevant works to discovering Cassian's view of Original Sin: *De Institutis Coenobiorum* (*Institutes of the Coenobia*), *Collationes Patrum in Scetica Eremo* (*Conferences of the Desert Fathers*), and *De Incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium* (*On the Incarnation against Nestorius*).

De Institutis Coenobiorum

Cassian's *Institutis* details the rules and structure of monastic living, which he had learned from his time spent in Egypt. The first part of the work addresses proper attire, nightly and daily scripture readings and the singing of psalms, and the reasons for a well-

[61] Gregg Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 453.

ordered life. The second part addresses the eight cardinal sins. While one might imagine that these ascetic instructions are not relevant to our theological pursuit in this project, Cassian's reflection on the sin of pride (the final chapter/book of his *Institutis*) provides some evidence on his anthropological and hamartiological understanding.

Collationes Patrum in Scetica Eremo

Cassian's *Collationes* are without a doubt the most referenced work by scholars of his writings. They are a retelling of the teachings of the Egyptian desert fathers through a question (from Cassian or Germanus) and answer format. Whether these answers were the exact answers (perhaps from memory) or embellished/fictionalized (to some extent) scholars do not know for certain. Owen Chadwick explains, 'The Conferences therefore do not provide us with substance of the teaching of twenty-four Egyptian abbots.'[62] Rather, we ought to view Cassian as someone who 'was seeking to build western monasticism' and less an historian than more so an 'architect, selecting and adapting his materials.'[63] There are twenty-four conferences which 'represent a coherent and complete, though not a systematically structured, guide to the monastic life or perfection.'[64] Cassian refers to free will and grace throughout this work (which has much to say on combating the sinful desires of the flesh), though the thirteenth chapter has garnered the most attention of them all, because this is where Cassian makes references to the human will being able to take the initiative in the work of the individual's salvation.

De Incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium

[62] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 33.
[63] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 33.
[64] Drobner, *The Fathers of the Church*, 375.

What makes *De Incarnatione* of interest to us is that it is not only his last writing, but his most theological in nature. While we do not want to dismiss the theological truths to be found in his ascetical writings, this work is overtly theological in purpose. *De Incarnatione Domini* was written at the request of Pope Leo who urged him to write it before the Council of Ephesus in 431. Interestingly enough, Cassian is the only westerner (at that time) to write against the soon-to-be heresy of Nestorianism. But why is this relevant to our work on Original Sin? Cassian opens up his criticism of Nestorius with an attack on Pelagius. Cassian associates Pelagianism with Nestorianism because if there were two persons in Christ (given Nestorianism) and the human person was sinless, then in the same way normal humans could live a sinless life (Pelagianism).[65] Cassian's anti-Nestorian writing contains anti-Pelagian remarks, which clue us in to his view on the Fall.

Vincent of Lérins

Within the writings of Vincent of Lérins there are also three existing works from which we may discover Vincent's view on Original Sin: *Commonitorium Peregrini adversus Haereticos* (Reminder of the Pilgrim against the Heretics), *Objectiones Vinentianae* (Vincentian Objections), and the *Excerpta Vincentii*.

Commonitorium

The *Commonitorium* is the most famous work of Vincent, being supported by many Catholic authors for its formula of sound doctrine: *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est.* The work was written pseudonymously under the name Peregrinus, but in the second half of the 5th century Gennadius ascribed it to Vincent.[66] There is no

[65] Cassian, *De Incarnatione* 1.3, *NPNF2* 11:552, 'For they imagined that if Jesus Christ being a mere man was without sin, all men also could without the help of God be whatever he as a mere man without participating in the Godhead, could be.'

[66] Gennadius, *De Virus Inlustribus* 65, *NPNF2* 3.396.

contention amongst scholars regarding its authorship. It was written in 434, because Vincent makes mention that the Council of Ephesus (431) occurred three years prior.

While Vincent's writing has been used by Christian thinkers (especially Roman Catholic) to respond against theological innovations, many scholars have been perplexed on how to interpret Vincent's original intention. Was this a document that simply summarized the church's teaching on sound doctrine or was his purpose more pointed, such as an indirect attack against Augustine's doctrine of grace? The latter is often supported by a passage from the twenty-sixth chapter:

> For they dare to teach and promise, that in their church, that is, in the conventicle of their communion, there is a certain great and special and altogether personal grace of God, so that whosoever pertain to their number, without any labour, without any effort, without any industry, even though they neither ask, nor seek, nor knock, have such a dispensation from God … it is impossible they should ever dash their feet against a stone….[67]

Traditionally many have understood this passage to be an indirect and silent attack against Augustine.[68] However, some are now skeptical of this hypothesis and instead opting to hypothesize that Vincent was simply critiquing an extreme form of Augustinianism present in Gaul.[69]

Objectiones Vinentianae

The *Objectiones* is a document that only survives in the writing of Prosper of Aquitaine. Prosper's work is a response to sixteen objections against an Augustinian doctrine of predestination that had been spreading throughout Gaul. Vincent is traditionally

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[67] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 26, *NPNF2* 11:151.

[68] See Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins*, 110, ftnt 5; B. J. Kidd, *A History of the Church: To A.D. 461*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1922), 154-155; Chadwick, *John Cassian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 119; H. Koch, 'Vincenz von Lerin und Gennadius. Ein Beitrag zur Literaturgeschichte des Semipelagianismus,' TU 31 (1907), 37-58; Jose Madoz, '*El concepto de law tradición en s. Vincente de Lerins: Estudio histórico-critico del "Commonitorio"*' *Analecta Gregoriana* 5 (Rome: Gregorianum, 1933); Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought*, vol. 2, 59; Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 184; Peter Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition*.

[69] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine'; Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*.'

believed to have been the author of those objections, though some such as William O'Connor have doubted that given various stylistic differences between the *Objectiones* and the *Commonitorium*. 'This tract is a harsh caricature of Augustine's thought in which little more than Vincent's bitter and less then eirenic attitude is evident.'[70]

Excerpta Vincentii

The *Excerpta* is a document that had been lost to history. Possibly the last writing of Vincent, it was foretold in the *Commonitorium* but never found or even referenced outside of Vincent's pen until 1940 when Fr. Madoz discovered a copy of it. This writing is essentially a collection of excerpts from Augustine compiled by Vincent with few, yet valuable, original statements from the abbot of Lérins. Some have argued that discovering this work has brought forth a need to reinterpret Vincent in light of the high regard he has for Augustine's Christology.

The Vincentian Shift

As previously mentioned, there had been a long-standing tradition that held Vincent as a critic of Augustine, however, with the discovery of the long lost *Excerpta* in 1940 Vincentian scholars have begun to doubt that tradition. This is because the *Excerpta* does not show a Vincent who is thoroughly anti-Augustinian but one that is strongly sympathetic to Augustine's Christology. Scholars have thus been left with a few strategies for interpreting Vincent.[71]

> 1. Deny Vincent's authorship of the *Objectiones*. This is done as a result of interpreting the *Excerpta* as Augustinian and rejecting the interpretation of the Commonitorium as being anti-Augustinian.[72]

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[70] Sandra Fach, 'Semi-Pelagianism and Grace,' *European Explorations in Christian Holiness* (2) (Summer 2001), 59.

[71] Here I paraphrase from Casiday's observation in Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 137-139.

[72] O'Connor's study has been the most authoritative on this strategy.

2. Reject the authenticity of the *Excerpta*.[73] This is done as a result of a meticulous interpretation of the *Commonitorium* as being anti-Augustinian, also likely as a result of interpreting the *Objectiones* as authentic.

3. Accept all three works as authentic and compartmentalize the perceived difficulties. This strategy argues that the *Objectiones* were anti-Augustinian on grace and predestination, and the *Excerpta* is pro-Augustinian on Christology and Trinitarianism.[74]

While noting the underlying assumption, that these three strategies assume the Augustinian-Pelagian dichotomy, Casiday offers a two-pronged strategy:

1. Deny that the *Objectiones* is targeted against Augustine and instead targeted against Prosper's flavor of Augustinianism. Essentially, Casiday argues that there was not one monolithic contemporary interpretation of Augustine.[75] Instead, there were many Augustinianisms.

2. Deny Prosper's ability to reliably convey the position of Vincent's *Objectiones*. While similar to #1, this position does not deny that Vincent authored the *Objectiones*, but rather that we simply cannot trust what Prosper says of Vincent.

Casiday's new perspective on Prosper is a two-fold concern: First, how certain are we that Prosper has correctly interpreted Augustine? He writes that there are numerous studies which explore a synthesis of authors that compose a construct of beliefs we call "Pelagianism," but 'few comparable attempts to explore the coherence of "Augustinianism" as designating another group.'[76] This may seem like a novel approach to reading Augustine, but it is indicative of the broader differing historical interpretations of the bishop of Hippo as either a patron saint, a father to be recognized, or simply another early Christian perspective. We also have no doubt that readers of this dissertation may encounter passages or interpretations of Augustine which they might not have ever come

[73] While being addressed as a possible course in O'Connor's study, no scholars to date have publicly taken this strategy. Perhaps this is because of the uncomfortable position of rejecting the authenticity of the *Excerpta*, which has great warrant for being authentic from Vincent's mentioning this future work in his *Commonitorium*.

[74] Madoz attempts this strategy; Ogliari, *Gratia et Certamen*, 118, ftnt 117.

[75] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 153, 'Contemporary historiography of fifth-century Gaul retains a strong presumption that there was a dominant, normative reception of Augustinian theology (identified first and foremost as his teachings on grace as exemplified in the subsequent generation in the teachings of Prosper of Aquitaine), and that any divergence whatever from that normative position justifies a modern presumption that those divergences are part of a subversive agenda.

[76] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 140.

across. Perhaps it is the case that Augustine was misunderstood not only in our day but even in his own; yet the question remains, 'Who is misunderstanding him?' Is it Prosper or Vincent? If they both understand him correctly, perhaps Augustine is then to blame for being inconsistent or ambiguous. These questions will be assessed further on in this project.

Second, how certain are we that Prosper has correctly interpreted Gallic authors? Casiday has argued strongly and coherently that Prosper misinterpreted Cassian.[77] But does that also hold true for Prosper's relaying of the *Vincentian Objectionae*? The great benefit to possessing both Prosper's and Cassian's works is that we can compare how Prosper interpreted Cassian. Sadly, this is not the case with the *Objectiones*. We simply do not have an independent source or copies of the original through which we can evaluate Prosper's interpretation.

So these three works by Vincent have created a love triangle of sorts, causing confusion and uneasy statements by scholars on how to understand Vincent. For example, if one were to take Prosper's conveying of the *Vincentian Objectionae* as reliable, then that affects one's interpretation of the *Commonitorium* as constituting an anti-Augustinian treatise. But, then one is left with how to undertake the pro-Augustinian nature of the *Exceprta*. Conversely, if one interprets the *Excerpta* as a document wherein Vincent is in full agreement to Augustine's doctrine of grace, then one would not interpret the *Commonitorium* through anti-Augustinian lenses. But then a difficulty remains in how one ought to understand the *Objectiones*. Further along in this project we will defend the traditional view of Vincent largely through a rebuttal of modern attempts to reinterpret his writings. This includes the debate over whether Vincent was the author of the *Objectiones*, and how we ought to understand Vincent's doctrine of grace from the *Excerpta*. After doing this, we will present the data from Vincent on his position of Original Sin. While the

[77] Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian,' 270-284.

Commonitorium will provide small insight into Vincent's view of the Fall, a broader scope including his other works will provide complementary evidence toward building a cumulative case for the Vincentian doctrine of Original Sin.

Faustus of Riez

In the body of Faustus's writings we will mainly analyze *De Gratia* and some of his *Epistulae*.

De Gratia

De Gratia provides the clearest expression of Gallic thought on grace and free will. It was written as an explanation for why Lucidus was condemned a heretic (for his supposed extreme Augustinianism) at the councils of Arles in 473 and Lyons in 474. Faustus is lesser known than Cassian and Vincent, but he is arguably the most theologically-able defender of the Gallic opposition to Augustine. Donato Ogliari observes, 'This work offers us a very interesting and solid synthesis of the continuing optimistic position held in the monastic and ecclesiastical milieu of Southern Gaul on the question of predestination, and the relationship between grace and free will.'[78] However, we are also able to begin piecing together Faustus's doctrine of Original Sin because in *De Gratia* he made many references to it, especially its denial as one of the shortcomings of Pelagianism. This provides for us explicit remarks made about the Fall which is the best type of evidence (contra implicit or deduced beliefs) for the Gallic monks' view(s) on Original Sin.

Epistulae

A couple of Faustus's letters enhance our understanding of his doctrine of Original Sin. These letters have gone untranslated except for some parts in the appendix to Ralph

[78] Ogliari, *Gratia et Certamen*, 433.

Mathisen's *Ruricius of Limoges and Friends: A Collection of Letters from Visigothic Gaul*. Mathisen's brief, excerpted translations unfortunately do not cover the pertinent mentions by Faustus on sin. We will draw upon two letters: *Epistula Fausti Ad Lucidum Presbyterum* and *Exemplar Epistulae Lucidi Presbyteri*.[79]

Secondary Sources: The Previous Studies on the So-Called Semi-Pelagians

Surveys of the Gallic Monks

Of the survey-method books written on the Gallic monks, there are two monographs and one collection of essays. Rebecca Harden Weaver's *Divine Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy* and Donato Ogliari's *Gratia et Certamen: The Relationship between Grace and Free Will in the Discussion of Augustine with the So-Called Semipelagians* are heavily focused on the monks' views of grace and free will. Regarding Original Sin, she interacts with Cassian's view most heavily in her analysis of Prosper of Aquitaine.[80] She notes that Prosper, one of Augustine's earliest defenders, rightly recognized the priority of harmartiology in the debate: He 'was convinced that it was differing opinions regarding the fall of Adam that had led to the divergence between the Augustinian position and Cassian's position on the operation of grace.'[81] Further on in her chronology of events Weaver examines Faustus of Riez. There she devotes two pages to analyze Faustus's rejection of Pelagianism (on the basis that the Pelagians denied Original Sin).[82] Vincent plays little-to-no importance for Weaver's purpose.

In Ogliari's thorough research one particular section, 'Free Will and the *naturae bonum*,' presents Cassian's doctrine of Original Sin.[83] Cassian 'did not mention the

[79] All found in *Fausti Reiensis et Ruricii Opera*, *CSEL* 21, ed. Augusti Engelbrecht (Vienna, 1891).
[80] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 118-128.
[81] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 122.
[82] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 165-166.
[83] Ogliari, *Gratia et Certamen*, 272-289.

peccatum originale in an attempt to describe its "ins" and "outs", but in relation to the question of God's call to universal salvation … .'[84] And while this is true for Cassian's purposes and even Ogliari's, it does not preclude the exploration of the 'ins' and 'outs' to Cassian's position. Ogliari does an excellent job detailing the outworking of Cassian's view even beyond the noted section into a segment on the *initium fidei* although his commentary fails to draw out the connection between *initium fidei* and *peccatum originale*.

While his work is arguably the most exhaustive on the debates between Prosper, Cassian, and their respective authorities of Augustine and the Eastern tradition, there is little attention given to Vincent and Faustus. This is largely due to the scope of his work, which sought to cover the first phase of the controversy. The brief epilogue, which covers the second phase, picks up at the death of Augustine (430) to the Second Council of Orange (529); this is, of course, when Vincent and Faustus lived.

The most recent (and only) published collection of essays devoted to the Gallic monks is titled *Grace for Grace: The Debates after Augustine and Pelagius*.[85] A couple of chapters provide valuable insight to Original Sin while most others do not address the issue directly.[86] Matthew J. Pereira recognizes Faustus's use of original sin in response and objection to Pelagianism while at the same time recognizing that it would be mistaken to think that Faustus and Augustine were in theological agreement as to the extent of the Fall.[87] Nestor Kavvadas's chapter on Theodore of Mopsuestia's *Against the Defenders of Original Sin* provides commentary on the only Greek work written in response to the

[84] Ogliari, *Gratia et Certamen*, 274.

[85] Alexander Y. Hwang, Brian Matz, and Augustine Casiday, eds., *Grace for Grace: The Debates after Augustine and Pelagius* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2014).

[86] Most other chapters pertain to issues on grace and free will which serve as either implicit or sometimes explicit clues of the Gallic monks' view(s) on Original Sin.

[87] Matthew J. Pereira, 'Augustine, Pelagius, and the Southern Gallic Tradition: Faustus of Riez's *De gratia Dei*' in *Grace for Grace: The Debates after Augustine and Pelagius* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 188-192.

Pelagian controversy.[88] Though it does not focus on the Gallic response to Augustine's view of Original Sin, it provides insight into the eastern theological tradition to which the Gallic monks were indebted. The rest of the chapters in this book, while not directly related to Original Sin, still provide some of the best and most recent scholarship on the Gallic monks, which we will employ throughout this project.

Lastly, Dunstan O'Keeffe offers us the most relevant academic work on a survey of the Gallic monks. 'The *Via Media* of Monastic Theology' looks at Cassian and Faustus. O'Keeffe offers us the most relevant academic work for our purposes because his analysis looks at grace, free will, and even original sin in the Gallic monks, comparing it against Augustine. However, his intent and method differs from ours insofar as he seeks to show 'that much of the thought of the monastic writers of fifth-century southern Gaul conforms much more closely to the Augustinian position than has often been supposed.'[89] Additionally, he admittedly evaluates Cassian 'Using Augustine's doctrine of grace and free will as a yardstick'[90] instead upon the standard Cassian would have considered for himself. Furthermore, he (like other authors) believes that in the theological analyses, 'Whatever Cassian's ultimate view, we have here a question of personal temperament and outlook, not one of doctrine.'[91] As previously argued this treatment of monastic writing is unwarranted and does a disservice to the respective positions in the debate. O'Keeffe attempts to show that Augustine and the Gallic monks, 'agree in asserting that original sin exists, that it is transmitted from generation to generation and that all men are liable to the sin of Adam.'[92] Though it remains to be seen, here, whether O'Keeffe's assessment of

[88] Nestor Kavvadas, 'An Eastern View: Theodore of Mopsuestia's *Against the Defenders of Original Sin*,' in *Grace for Grace: The Debates after Augustine and Pelagius* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 275.

[89] O'Keeffe, 'The *Via Media* of Monastic Theology,' 157.

[90] O'Keeffe, 'The *Via Media* of Monastic Theology,' 157.

[91] O'Keeffe, 'The *Via Media* of Monastic Theology,' 159.

[92] O'Keeffe, 'The *Via Media* of Monastic Theology,' 162-163.

Original Sin is accurate, he does not consider the various ways in which Augustine and the Gallic monks *disagree* on Original Sin, and how those disagreements led to their differences of grace and free will.

Augustine Casiday's 'Grace and the Humanity of Christ According to St Vincent of Lérins'[93] is a good contribution to illustrate the strong response that Cassian and Vincent had against Pelagianism. It is here, however, that Casiday begins his consideration that Vincent is an Augustinian on the doctrine of grace, which we will deal with in Chapter 6. While this published work does not focus upon Original Sin, it is important to consider how the Gallic monks were fiercely anti-Pelagian and at the same time, anti-Augustinian (if at all).

Of the surveys that have been done on the Gallic monks, from the two monographs to the recent collection of essays to the two published articles, none of them 1) have their purpose of looking at the Gallic monks through the lens of their doctrine of Original Sin, 2) seek to present a thorough comparison with eastern Greek theology on Original Sin, or 3) present a systematic defense of the Gallic monks' view of Original Sin and explain how it is of value in today's contemporary theological discussions.

Studies on the Individuals

Of the studies on the individuals, we have found there to be a greater number of published works on the Gallic monks than of surveys. We shall address these studies, which manifest themselves as books, dissertations, theses, or journal articles, in the following order: John Cassian, Vincent of Lérins, and Faustus of Riez.

[93] Augustine Casiday, 'Grace and the Humanity of Christ According to St Vincent of Lérins,' *Vigilae Christianae*, vol. 59, no. 3 (August 2005), 298-314.

John Cassian

Within modern scholarship, Owen Chadwick has written the earliest biography of Cassian, and arguably the most influential one. He notes how great a legacy Cassian left western civilization and yet how little he has been studied.

> John Cassian has not received adequate study from ecclesiastical historians. Not only was he the teacher of Benedict and one of the principle architects of the western monastic system; through the charge of the Benedict Rule that his writings should be read in religious communities, his teaching upon the ascetic life and the road to perfection dominated the origins and affected the spiritual ethos of medieval and modern monasticism. His work has permanently influenced the Christian life and culture of Europe through its effect upon the form and diffusion of the western ascetic movement.[94]

Despite this great role, Cassian had received little attention. Chadwick notes that up until his time, only two authors had written on the monk: T. Scott Holmes and Edward Gibson. Holmes's 567-page *The Christian Church in Gaul* devotes only 'some ten pages to one who was clearly the most momentous figure of the Church in Gaul at the epoch.'[95] Gibson's work is the preface to the translation of Cassian's writings in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*.[96] In sum, he notes, 'surprisingly few scholars made any serious study of the man and his work.'[97] Today, however, Cassian has received more attention; the attention he has received has usually been on Cassian's monasticism,[98] more so than his theology proper. For the work that has focused on his theology proper, it has been largely upon Cassian's view of free will and the nature of grace. As Marín has pointed out, there is hardly any literature devoted to Cassian's view of Original Sin (let alone the view of other Gallic monks).

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[94] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 5.

[95] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 5.

[96] Edward Gibson, 'Prolegomena,' in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*,ona second series, vol. 11, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody: Hendrickson Inc., 1894).

[97] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 5.

[98] Columba Stewart, *Cassian the Monk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) makes no mention of 'original sin' other than a footnote to Lauren Pristas's dissertation on Cassian.

Chadwick, himself, explores Cassian's view of Original Sin over the course of just two pages.[99] He rightly notes how Cassian's view is neither Augustinian nor Pelagian. For Cassian, 'The carnality in man which is the result of the Fall, has not made man incapable of doing good: it has rather produced a tension in human nature whereby the sinful desires pull against the spiritual desires.'[100] Compare that with Pelagianism, which 'conceived freedom as perfect liberty to choose between right and wrong,'[101] and with the 'Augustinian conception where the human will has descended wholly upon the side of the flesh.'[102] Cassian held to a doctrine of Original Sin distinct from Augustine, and it is worth investigating.

Raul Villegas Marín presents a rare piece dedicated toward the doctrinal topic at hand: 'Original Sin in the Provencal Ascetic Theology: John Cassian.' In his paper he nicely places Cassian's anthropology logically second to his harmartiology and consistently puts it in those terms. For example he writes, 'Man's inability to attain the highest good to which human nature must aspire … is also a consequence of original sin.'[103] This 'inability to attain the highest good' is what the monks believed about salvation. Thus, no man could save himself (contra the Pelagians). However, contrary to the Augustinians, Cassian believed that man could play a part in that process. Marin's work remains limited in its scope by only analyzing Cassian and not Vincent or Faustus.

David J. McQueen recognizes the importance of Original Sin as it relates to the issues of grace and free will because it 'is ultimately inseparable from Cassian's understanding of how free will was affected by the Fall and the extent to which Adam's original libertas still exists in his descendants.'[104] McQueen provides some engaging

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[99] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 123-124.
[100] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 123.
[101] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 123.
[102] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 123.
[103] Marín, 'Original Sin in Provençal Ascetic Theology,' 289.
[104] McQueen, 'John Cassian on Grace and Free Will,' 15.

criticism of Cassian as it pertains to seemingly contradictory remarks in his *Conferences*. However, he merely scratches the surface on Original Sin in Cassian, and makes no attempt to draw upon the eastern theological tradition on the issue.

Lauren Pristas's dissertation on 'The Theological Anthropology of John Cassian'[105] gets us close to Original Sin insofar as the two are closely related topics. The first half of her work is based upon a literary analysis of the *Institutis* and *Collationes*, whereas the second half is a theological commentary/analysis of the works in the context of his anthropology. She makes three mentions of Original Sin. In commenting on *Conlatio* V she notes that 'He identifies the effects of original sin only generally, but he asserts their universality.'[106] On *Conlatio* VII she concludes, 'we cannot assert that Cassian means to suggest certain strains of humanity were utterly preserved from the effects of original sin even for a time … .'[107] Unfortunately, in these two sections, Pristas does not provide quotations from the source material. She does interact with the source material in her third mention of Original Sin, which happens to be Cassian's first explicit use of the term.[108] Here Cassian uses Matthew 11:28's 'Come to me all you who are heavy burdened' as evidence that all humans are heavy burdened and proof that God generally wills all men to be saved (one of the explicit points of contention between the Gallic monks and Augustine). While her detection of Cassian's view on Original Sin is quite limited, much may be drawn upon his view of theological anthropology. By way of example, Pristas observes from *Conlatio* XII that Cassian believed humans had the God-given gift of willing from multiple options, lest there not be free will. This proposition by Cassian could be made and should be understood in light of his doctrine of Original Sin, i.e. that humans did

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[105] Lauren Pristas, 'The Theological Anthropology of John Cassian' (doctoral diss., Boston College, 1993).

[106] Pristas, 'The Theological Anthropology of John Cassian,' 225.

[107] Pristas, 'The Theological Anthropology of John Cassian,' 243.

[108] Pristas, 'The Theological Anthropology of John Cassian,' 283; cf. Cassian, *Collationes* 12.7.4, *ACW* 57.443.

not lose that ability because of the Fall. Examples like this abound in Cassian. In Pristas's research, however, recognizing their importance through the lens of Original Sin was not seemingly the focus of her work.

Augustine Casiday's *Tradition and Theology in St. John Cassian*[109] covers a spectrum of topics pertaining to Cassian, from the backgrounds of monasticism in fifth century Gaul, to Cassian's anti-Pelagianism, his view on prayer, etc.. Some of Casiday's research has found its way into numerous academic journals over the years.[110] His research is quite valuable for our project not only in understanding Cassian's view on certain topics (including theological anthropology) but also Cassian's reception by Prosper of Aquitaine. However, none of his enjoyable-to-read work has yet to be focused upon Cassian's doctrine of Original Sin.

Peter Munz's 'John Cassian' is an article devoted to the monastic thought of John Cassian, as it pertains to the salvation of society.[111] While it ranges from issues in theological proper such as Cassian's doctrine of grace, the providence of God, and salvation to ascetic themes such as fighting the sinful desires of the flesh, Munz neglects to discuss Cassian's view on Original Sin.

Stuart Squires has found a fascinating topic to write his dissertation on: the possibility of a sinless life.[112] This was an issue brought up during the Pelagian controversy, as the main advocates were Pelagius, Caelestius, and Julian of Eclanum. In response to that position were voices such as Augustine, Jerome, and particularly of interest

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[109] Augustine Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St. John Cassian*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[110] Augustine Casiday, 'Cassian, Augustine, and *De Incarnatione*' *Studia Patristica*, vol. 38 (2001), 41-47. Augustine Casiday, 'Cassian Against the Pelagians' *Studia Monastica*, vol. 46 (2004), 7-23; Augustine Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian: an Evaluation of Prosper of Aquitaine's Polemic Against the "Semipelagians,"' *Scottish Journal of Theology*, vol. 58, no. 3 (2005), 270-284. Augustine Casiday, 'Tradition as a governing theme in the writings of John Cassian' *Early Medieval Europe*, vol. 16, no. 2 (2008), 191-214.

[111] Munz, 'John Cassian,' 1-22.

[112] Stuart Squires, 'Reassessing Pelagianism: Augustine: Cassian, and Jerome on the Possibility of a Sinless Life' (doctoral diss., The Catholic University of America, 2013).

for our purposes, Cassian. Squires's original research on Cassian here is quite welcomed because whether a human can live a sinless life is an issue of anthropology contingent upon one's view of the Fall and thus part of the doctrine of Original Sin. In this respect, we can utilize Squire's research to build a comprehensive case on Cassian's view.

Lastly, an uncommon angle in addressing Cassian's view of Original Sin is provided by Michael Azkoul who utilizes Cassian's Christology (from *De incarnatione Domini contra Nestorium*) to show the errors of Pelagianism as connected to Nestorianism.[113] As Cassian's Christology is fleshed out it becomes apparent that it is inconsistent with the Augustinian doctrine of Original Sin. Azkoul surprisingly even goes so far to say that Augustinianism is a monophysite heresy[114] because 'Always the synergism of St. John followed from his Christology, that is, freedom and grace as analogies of the two natures of Christ.'[115]

Vincent of Lérins

Much of the literature on Vincent has been devoted to his *Commonitorium*, which presents his desire for doctrinal purity.[116] Yet to date, to the best that we have researched, we have found no work on Vincent that analyzes his doctrine of Original Sin. Most of the literature on him is regarding his *Commonitorium* while less attention is given to his *Objectiones* and the more recently discovered *Excerpta*. Over the past forty years there has been a reversal from conversant scholars against a long-standing tradition that Vincent was a critic of Augustine. This reversal has taken two shapes. The first is that Vincent was not a

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[113] Michael Azkoul, 'Peccatum Originale: the Pelagian Controversy,' *Patristic and Byzantine Review*, vol. 3, no. 1 (1984), 39-53.

[114] Azkoul, 'Peccatum Originale,' 46. The relevance here being that if Christ only had one nature (grace) then it would count as a demerit against the other nature's (free will) existence. If Christ had no free will and if Christ is an archetype, then humans do not have free will (which would be an absurd conclusion for Cassian).

[115] Azkoul, 'Peccatum Originale,' 47.

[116] For example, Moxon nor A.C. Cooper-Marsdin make no mention of Vincent's view of Original Sin.

critic of Augustine but an admirer and any interpretations of him as a critic are mistaken. The second shape has a finer nuance to it that while Vincent was not a critic of Augustine, he was a critic of a form of Augustinianism that he was exposed to in Gaul. Now, while we will demonstrate a Vincentian doctrine of Original Sin from primary source material, it will also be necessary to engage in this secondary literature that attempts to reinterpret Vincent against the time-honored view.

William O'Connor's 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine' has been the heart of the new movement at distancing Vincent from the traditional interpretation of him as a critic of Augustine's.[117] Thomas Guarino speaks of O'Connor's research as 'an exhaustive study, surely the most influential to date.'[118] Weaver believed that O'Connor had proven that Vincent was not the author of the *Objectiones*.[119] Casiday found O'Connor's 'commendable argument' to be a good attempt at reconciling the Vincentian corpus but provides his own interpretation, albeit one similar to the findings of O'Connor regarding Vincent's supposed endorsement of Augustine's doctrine of grace from the *Excerpta*.[120]

In his first chapter, O'Connor argues against the Vincentian authorship of the *Objectiones*, instead opting to posit the existence of a second person named 'Vincent.' O'Connor tackles this work first because, 'Historically it was from the Objections that the semi-pelagian stain first became attached to the name of Vincent of Lerins.'[121] Thus, if O'Connor could prove Vincent was not the author, he could also begin to deconstruct the notion that Vincent, that magnificent literary artist of the *Commonitorium*, was a Semi-Pelagian.

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[117] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine.'
[118] Thomas Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, xviii.
[119] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 132.
[120] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 139.
[121] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 142.

In his second and third chapters O'Connor moves to show that the *Commonitorium* does not necessarily evince itself as a Semi-Pelagian document. The main style of argument presented is that the *Commonitorium* contains certain passages that some believe are against Augustine, however, such 'doctrine is so evidently foreign to the mind of Saint Augustine that no intelligent man who read his writings could ever have attributed it, in good faith, to him….'[122] So Vincent, being a man of good faith, could not possibly have thought Augustine believed those things. Rather, Vincent had in his target 'some small local sect which, at his time, preached the said doctrine and was a source only of local worry.'[123] Hence, the *Commonitorium* is not directed against Augustine.

O'Connor's research, thoughtfulness, and considerations provide the foundation for scholars of the second half of the 20th and 21st centuries to reinterpret Vincent away from being a critic of Augustine's. While we will show upon their own merits how these arguments fail to accomplish their goal, we will also illustrate how Vincent's hamartiology is distinct from Augustine's and consequently, how different their views on anthropology were.

Thomas G. Guarino's recent monograph *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine* explores the main theme of the *Commonitorium*: retaining the teaching of the Church. Guarino recognizes how some authors have interpreted the work as a defense against Augustine's doctrine of grace and free will, while he opts to posit the alternative, more broad view that Vincent's work is about upholding previous ecumenical decisions. There still is valuable consideration to be given to his arguments, including a section on John Henry Newman's interpretation of Vincent's famous dictum (mentioned only in passing by Newman[124]).

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[122] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 186.
[123] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 216.
[124] 'There are two doctrines which are generally associated with the name of a Father of the fourth and fifth centuries, and which can show little definite, or at least but partial, testimony in their behalf before

> Newman's argument is that if one interprets Vincent's canon narrowly, then a Christian can admit *neither* the doctrine of original sin nor the doctrine of purgatory since neither teaching is well supported in the earliest fathers. But if one interprets Vincent broadly, he must accept both doctrines.[125]

Therefore, in spite of the few explicit reference Vincent makes to grace and free will, and even fewer explicit reference to original sin, one's interpretation of the *Commonitorium* very well might lead them to an alternative interpretation.

Faustus of Riez

Relative to Cassian and Vincent, Faustus has received much less attention. This is maybe due to the fact that his works have gone untranslated from the original Latin, as previously mentioned, so his exposure and reach has been less than the other two Gallic writers, whose works have been translated into many languages. While Faustus has received some attention in books[126] with broad foci, books or articles devoted solely to him are few and far between. Given that there is little research on Faustus, there does not seem to be as wide an array of interpretations as there are for Cassian or Vincent. Perhaps this is because Faustus is considered 'as having given the semipelagian position its clearest exposition.'[127] His genre of writing is more theological than monastic (contra Cassian), and that makes it easier to understand his view. Nevertheless, scholarship has devoted itself to understanding the bishop of Riez's doctrine of grace and free will. What has been lacking is a thorough assessment of his doctrine on Original Sin.

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his time,—Purgatory and Original Sin. The dictum of Vincent admits both or excludes both, according as it is or is not rigidly taken; but, if used by Aristotle's "Lesbian Rule," then, as Anglicans would wish, it can be made to admit Original Sin and exclude Purgatory.' John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2009), 20.

[125] Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 56.

[126] Casiday, Hwang, and Matz, *Grace for Grace*; Cooper-Marsdin, *The History of the Island of Lerins*, 192-210; Ralph Mathisen, 'Faustus, Intellectual Controversy, and the End of Roman Gaul,' in *Ecclesiastical Factionalism and Religious Controversy in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 235-272.

[127] Thomas A. Smith, *De Gratia: Faustus of Riez's Treatise on Grace and Its Place in the History of Theology* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 228.

Thomas A. Smith's *De Gratia: Faustus of Riez's Treatise on Grace and Its Place in the History of Theology* is only the second biography from the 20th century and first in (almost) living memory on the bishop of Riez.[128] The main segment of Smith's work on Faustus and Original Sin comes in his ten-page section, 'Human Sin: Essence, Consequences, Transmission.'[129] Smith provides noteworthy distinctions in Faustus's anthropology, even arguing that his view of Original Sin comes, in part, from Augustine:

> In brief, one can say that Faustus has inherited, and has developed in the *De gratia*, a clear doctrine of sin which is derived in many of its particulars from Augustine. At the same time, the bishop of Riez refuses to follow Augustine's pessimistic estimate of human capabilities after the fall.[130]

We will later suggest that this assessment is helpful, but incomplete. Smith's scope is strictly an analysis on *De Gratia*, and so fails to incorporate how Faustus's *Epistulae* or *Sermones* strengthens his own case for his reading of Faustus on Original Sin.

Marianne Djuth's 'Faustus of Riez: Initium bonae voluntatis' is about the origin of faith and the freedom of the will. Djuth provides some background between Faustus and Lucidus (his predestinarian opponent) but attempts to show that the *De Gratia* contains 'the unmistakable presence of Pelagian themes'[131] from both Pelagian and Eastern theological thought. The latter is of special interest to us to explore later in this work, while the former is something that scholars by and large reject. Faustus's first two chapter of *De Gratia* are devoted to exploring why Pelagius is a heretic, precisely on the basis that he denied Original Sin.

Secondary Sources: Historical Surveys on Original Sin

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[128] The first biography belongs to Gustave Weigel, *Faustus of Riez: An Historical Introduction* (Philadelphia: Dolphin Press, 1938).

[129] Smith, *De Gratia*, 185-196.

[130] Smith, *De Gratia*, 185.

[131] Djuth, 'Faustus of Riez,' 35.

The catalyst for this research came as a result of reading numerous published surveys on the doctrine of Original Sin for this author's master's thesis. During the course of that study, it became evident that those historical theologians failed to present a thorough investigation on the Gallic monks.

N. P. Williams's Bampton Lectures of 1924 at Oxford University, published as *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, are devoted to understanding the ways in which Christians through the ages have understood Original Sin. He analyzes how the doctrine was understood in pre-Christian Jewish circles, in the New Testament, in the Church before Augustine, Augustine's position, and the reception of Augustine's position to the present day. While utilizing the Vincentian canon (*ubique, semper, et ab omnibus*) to measure whether Augustine's doctrine was consistent with the tradition of the Church, Williams is content to give no consideration to how Vincent himself (or the other Gallic monks, for that matter) received Augustinianism. He thought, 'Our historical review need not pause to consider the Semi-Pelagian controversy, which, through the direct sequel of the great duel between Augustine and Pelagius ... was concerned rather with the operations of "grace" than with the nature and results of the Fall ….'[132] As it will be shown, the so-called Semi-Pelagian controversy was founded upon the respective parties' views of Original Sin.

Henri Rondet's *Original Sin: The Patristic and Theological Background* appears to be an authoritative resource for many contemporary authors who have written on the doctrine. His historical research of the early church up through the present day includes analyzing many of the church fathers, which is beneficial for our analysis to determine whether the Gallic monks embraced a Western or Eastern view on the Fall. Rondet's keen mind in making deductions from non-explicit statements serves as a model for our original research. For example, in his section on Justin Martyr, Rondet observes, 'What he says

[132] Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 397.

about the effects of baptism only indirectly refer to original sin in us. All the more should one not seek to find in him the idea of hereditary fault transmitted by procreation.'[133]

While Rondet writes over 100 pages on the early church's understanding of Original Sin, tracing its roots from the East[134] to the West,[135] he writes just one paragraph on the Gallic monks, which we provide in full:

> At this point [at the end of the Pelagian controversy] Augustinianism itself was hauled over the coals by the representatives of what will later be known as Semi-pelagianism. But the condemnation of Pelagius was obtained and Vincent of Lerins, although an opponent of Augustine, will exclaim: 'Before Celestius, who ever called in question that the entire human race was implicated in Adam's disloyalty?'[136]

This single quotation from Vincent is merely the tip of the iceberg in analyzing Vincent's thought on Original Sin. Rondet makes no mention of Cassian or Faustus in his survey.

Tatha Wiley's *Original Sin: Origins, Developments, Contemporary Meanings*, like Rondet's work, provides a descriptive historical survey of the development of Original Sin from its earliest inklings to the Patristic era and full-blown acceptance in Augustine up through the modern period and into contemporary theology. However, in her chapter on Augustine's theory and his interaction with Pelagius, we are given her approach to the Gallic monks:

> Almost a hundred years later, the Council of Orange (529) was convened in southern France to address the difficulties presented by those who were taking Augustine's theory of the corruption of human nature to an extreme. Faustus of Riez (d. before 500), a major figure in this controversy, argued against both sides in *De gratia et libero arbitrio*. He assailed those who held that human freedom had been completely destroyed (the extreme Augustinian position).[137]

Wiley writes one paragraph (like Rondet) about Faustus, without going into detail, and essentially skips the one hundred years between Pelagius's condemnation and the Second

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[133] Henri Rondet, *Original Sin: The Patristic and Theological Background*, trans by Cajetan Finegan (Staten Island, Ecclesia Press, 1972), 29.

[134] Irenaeus, Alexandrians, Origenists, and the Cappadocians.

[135] Tertullian, Ambrose, and Augustine.

[136] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 127-128.

[137] Tatha Wiley, *Original Sin: Origins, Developments, Contemporary Meanings* (Mahweh: Paulist Press, 2002), 73.

Council of Orange; she makes no mention of Cassian or Vincent. This one hundred or so years after Pelagius, however, is crucial for recognizing the reception that Augustine had in the West.

John E. Toews's *The Story of Original Sin* is the most recent historical survey on Original Sin.[138] His work is welcomed as an additional voice of agreement illustrating the historical divide between Eastern and Western approaches on this doctrine. Unfortunately, Toews's survey fails to make any mention of Cassian, Vincent, or Faustus.

James Boyce's *Born Bad: Original Sin and the Making of the Western World* appears to be more of a sociological treatment of the history of original sin rather than through the method of historical theology. He devotes less than a page to describing the Gallic opposition to Augustine, and while Boyce does not have much to contribute by way of a discussion including primary sources, his astute observation that the differences between Augustine and his objectors was ultimately grounded in the doctrine of Original Sin is, we believe, correct.[139]

Our brief survey of secondary sources on the history of Original Sin forces us to conclude that there is a deficiency in this theme of literature on the Gallic monastic response to Augustine.

Summary

In summary, it has been shown that the studies which focus upon the Gallic monks have not given due diligence to the monks' understanding of Original Sin. Most of the published work has addressed their views on grace and free will, no doubt due to the dominant nature of their debates. However, the beliefs that undergirded their views on

[138] John E. Toews, *The Story of Original Sin* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2013).
[139] Boyce, *Born Bad*, 22-23.

grace and free will have received little attention (often a couple pages in a book or a paragraph in an article).

The only mention of the Gallic monks on Original Sin is found in Greg Allison's introductory textbook, *Historical Theology: An Introduction*. In his section on election and reprobation (not hamartiology), Allison ties the Gallic response to Augustine to their view on the Fall: 'These Christians, who would later become known as the semi-Pelagians, agreed with [Augustine] about the fall of Adam, original sin, the necessity of and salvation by grace and so forth.'[140] We are concerned about the consistency of this statement because in his earlier chapter on sin he writes that so-called semi-Pelagianism 'denies liability for guilt from Adam but agrees that people are corrupted by sin.'[141] Allison appears to be saying that the Gallic monks agreed and yet disagreed with Augustine on Original Sin. Whether those points can be smoothed out through accurate nuance remains to be seen for the time being, but it shows us how further study is needed.

This project is unique insofar as it first, attempts to present a synthetic Gallic account of Original Sin, second, to compare and contrast this Gallic view against eastern Greek theology and third, present a systematic defense of the Gallic view and explain its value for contemporary evangelical Protestant discussions on Original Sin and *ordo salutis*.

Motivation

The chief motivation of this project is to provide a contribution to the academic discussion in an area that has heretofore been largely neglected: What precisely did the Gallic monks believe about Original Sin and does it, like their views on grace and free will bear any connection to eastern Christian theology on the same topic? But there is also a

[140] Allison, *Historical Theology*, 457-458.
[141] Allison, *Historical Theology*, 342.

secondary motivation by this author to correct numerous misconceptions which 19th, 20th, and 21st century scholars, especially Reformed theologians, have about the so-called Semi-Pelagians. These misconceptions pertain not only to the theology of the Gallic monks, but also to their reception by their contemporaries and later interpreters. Charles Hodge believed the Gallic monks were so influential upon the Roman Catholic church that the doctrine of 'original righteousness arose out of the Semi-Pelagianism of the Church of Rome, and was designed to sustain it.'[142] Louis Berkhof, like some previously stated, believed that 'Between the extremes of Augustinianism and Pelagianism a mediating movement *arose*, which is known in history as Semi-Pelagianism.'[143] Historian Paul Johnson wrote, 'Cassian was a scholar … who steered a cautious *middle course* between Pelagianism and the Augustinian determinism ….'[144] Anthony Hoekema believed that so-called Semi-Pelagianism *necessitated* a first act by the human.[145] Montgomery Hitchcock opined, 'The weakness of the Semi-Pelagian position lay in its ascribing the beginning of salvation to the free-will of man, and not to Divine grace.'[146] Joseph Tixeront described the so-called Semi-Pelagians as thinking that, 'Man is able, *without grace*, to desire and will, but not to perform, supernaturally good deeds; he can begin to believe, but he can not impart to himself complete faith.'[147] And finally, consider the peculiar claims by Olson:[148]

- 'The gospel preached and doctrine of salvation taught in most evangelical pulpits and lecterns, and believed in most evangelical pews, is not classical Arminianism but semi-Pelagianism …'

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[142] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (New York: C. Scribner, 1882-73), 2:105.

[143] Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1975), 137.

[144] Paul Johnson, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 142.

[145] Anthony Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 8, 'To teach that human nature after the Fall is only partially depraved, so that human beings are not dead in sin but only diseased, *must therefore take the first step in regeneration*, and may lose their salvation after they have received it, implies a Semi-Pelagian soteriology,' emphasis mine. Also note Hoekema's association with the contagion/diseased model of human nature as constituting Semi-Pelagianism at the expense of the eastern theological tradition which also viewed Original Sin as a contagion that was contracted.

[146] Montgomery Hitchcock, *St. Patrick and his Gallic Friends* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1915), 82.

[147] Joseph Tixeront, *History of Dogmas: Vol. III, the End of the Patristic Age* (430-800) (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1916), 271, emphasis mine.

[148] Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 30.

- ‘Semi-Pelagianism became the popular theology of the Roman Catholic church in the centuries leading up to the Protestant Reformation.’
- ‘Today, semi-Pelagianism is the default theology of most American evangelical Christians.’

Given just these few claims about the Gallic monks and their theology, it falls upon those more adept in the literature to repudiate these misunderstandings just as Backus and Goudriaan have done: ‘While this description of the content of “Semipelagian beliefs” corresponds to what later generations of scholars took “Semipelagian” to mean, it does not actually describe the historical reality of the movement or movements.’[149]

Today the Semi-Pelagian moniker is a boogeyman in contemporary evangelical Protestant theological circles used to convey the notion of a heretical position (likely in our estimation because of the linguistic association one might have with the formally recognized heresy of Pelagianism). Since Augustine found the Gallic monks to be Christian brothers, then we would like to suggest that contemporary Christian Protestant scholars ought to do the same. Augustine Casiday rightly remarks that, ‘the received account of how various parties in southern Gaul, in around the fifth and sixth centuries, responded to the works of Augustine is badly in need of revision’[150] Finally, and in order to accomplish the above motivation, we are also impressed upon to provide a systematic defense of the Gallic monks’ view on Original Sin so as to help bring their voice to the contemporary Protestant discussions on grace, faith, and free will (often referred to today as the Calvinism-Arminianism debate). But before analyzing the Gallic monks’ view(s) on Original Sin, it is necessary to provide background information pertinent to their concerns about Augustine. It is to this that we now turn.

[149] Backus and Goudriaan, ‘“Semipelagianism,”’ 25.
[150] Casiday, ‘Rehabilitating John Cassian,’ 270.

Chapter 2

Historical Background

Critical Responses to Augustine

In the century after the Pelagian controversy had ended, Augustine's own doctrine of grace was questioned.[1] 'This controversy over grace and free will has long remained in the shadows cast by the much better known Pelagian controversy.'[2] Rebecca Harden Weaver writes, 'The disputes over grace that arose in the fifth and early sixth centuries in the West reveal not only the absence of any normative doctrine of grace but also the lack of a consensus on the subject.'[3] While some scholars believe the doctrines questioned were extreme versions of Augustine's own beliefs, whether such positions were extreme or consistent with the Bishop of Hippo remain to be seen. The positions that were particularly questioned were Augustine's teaching on predestination, a limited scope of God's purpose in election, and the purpose of perseverance. The critical monks from Hadrumentum and Gaul were concerned that Augustine's doctrine 'undermines human responsibility and free choice by its emphasis on God's sovereign hand in the bringing about of salvation.'[4] Disturbances arose mainly in Hadrumetum, North Africa and Roman Gaul (especially Marseilles and the Island of Saint Honorat). To address these concerns, Augustine wrote his four final works on grace. *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio* (*Grace and Free Choice)* and *De Correptione et Gratia* (*Rebuke and Grace*) both respond to the concerns from Hadrumentum, 'where a group of monks thought that Augustine's teaching on grace

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[1] The notion of a "Semi-Pelagianism" 'makes clear that Augustine's ideas on grace, human freedom and predestination were not widely accepted in the theological context of his day,' Anthony Dupont, *Gratia in Augustine's Sermones ad Populum during the Pelagian Controversy: Do Different Contexts Furnish Different Insights?* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 65.

[2] Hwang, Matz, and Casiday, 'Preface,' ix.

[3] Weaver, 'Introduction,' *Grace for Grace*, xi.

[4] Susannah Ticciati, 'Augustine and Grace Ex Nihilio: The Logic of Augustine's Response to the Monks of Hadrumetum and Marseilles,' *Augustinian Studies*, vol. 41, no. 2 (2010), 404-405.

destroyed free choice and human merits and eliminated the possibility of anyone, but especially of a monastic superior, giving rebukes and exhortations.'[5] This seemingly quelled the concerns from North Africa, but two of Augustine's supporters, Prosper of Aquitaine who lived in Marseilles and Hilary (both of whom were laymen), requested help from Augustine in responding to his Gallic critics. *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* (*On the Predestination of the Saints*) and *De Dono Perseverantiae* (*On the Gift of Perseverance*) both respond to their letters.

It has been traditionally believed that the two areas of concerns arose in a chronological fashion, perhaps even causally connected as a result of the writings written to Hadrumetum making their way across the Mediterranean to Gaul. However, some scholars such as Weaver have begun doubting the traditional chronology. Reflecting upon her own thought over many decades, Weaver notes that she has, 'more questions I have encountered about both the beginning and the end of the controversy, as well as the identification of its various stages and the relationships among them.'[6] Two specific examples illustrate her point: First, she realized that there might not have been a causal relationship between the events of Hadrumetum and Gaul, and second, she now recognizes that the overly confident Augustinian figure, Prosper, changed his mind as time progressed, becoming more soft spoken on predestinarianism. While the concerns coming from Hadrumentum are not the main focus of our project, it remains important to consider their interactions because some of Augustine's writings found their way to Gaul and exacerbated his objectors.

The Hubbub at Hadrumetum

[5] Teske, 'General Introduction,' *AP4 WSA* 1.26.xi.
[6] Weaver, 'Introduction,' *Grace for Grace*, xvii.

Much of what we know of this background comes from a letter written by Valentine, the abbot at the monastery of Hadrumetum, to Augustine.[7]

In the library of a monastery at Uzalis (modern day El Alia, Tunisia) was a copy of a letter that Augustine wrote in 418 to Sixtus, a priest at the church in Rome (and future Pope). This letter was read by a monk named Florus in 427, who was so impressed with it that he had a copy made and sent it to his monastery home at Hadrumentum. 'Without the knowledge of Valentine, the abbot of the monastery at Hadrumetum, the Letter to Sixtus was circulated among some of the "less educated" monks at Hadrumentum ... .'[8] After having read this letter, quarreling broke out over concerns regarding the role of free will in salvation. Why this monastery had not seen this letter or known of Augustine's beliefs against the Pelagians is probably a testament to the isolation that the monastic community (at least in North Africa) had to the outside world, even the ecclesiastical world.[9]

The section of the letter that perhaps caused issue was regarding Augustine's understanding of grace: 'Or is there anything for which we ought to give more abundant thanksgiving to God, than that His grace is so ably defended by those to whom it is given, against those to whom it is not given, or by whom, when given, it is not accepted, because in the secret and just judgment of God the disposition to accept it is not given to them?'[10] In the attempt to quell the quarreling, Valentine tried multiple solutions. First he sent a letter to Evodius (the Bishop at Uzalis); to the present knowledge of scholars on this issue, this letter has failed to survive. The response from Evodius, which has survived, did little to help the situation,

> But if there is something less clear about the gift of free choice and grace and its outcome, or about the secret depth of God's judgment and about his providence and his secret

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[7] Teske, 'General Introduction,' *AP4 WSA* 1.26.lv.

[8] Teske, 'General Introduction,' *AP4* WSA 1.26.xii. Teske notes that whether these monks really were less educated or if they were labeled as such for their misgivings about Augustine's doctrine remains to be seen (Teske, *AP4 WSA* 1.26.xli, ednt 7).

[9] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 6, ftnt 9.

[10] Augustine, 'Letter 191,' *NPNF1* 1:555.

> dispensation regarding various human beings, let no one be disturbed, if he does not understand. Let us believe that the Lord is just and that there is no injustice in him, and let us save for the next life what we do not understand in this life.[11]

Evodius's response was that if anything remains unclear, then one ought to wait until the next life to discover the truth. Unsatisfied, Valentine then approached a priest named Sabinus who conveyed Augustine's message clearly. Still unsatisfied, Valentine sent two monks (Cresconius and Felix) to Augustine with a copy of the letter to Sixtus. These monks spent time with Augustine to explain the division at Hadrumetum and to learn from the Bishop, who welcomed them. The two monks were intent to return before Easter and so Augustine wrote a letter to Valentine explaining these matters to them. However, Cresconius and Felix were persuaded to stay at Hippo and consequently Augustine wrote a second letter to Valentine.

In his first letter to Valentine we learn from Augustine that 'certain among you preach grace in such a way that they deny that human beings have free choice' while yet the majority of monks correctly believed that 'free choice is helped by the grace of God.'[12] In his second letter we see that Augustine used the extra time provided to him to teach the visiting monks more about his positions.

With the additional time Augustine also wrote *Grace and Free Choice*. This work was purposed so that one must not deny the grace of God while affirming free choice but also not to deny free choice while affirming the grace of God (chapter 1). The first half of the work (chapters 2-22) is largely a defense of free will, with Augustine's use of scriptural support. Free choice exists because the Bible tells us that God tempts no person, moral imperatives imply free choice, God will hold all human beings accountable for their behavior, etc. (chapters 2-5). But free choice, contrary to the Pelagians, does not mean grace is unneeded. In fact, grace is necessary for the use of free choice not only in

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[11] Evodius, 'Letter to Valentine,' *AP4 WSA* 1.26.42.
[12] Augustine, 'The First Letter from Augustine to Valentine,' *AP4 WSA* 1.26.44.

conversion (chapters 10-12) but also for sanctification (such as chastity and avoiding temptation; chapters 6-9, 13-14), perseverance (chapters 16-18), and eternal life (chapters 15 & 19-21). To conclude his defense of free will, he remarks that free will is unable to justify humans, who are transgressors of God's law (chapter 22).

The second half of *Grace and Free Choice* (chapters 23-45) is a defense of his understanding of the doctrine of grace. In contrast to the Pelagians, Augustine argues that grace is not the law (chapter 23) and if it were then we could earn our own salvation (chapter 24). Grace is not the same as nature because 'we possess this nature in common with ungodly men and unbelievers; whereas the grace which comes through the faith of Jesus Christ belongs only to them to whom the faith itself appertains.'[13] This grace not only is for the forgiveness of past sins but also for helping us from committing future sins (chapters 26-27). Faith is the absolute gratuitous gift of God (chapter 28) which is the point of conversion (paragraph 29) because God removes our hearts of stone (chapter 30). But lest we think free will is nullified, the free will, finally becoming able to do good that it can fulfill the divine commandments (chapters 31-33). The grace of God so changes the human will that it is able to love God (chapters 34-38), through the Holy Spirit (chapter 39). This love is unlike the Pelagian understanding because on their view love is from ourselves (chapter 40). In the next three chapters (41-43) Augustine argues for a sense of divine sovereignty that God can do whatever he pleases with humans. The gratuitous grace of God is exemplified in the case of dying infants, who deserve nothing but nevertheless some receive the sacrament of baptism while others do not (chapter 44). Why it is that some infants or adults receive God's grace and others do not is entirely up to the secret counsel of God (chapter 45). In concluding, Augustine argues that if some have trouble

[13] Augustine, *Grace and Free Will* 25, *NPNF1* 5:454.

understanding these doctrines, they should pray that God give them understanding (chapter 46).

Valentine responded positively to Augustine, because he finally received the type of answer that he was seeking, one which was medicinal and brought healing to the situation.[14] However, Augustine learned from Florus (whom Valentine had sent) that one of the monks drew the conclusion from *Grace and Free Choice* that monks ought not rebuke one another, but only pray that God's commands be kept, because it is God who produces the will to act or not act in any given person. So in order to put to rest all the concerns from Hadrumetum, Augustine wrote *Rebuke and Grace* (*De Correptione et Gratia*).

Rebuke and Grace can be divided into three main sections. The first section (chapters 6-25) contains response to objections against rebuking, the second section (chapters 26-35) presents Augustine's distinction between grace in the pre- and post-lapsarian worlds, and the third section (chapters 36-48) answers potential objections. There is an introductory section (chapters 1-5) which covers formalities, the doctrine of grace, and the purpose and biblical basis of prayer and rebuke.

Augustine begins the first section by providing the objection from Hadrumetum against rebuking (chapter 6). To this he replies that the objector is one who does not want to be rebuked for the sin that he is dealing with (chapter 7). God does not need humans to rebuke in order to achieve his purposes, like with Peter or Paul (chapter 8) and yet it remains beneficial to rebuke even the non-believer (chapter 9). Rebuke should even be used upon the former believer who has lost his or her way (chapter 10), for if rebuking does not work, then that person shall be justly condemned (chapter 11); there is no difference between the person that never believed and the one who did believe but did not persevere (chapter 12). Those that are called by God are elect and if they depart from the faith they

[14] Valentine, 'A Letter of Abbot Valentine to Saint Augustine,' *AP4 WSA* 1.26.lvii.

will return before they die (chapters 13-14). Perseverance is a gift and we do not know why some receive it but others do not (chapter 15-17). God's ways are mysterious and humans cannot fathom His ways (chapters 18-19). Those persons who do believe for a short time are considered to be children of God but if they fall away, then they are not elect because they are 'not truly called' (chapters 20-23).[15] In finishing the first section Augustine notes how even the sins of the elect are used by God for their own good to bring them back to the faith (chapter 24), so that is why rebuke is to be used upon believers (chapter 25).

The second main section of *Rebuke and Grace* is on Augustine's view of grace before the Fall and grace after. The first objection is that if Adam was created good, then that would include the gift of perseverance; yet he sinned so he must not have had that gift (chapter 26). Augustine replies that just as angels had the choice of rebelling or remaining faithful (chapter 27), so too Adam had that choice and chose rebellion wherein the whole human race fell but God graciously saves a few from condemnation (chapter 28). The grace that Adam received was of a different type than the type received today because Adam did not fight against the spirit of the flesh as his posterity do (chapter 29). Therefore, because a more powerful grace is needed that grace is the power of Christ to defeat sin (chapter 30). Augustine claims that Adam did have God's help to persevere if he so desired but he chose to rebel instead (chapters 31-32):

> For he did not need grace to receive good, because he had not yet lost it; but he needed the aid of grace to continue in it, and without this aid he could not do this at all; and he had received the ability if he would, but he had not the will for what he could; for if he had possessed it, he would have persevered.[16]

The difference between Adam and the last state of humans is that Adam was able not to sin, die or forsake good. But in the last state humans will not be able to sin, die, or forsake good (chapter 33). This is because in the prelapsarian world Adam received a grace without

[15] Augustine, *De Correptione et Gratia* 22, *NPNF1* 5:480.
[16] Augustine, *De Correptione et Gratia* 32, *NPNF1* 5:485.

which he could not persevere (like what food is to living) but in the final state humans receive a grace by which we will persevere (like receiving a blessing) (chapter 34). And so, the freedom that the saints receive is greater than the freedom that Adam had. After all, temptations abound much more than in the prelapsarian world, but the grace of Christ empowers the saints to persevere (chapter 35).

In the third section, Augustine appears to be anticipating possible objections so he brings up a variety of topics. He remarks that in the same way that God elects and predestines persons, so too it is God that 'makes them to perservere in good, who makes them good'[17] (chapter 36) because the human will in the postlapsarian world is so weak (chapter 37); such as it is, no saint can boast of anything he or she has done to persevere (chapter 38). The number of the elect is certain and limited (chapter 39), but 'who of the multitude of believers can presume, so long as he is living in this mortal state, that he is in the number of the predestined?' (chapter 40).[18] The next two chapters (41-42) are devoted to explaining that on the day of judgment God will show mercy to whom he has shown mercy but those who are not among the elect will receive condemnation. Rebuke is beneficial for all men, if applied in a loving manner (chapter 43). Regarding God's desire to save all men (1 Timothy 2:4), Augustine interpreted the 'all' as follows: 'all the predestinated may be understood by it, because every kind of men is among them' (chapter 45).[19] Like in *Grace and Free Choice*, Augustine argued that God may do as he pleases with men and this is seen in the Old Testament narrative stories of God moving in the hearts of men to pick Saul as their king or for the mighty men to support David (chapter 46). Two brief chapters follow. The first offers an alternative interpretation to 1 Timothy 2:4 that God simply makes us desire all men to be saved (chapter 47) and the second is an

[17] Augustine, *De Correptione et Gratia* 36, *NPNF1* 5:486.
[18] Augustine, *De Correptione et Gratia* 40, *NPNF1* 5:488.
[19] Augustine, *De Correptione et Gratia* 44, *NPNF1* 5:489.

encouragement to rebuke (chapter 48). Augustine finishes his work with a concluding summary chapter (49).

While we cannot know with certainty that this put an end to the concerns that the monks at Hadrumetum had, scholars have granted the point as such. We do not know precisely what reasons the monks at Hadrumetum had for being satisfied with Augustine's answers. There is the 'the profound question of why some monks seem to have found Augustine's teachings congenial (e.g., at Hadrumetum), whereas others allegedly did not (e.g., at Lerins).'[20] The reason for this is because we do not have the questions written by the monks themselves, only the responses of those who answered. One hypothesis attempts to pit the theological style versus monastic lifestyle focus (see §1.4), but this fails to consider the fact that Augustine himself was a monk or that monks were also theologically inclined (e.g. Vincent's *Commonitorium*). Weaver's hypothesis is more convincing in spite of the lack of explicit reasons from the primary sources: '[I]n contrast to the fully developed monastic theology of South Gaul, evident, for example, in the works of John Cassian, the monastic theology of North Africa is either no longer accessible to us or, more likely, was never explicitly developed.'[21] So perhaps it is the case that Hadrumetum lacked a guided theology on these matters; their lack of theological direction could also be explained by the fact that they had not seen some of Augustine's work and even supposedly had Pelagians in their ranks, in North Africa, the supposed bastion of Augustine's doctrine. Across the Mediterranean Sea, however, there was a theological consensus and it is to that geographical region to which we now move.

The Gall from Gaul

[20] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 141.
[21] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 9.

In the last chapter we noted Rebecca Harden Weaver's retraction that the anti-Augustinian response moved chronologically and geographically from Hadrumetum to Gaul. While Weaver could hardly be blamed for affirming this traditionally held historical belief, Hwang notes that a letter from Prosper to Rufinus which is dated to 426 either pre-dates or is concurrent with the concerns from Hadrumetum.[22] In this letter Prosper makes known the existing anti-Augustinian sentiment:

> Against this doctor [Augustine], resplendent with the glory of so many palms and so many crowns which he gained for the exaltation of the Church and the glory of Christ, some of ours, to their own great misfortune, speak and murmur in secret; but we came to know their criticisms. When they find ears ready to listen, they defame the writings Augustine published against the Pelagian error. They say he completely sets aside free will and under cover of grace upholds fatalism.[23]

For these anti-Augustinian Gallic monks, 'many were seriously disturbed at the turn which the controversy had latterly taken, and were prepared to reject Augustine's teaching, as not merely novel, but also practically dangerous.'[24] What was it about his views that, 'for while Augustine is virtually ignored in Gaul during the first decade of the fifth century, [until] his works become a source of controversy by the end of the third.'[25] This controversy 'affected Lérins more than any other center in Gaul, with the exception of the monastery of St. Victor at Marseilles.'[26] The monks from Hadrumetum were not alone as independent observers of Augustine's doctrine of grace and its worrying implications.

We can begin to discover the rumblings of the Gallic monks not solely through their writings but also through Prosper's. Before looking at Prosper's writings it is important to make one caveat: We ought to proceed with fairly strong skepticism of his interpretation of his interlocutors. Prosper 'had to admit, in a letter sent to Augustine, his lack of knowledge of the patristic tradition, a fact that left him at a disadvantage in debates with his

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[22] Hwang, *Prosper of Aquitaine: A Study of his Life and Works*, doctoral diss., Fordham University, 2006), 113.
[23] Prosper, 'Letter to Rufinus' 3, *Defense of St. Augustine*, *ACW* 32.23.
[24] Gibson, 'Prolegomena,' *NPNF2* 11:191.
[25] Smith, *De Gratia*, 39.
[26] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez*, 40.

theological Provencal rivals.'[27] Likely as a consequence of his lack of knowledge, 'the strategy that Prosper employs throughout the controversy,' is to peg the Gallic monks as Pelagians.[28] We will deal more with Prosper's shortcomings in due time, but for now we can observe his perception of his opponents. For Prosper, his 'answers are drawn from elements of Augustine's doctrine of grace, namely, Original Sin, free will, and predestination.'[29] It would be accurate to say that Prosper believed Augustine's doctrines were the most accurate and what he (Prosper) believed to be representative of the Christian Church.

In his second letter to Augustine (the first is extant), dated roughly 428-429, we learn that Prosper's purpose (paragraph 1) for contacting Augustine was to receive help from a 'special protector of the faith [against] those matters that I understand to be extremely dangerous.'[30] These matters, specifically (paragraph 2) were that the monks who 'dwell in the city of Marseilles think that whatever you [Augustine] discussed concerning the calling of the elect according to God's plan is opposed to the opinion of the Fathers and to the mind of the Church.'[31] Prosper notes that these concerns were similar to the ones that 'disturbed certain persons in Africa' and he had hoped that *Rebuke and Grace* would have solved the problem in Gaul. However, unlike Hadrumetum, that was not the case as 'those who were handicapped by the darkness of their own point of view went off more unfavorably disposed than they had been.'[32] Instead of helping to calm the concerns of the Massilian monks, Augustine's writing 'only intensified the problem.'[33]

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[27] Raul Villegas Marín, 'Prosper's "Crypto-Pelagians": *De ingratis* and the *Carmen de prouidentia Dei*,' trans. Gerardo Rodriquez-Galarza, in *Grace for Grace: The Debates After Augustine and Pelagius* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 60.

[28] Marin, 'Prosper's "Crypto-Pelagians,"' 67.

[29] Hwang, *Prosper of Aquitaine*, 118.

[30] Prosper, 'Letter 225: Prosper to Augustine,' in *Letters 211-270, 1*-29**, *Works of Saint Augustine – A Translation for the 21st Century*, part 2, vol. 4, trans. Roland Teske, ed. Boniface Ramsey (Hyde Park: New City Press, 2005), 88.

[31] Prosper, 'Letter 225,' *WSA* 2.4.88.

[32] Prosper, 'Letter 225,' *WSA* 2.4.88.

[33] Weaver, 'Introduction,' in *Grace for Grace*, xii.

Prosper then provides a summary of their theological position (paragraph 3); all humans have participated in Adam's fall and all humans can be reconciled to God. This is contingent upon a human response to the Gospel, which was predestined by God according to his foreknowledge. The monks were concerned that Augustine's doctrine of grace nullified the purpose of human free choice. '[T]hey defend their stubbornness by invoking tradition' because they believed that he was outside of the tradition of the church fathers.[34] Augustine also had an interpretation of the book of Romans that 'had never been interpreted by anyone in the Church' before, so their disagreement was not only based upon church tradition, but of having a correct view of the Scriptures.[35] On this methodology, Weaver observes, 'The crucial issue here is to discover the ways in which the various disputants in the debate made use of particular passages of Scripture and specific teachings of recognized fathers and councils of the church in order to reshape the tradition to support their own argument.'[36]

The Pelagian roots of the Gallic view, according to Prosper, are seen for example in their affirmation of a natural sense of free choice. That is, they believed that God's grace was to be found in the created order, which humanity still retained the ability to use post-Fall (paragraph 4). Unlike Augustine, the Gallic monks believed there was no need for an immediate, imminent, individualized superadded grace in the post-lapsarian world to counteract the effects of the Fall (in contemporary uses, this might be understood as 'Common,' 'Prevenient', or 'Regenerative' grace for an efficacious change in the person's will). Also unlike Augustine, the monks believed that God would save some infants that die even if they had not received baptism (paragraph 5). The cause of this is found in God's foreknowledge of what the person would have done had they lived. Then Prosper mentions

[34] Prosper, 'Letter 225,' *WSA* 2.4.89.
[35] Prosper, 'Letter 225,' *WSA* 2.4.89.
[36] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 3.

the Gallic view of the sufficiency of the atonement for all humans, should all humans believe (paragraph 6). 'They say, moreover, that our Lord Jesus Christ has died for the whole human race and that no one is exempt from the redemption of his blood ….'[37] Prosper concludes the theological body of his letter by listing a few other points of contention: the priority of grace against works, the certitude of the number of the elect, and whether every person can be genuinely called to repent.

The final section of his letter mentions that the Gallic monks are morally upstanding and of high positions, so they are revered in their communities (paragraph 7). However, Prosper finds that they are to some degree crypto-Pelagians because 'the inner life of this great virulence is nourished in these remnants of the Pelagian depravity.'[38] So, he calls upon Augustine to write a reply to these many points (paragraph 8). If and when Augustine does this, Prosper's final request (paragraph 9) is for him to write a message to Hilary the Bishop of Arles,[39] who is 'an admirer and follower of your teaching in all other respects' except this one, in order that Hilary may be corrected.[40] While we will later show skepticism concerning the reliability of Prosper's ability to accurately represent his opponents, Hilary, a layman (not the Bishop of Arles), also wrote to Augustine.

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[37] Prosper, 'Letter 225,' *WSA* 2.4.91.

[38] Prosper, 'Letter 225,' *WSA* 2.4.93.

[39]Teske, 'Letter 225,' *WSA* 2.4.94., footnote 18, notes that 'There has been some recent question about whether Prosper actually referred to Hilary of Arles or to Helladius, the man to whom John Cassian dedicated his first ten *Conferences*.' Some scholars believe that Prosper's letter should be dated to 429 on the basis of Hilary's recent appointment to Bishop of Arles. However, Owen Chadwick strongly argues ('Euladius of Arles,' *The Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. 46 (1945): 200-205) that Helladius ("Elladium" as it is in one manuscript) is the person Prosper has in mind. It was Helladius who was the Bishop of Arles from 426-427, and this date fits better with other factors that we must consider. First, since Augustine died in 430 we know that his final works, *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian*, *Heresies*, and *Revisions* were written in 429 or 430. That would make his final year quite busy if he also penned *Predestination of the Saints* and the *Gift of Perseverance*. Second, Teske reminds us that the Vandal invasion of North Africa cut off communication between Africa and Gaul before Augustine's death (*AP4*, 22), so that provided an even smaller window of time through which he could have sent out his writings to Prosper and Hilary. Lastly, we know from his letter to Rufinus (dated to 426) that Prosper was already aware of the anti-Augustinian sentiments in Marseilles, so dating his letter to Augustine in either 426 or 427 is not pushing the timeline sooner than the evidence might otherwise require.

[40] Prosper, 'Letter 225,' *WSA* 2.4.94.

In Hilary's letter to Augustine, he describes for us the beliefs of monks at Marseilles and other places in Gaul on free will, predestination, grace, and even the Fall. Paragraphs 1, 9, and 10 contain no theological content, while it is noteworthy from paragraph 9 we are told these monks are leaders of the church and that the laity pays attention to them. Paragraphs 2 and 5 describe that the monks believed God's predestining of the elect in Augustine's understanding renders the human will powerless. 'For, they say, if people are predestined to each side so that no one can move from the one side to the other, what good does such great insistence upon rebukes from someone else do, if there does not arise' faith, even a sorrow, or fear of eternal death?[41] In contrast to that particular predestinarian view, they believed that 'one who has begun to will is helped, but not in the sense that one's willing is also a gift and that others are excluded from this gift' and yet 'no one can be sufficient by himself to begin, not to mention to complete, any good work.'[42]

The letter makes note of the monks' belief that predestination is based upon God's foreknowledge of what the human choice to believe will decide (paragraph 3), a position that they argue was Augustine's previously held belief. This is argued from quotations from Augustine's letter against Porphyry, his *Expositio in Epistulam ad Romanos*, and in his commentary on Romans. 'Augustine's thought in 395 is, indeed, very like the theology of the Semi-Pelagians of Marseilles, which he opposed some thirty years later.'[43] In agreement with Augustine they believed that perseverance is a divine gift (paragraph 4), though the human still has the free choice to accept or reject even that gift. '[T]hey hold that no one is given such perseverance that he is not permitted to abandon it, but such perseverance that he can by his will fall away and grow weak.'[44]

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[41] Hilary, 'Letter 226:Hilary to Augustine,' in *Letters 211-270, 1*-29**, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, II/4, trans. Roland Teske, ed. Boniface Ramsey (Hyde Park: New City Press, 2005), 98.

[42] Hilary, 'Letter 226,' *WSA* 2.4.96.

[43] Bonner, 'Augustine and Pelagianism,' 35.

[44] Hillary, 'Letter 226,' *WSA* 2.4.98.

In contrast to Augustine, these monks also reject the distinction between the grace that Adam had and the grace that saints now receive (paragraph 6). Hilary specifically quotes an excerpt from *Rebuke and Grace* that the Gallic monks rejected wherein Augustine distinguished between the grace given to Adam *toward* perseverance whereas the saints now are given perseverance *itself*.[45] The Gallic monks reject the idea that the number of the elect is fixed and God's desire limited in scope (paragraph 7), because 'God wills that all human beings be saved, and not just those who pertain to the number of the saints but absolutely all human beings without any exception.'[46] Finally, they also reject that infants that pass away are necessarily hell bound (paragraph 8). Augustine, 'providing them with the occasion for this objection' from his earlier works, previously remained agnostic on the matter.[47] Since no other work exists from this Hilary, we ought not to be skeptical of his message since no evidence exists for us to believe he was as polemical or opportunistic as Prosper.

Teske concludes with a summation of what we can learn about the Gallic monks from Prosper and Hilary's letters:

> The monks of Provence, then, clearly differed from Augustine, not merely on the beginning of faith, but on their understanding of predestination, on the efficacy of the grace of Christ, on the determinateness of the number of the predestined, and the universality of God's salvific will.[48]

This perceptive observation shows the contrast between Augustine and the Gallic monks on grace and free will, but it fails to note that despite a couple references to agreement on the Fall, the two camps also disagreed (we will later argue) on the critical minutia of Original Sin. This was likely unknown to Augustine because he did not have Cassian's work (that we know of) and he did not live on to come across the work of Vincent or Faustus.

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[45] Hilary, 'Letter 226,' *WSA* 2.4.99.
[46] Hilary, 'Letter 226,' *WSA* 2.4.99.
[47] Hilary, 'Letter 226,' *WSA* 2.4.100; cf. Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will* 3.23, trans. Anna S. Benhamin and L. H. Hackstaff (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1964), 139-142.
[48] Teske, 'General Introduction,' *AP4 WSA* 1.26.xxvii.

In response to Prosper and Hilary, Augustine penned *Predestination of the Saints* and *The Gift of Perseverance*, the last of his writings on grace written either in 428 or 429. These two strong supporters of Augustine's thought made known to the Bishop of Hippo about the monastic groups in southern Gaul 'who admitted that the grace of God is not given on the basis of any good works, but held that our initial will to believe should not be included among such good works.'[49] Among their other concerns were the eternal resting place of infants and on what basis God judges them.

De Praedestinatione Sanctorum is regarding the necessity of Christ to save humanity from its fallen state. The only way to do this, according to Augustine, is based upon God's predestined grace to some but not to others. The origin of faith comes not from the human being, but from God, otherwise salvation would be works-based. In the first two chapters Augustine recognizes that the Gallic monks, misguided as they might have been on grace and predestination, were nevertheless to be considered Christian brothers and not Pelagians. He explains that the beginning of faith is the gift of God and that grace is not based upon merits (chapters 3 & 4). Grace cannot be based upon merits because 'no one is sufficient for himself, for the beginning or the completion of any good work whatever' (chapter 5),[50] and so no human should think too highly of herself as if her work were of first priority and God's second (chapter 6).

Augustine admits (chapter 7) that he previously held to a different (faulty) view of divine grace:

> For I did not think that faith was preceded by God's grace, so that by its means would be given to us what we might profitably ask, except that we could not believe if the proclamation of the truth did not precede; but that we should consent when the gospel was preached to us I thought was our own doing, and came to us from ourselves.[51]

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[49] Teske, 'General Introduction,' *AP4 WSA* 1.26.xi.
[50] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 5, *NPNF1* 5:500.
[51] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 7, *NPNF1* 5:500.

He describes how, if the Gallic brothers had been keeping up with his writings, they would have seen him solve the concern over grace and free will in his first book to Simplicianus (chapter 8). Augustine defends his interpretation of St. Paul, who he thinks argues that any credit given to humans would detract glory from God (chapter 9). In chapter 10 we find Augustine's doctrine of double predestination: 'As the one who is supremely good, he made good use of evil deeds, for the damnation of those whom he had justly predestined to punishment and for the salvation of those whom he had kindly predestined to grace.'[52] Ultimately, we do not know why God chooses some for eternal salvation and others for eternal damnation because 'His ways are unsearchable' (chapter 11).[53]

Augustine argues that Paul says we are justified by faith, and not of works, because God first gives faith and works are an outworking of that faith (chapter 12). When the Father gives faith to a person their hardened heart is replaced and the person comes to faith by going to the Son (chapter 13). The following three chapters are used to reply to the concerns that God does not teach or give the gift of faith to all humans. He then goes on to explain that it was because of Christ's foreknowledge that He waited to enter into human history (chapters 17 and 18). In chapter 19 he distinguishes between predestination and grace, the former the preparation of the latter. Grace is the fulfillment of God's promise, and that includes his promise to Abraham and the foreseen inclusion of the Gentiles (chapter 20). Augustine questions why some men would entrust their own will to that of God's will with crediting where their faith came from (chapter 21). Ultimately, it is God who fulfills his promises and not man (chapter 22).

The next seven chapters are Augustine's response to the Gallic monks' concerns about the eternal state of unbaptized infants. They believe that God's judgment of infants is

[52] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 11, *NPNF1* 5:503.
[53] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 10, *NPNF1* 5:504.

based upon His foreknowledge of their actions, had they continued to live. Augustine, on the other hand, entrusts God's judgment to punish the unbaptized infants.

> And to this period of the bodily life moreover pertains, what the Pelagians deny, but Christ's Church confesses, original sin; and according to whether this is by God's grace loosed, or by God's judgment not loosed, when infants die, they pass, on the one hand, by the merit of regeneration from evil to good, or on the other, by the merit of their origin from evil to evil.[54]

Augustine admonishes the Gallic monks (chapter 24), who were reported as being intelligent men, because they have posited something which Scripture does not support and which Augustine thinks does an injustice to God's foreknowledge, because the infants would have grown up to continue in their rebellion anyway.[55] He thinks their belief entails that infant baptism is for future sins (chapter 25) and not present ones, doing a disservice to the doctrine of Original Sin: 'let them observe and see that if it be so it is not in this case original sins which are punished in infants that die without baptism, but what would have been the sins of each one had he lived.'[56] He makes it a point to utilize the Pelagians by arguing that even they, who deny original sin, had not taken this line of reasoning and so 'it cannot be said with what pain I find that they who with us on catholic authority condemn the error of those heretics, have not seen this, which the Pelagians themselves have seen to be most false and absurd.'[57]

This line of reasoning takes Augustine to discuss an argument from Cyprian and the book of Wisdom regarding the advantage of death because it prevents righteous humans from further sinning (chapters 26-28). So if the Gallic monks are correct that God judges unbaptized infants upon his counterfactual foreknowledge, then 'wherein is the advantage of this, if even future sins which have not been committed are punished?'[58] For Augustine,

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[54] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 24, *NPNF1* 5:509.

[55] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 244, *NPNF1* 5:510, 'as if future sin could be foreknown, and could not be foregone.'

[56] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 25, *NPNF1* 5:510.

[57] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 25, *NPNF1* 5:510.

[58] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 26, *NPNF1* 5:510.

the Gallic monks' position is functionally useless because death serves as no advantage to being punished. Instead, he argues (and probably implicitly regarding the death of infants, given the context) that death is an advantage for them, '… how, I say, should it not have been of the greatest and highest advantage to such an one to be snatched by death from this sphere of temptations before his fall?'[59]

Ultimately it is God's mercy and judgment that fall upon infants (chapter 29). It is in this chapter that Augustine is concerned or even accuses the Gallic monks of flirting with Pelagianism:

> Wherefore our brethren, who with us on behalf of the catholic faith assail the pest of the Pelagian error, *ought not to such an extent to favour the Pelagian opinion*, wherein they conceive that God's grace is given according to our merits, as to endeavour (which they cannot dare) to invalidate a true sentiment, plainly and from ancient times Christian … to wit, that any deceased person would be judge according to those things which he would have done if he had lived for a more lengthened period.[60]

Augustine here makes a connection between the Gallic monks' model of the judgment of unbaptized infants and the Pelagian idea that God's grace is given according to works. If the Gallic monks are correct (thinks Augustine), then God judges them upon their works. But the grace of God is not given to merit, 'so that ingenious men who contradict this truth are constrained to say things which must be rejected form the ears and from the thoughts of all men.'[61]

The alternative model of grace given by God's choice is grounded in the predestination of Christ Jesus (chapter 30). 'As, therefore, that one man was predestined to be our Head, so we being many are predestined to be His members.'[62] There are two types of calling for Augustine, the general call to all humans and the efficacious call for the elect (chapter 32). This call is based upon God's providential plan for humanity, including God's

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[59] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 26, *NPNF1* 5:512.
[60] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 29, *NPNF1* 5:512.
[61] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 29, *NPNF1* 5:512.
[62] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 31, *NPNF1* 5:513.

providence over the affairs of evil actions (chapter 33). For Augustine, people have the power to perform evil actions, 'but that in sinning they should do this or that by that wickedness is not in their power, but in God's who divides the darkness and regulates it; so that hence even what they do contrary to God's will is not fulfilled except it be God's will.'[63]

In the next four chapters Augustine expounds upon his understanding of the special, efficacious call. First he argues that election comes not from one's believing but that they would believe (chapter 34). Second, election is teleological in nature, to become conformed to the image of Christ Jesus (chapter 35). Third, he critiques what he labels a Pelagian view, that God's election is based upon foreknowledge of which humans accept the Gospel (chapter 36). Fourth, he recaps his position that the elect were chosen because of God's purpose (chapter 37).

Augustine then goes on to describe the difference between the Gallic and Pelagian views of predestination (chapter 38), which leads him to his last point of contention: the *initium fidei*. For the Gallic monks, the origin of faith is at least in part of the human response to God's call. But for Augustine, the origin of faith is entirely of God's doing (chapter 39). He supports his position by quoting passages from the Gospels and Paul's epistles (chapters 40 and 41), and by quoting Old Testament passages of divine providence (chapter 42). He then abruptly concludes his treatise because he has found that this work is lengthy (chapter 43).

In *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* we find that Augustine had a more favorable view toward the Gallic monks than the ones in Hadrumetum. He never questioned that they were 'new Pelagians' but rather 'allies in the cause against Pelagianism.'[64] Augustine

[63] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 33, *NPNF1* 5:514.
[64] Casiday, 'Grace and the Humanity of Christ According to St Vincent of Lérins,' 307.

referred to them as Christian brothers who not only held positions which 'abundantly distinguish them from the error of the Pelagians'[65] but also had 'catholic authority'[66] and 'who with us on behalf of the catholic faith assail the pest of the Pelagian error.'[67] While some scholars believe this to be an era of controversy (whether it be described as 'Semi-Pelagian' or 'Augustinian'), Anthony Dupont reckons that, 'This fraternal exchange of explanation never took the form of a controversy.'[68]

De Dono Perseverantiae is supposedly an extension of *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* which some have believed to have once been one work but are now considered two distinct works. For Augustine, perseverance is also a work of predestination because it is a divine gift not of any human doing. Many of the themes found in *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* are also present in *De Dono Perseverantiae*.

After Augustine died in 430, soon thereafter Prosper and Hilary sought papal support for Augustine's view. Pope Celestine did reply to their request, but his supposed endorsement of Augustine 'was so vague that each side could use it to support its own position.'[69] For example, Vincent believed it to support his case as is demonstrated in *Commonitorium* XXXII,

> Holy Pope Celestine also expresses himself in like manner and to the same effect. For in the Epistle which he wrote to the priests of Gaul, charging them with connivance with error, in that by their silence they failed in their duty to the ancient faith, and allowed profane novelties to spring up … [70]

Therefore, Celestine's letter was not a certain end to the controversy. Many scholars posit that the Second Council of Orange of A.D. 529 constituted the end, but as we will later show, that also cannot be conclusive. Next, as we make our way to analyzing the Gallic

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[65] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 2, *NPNF1* 5:498.
[66] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 25, *NPNF1* 5:510.
[67] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 29, *NPNF1* 5:512, '*qui nobiscum pro catholica fide perniciem Pelagiani erroris impugnant*.'
[68] Dupont, *Gratia in Augustine's Sermones ad Populum during the Pelagian Controversy*, 64.
[69] Weaver, 'Introduction,' *Grace for Grace*, xii.
[70] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 32, *NPNF2* 11:156.

monks' views on Original Sin, we will analyze the doctrine of Original Sin in Augustine, the pre-Augustine western tradition, and the eastern theological tradition. In doing this, we will later be able to see if and how Cassian, Vincent, and Faustus agreed or disagreed with the Bishop of Hippo and eastern Christendom and if their positions were part of a broader tradition than merely an attempt to create a middle ground between Augustine and Pelagius.

Chapter 3

Original Sin Augustine & Pre-Augustinian Latin Sources

In this chapter we shall explore what space permits of the doctrine of Original Sin in Augustine and pre-Augustinian Western sources. While "Original Sin" might refer to the chronologically first sin committed by Adam (*peccatum originis originans*), the doctrine mainly refers to the effects of that first sin. In the Bampton Lectures of 1924 at Oxford University, N. P. Williams made this distinction by noting that the *peccatum originis originans*, what he simply calls the "Fall," is 'the belief that there has been some great prehistoric moral catastrophe which has separated man from God.' This is contrasted with *peccatum originale* which is, 'the affirmation that the ground of this separation lies in man's consequent infection by a hereditary weakness or taint which is interior or psychological in nature.'[1] For all intents and purposes, as we begin to analyze the aspects to this doctrine, we will simply be using 'Original Sin' to refer to the *peccatum originale*.

The general consensus of historical theologians is that the doctrine, *qua* doctrine, of Original Sin cannot be seen before the writings of Augustine.[2] Regardless of one's assessment of Augustine's position, the reason why this doctrine is generally believed to not have received attention prior to Augustine is likely due to the lack of controversy, a catalyst for the development of Christian doctrine. Yet, as it will be shown this does not negate the importance of remarks made about *peccatum originale* in pre-Augustinian sources. It simply means that those remarks were not necessarily the primary focus of an author's overall writing.

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[1] N. P. Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 311.

[2] Gerald Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' *Churchman,* vol. 118, no. 1 (1994), 37, 'It is virtually an axiom of historical theology that the doctrine of original sin, as we recognize it today, cannot be traced back beyond Augustine.'

Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin

While the doctrine of Original Sin often is stated in the same breath as the bishop of Hippo, surprisingly, 'there are no definite treatments of Augustine's views on this matter.'[3] Jesse Couenhoven's reasoning for this lack of treatment was that either the basic points of the doctrine have been known and readily accepted, or the doctrine has been rejected and dismissed. Couenhoven cites ten attempts which constitute 'anything approaching comprehensive,' some of which are but a dozen pages, and attempts himself to present a taxonomy for Augustine's position.[4] One of the clearest observations is that in Augustine there are actually 'a handful of doctrines'[5] made 'from a mass of statements that are rarely as well ordered and clear as one would like.'[6] Perhaps the one statement that touches upon the many sub-tenets comes from *De Amina et ejus Origine*.

> That owing to one man all pass into condemnation who are born of Adam unless they are born again in Christ, even as He has appointed them to be regenerated, before they die in the body, whom He predestined to everlasting life, as the most merciful bestower of grace; whilst to those whom he has predestined to eternal death, he is also the most righteous awarder of punishment, not only on account of the sins which they add in the indulgence of their own will, but also because of their original sin, even if, as in the case of infants, they add nothing thereto. Now this is my definite view on that question ….[7]

In this passage we see the solidarity that all humans have with Adam,[8] the transmission of sin,[9] the inheritance of guilt,[10] and the propensity to sin,[11] all of which we will describe in due course.

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[3] Jesse Couenhoven, 'St. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin,' in *Augustinian Studies*, vol. 36, no.2 (2005), 359.

[4] Coenhoven, 'St. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin,' 359, ftnt 1. Published after Couenhoven's article, Pier Franco Beatrice, *The Transmission of Sin,* translated by Adam Kamesar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[5] Couenhoven, 'St. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin,' 360.

[6] Couenhoven, 'St. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin,' 363.

[7] Augustine, *De Anima et ejus Origine* 4.16, *NPNF1* 5:361, emphasis mine.

[8] 'born of Adam.'

[9] 'their original sin.'

[10] 'in the case of infants, they add nothing.'

[11] 'indulgence of their own will.'

While some of the points of Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin can been seen outside the corpus of works from the Pelagian controversy, the prolonged public contention provided Augustine a platform to explicitly lay out his position. Contrary to some, the Pelagian controversy was not over the freedom of the will.[12] The debate between Augustine and Pelagius was in 'the context of grace and original sin (doctrines on which Augustine was at polar opposites from Pelagius).'[13] While the church had historically believed that the Fall corrupted human nature in some way, the Pelagians (the key figures being Pelagius, his disciple Caelestius, and later on his supporter Julian) believed that each person was created just like Adam, metaphysically unaffected by the Fall. 'It is the denial of *any* doctrine of Original Sin which constituted the one essential article of belief for any would-be Pelagian.'[14] It is this position, according to Gerald Bonner, that hamartiology was the bellwether against the Pelagians.

> What really alarmed the African bishops, who were its earliest and most indefatigable opponents, was its theology, which went directly counter to their own. African concern, it may reasonably be suggested, arose from the conviction of their own rightness with regard to the doctrine of Original Sin, and a refusal to allow that there could ever be any compromise on this matter.[15]

In one of his responses in the controversy, Augustine wrote that Pelagius, 'argues against the transmission of sin from Adam to infants.'[16] This is the 'real objection against them' because 'they refuse to confess that unbaptized infants are liable to the condemnation of the first man, and that original sin has been transmitted to them and requires to be purged by regeneration.'[17] Instead, the Pelagians believed that 'actual sin has not been transmitted from the first man to other persons by natural descent, but by imitation. Hence, likewise,

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[12] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition*, 267, 'at the heart of the debate between Augustine and Pelagius is the concept of freedom.'

[13] Allison, *Historical Theology*, 456.

[14] Gerald Bonner, 'Pelagianism and Augustine,' *Augustinian Studies*, vol. 23 (1992), 35, emphasis mine.

[15] Bonner, 'Pelagianism and Augustine,' 37.

[16] Augustine, *De Gratia Christi, et de Peccato Originali* 2.15, *NPNF1* 5:241.

[17] Augustine, *De Gratia Christi, et de Peccato Originali* 2.19, *NPNF1* 5:243.

they refuse to believe that in infants original sin is remitted through baptism, for they contend that no such original sin exists at all in people by their birth.'[18] Formally, there were six articles to Pelagianism:[19]

> 1. Adam was created mortal and would have died whether he had sinned or not sinned.
> 2. Adam's sin harmed only himself and not the human race.
> 3. The law no less than the gospel leads us to the kingdom.
> 4. There were sinless men previous to the coming of Christ.
> 5. New-born infants are in the same condition as Adam was before the fall
> 6. The whole human race does not, on the one hand, die through Adam's death or transgression, nor, on the other hand, does the whole human race rise again through the resurrection of Christ.

Both Pelagius and Caelestius were known for holding to orthodox teaching concerning the Trinity and the person of Christ. In fact, Pelagius wrote a treatise titled *On the Faith of the Trinity*. Therefore, 'if the touchstone of orthodoxy was adherence to the true faith concerning the Trinity and the person of Christ, it was incorrect to call this doctrine of sin and grace a "heresy."'[20] Indeed, this was Caelestius's argument during his trial: 'As touching the transmission of sin … I have already said that I have heard many persons of acknowledged position in the catholic Church deny it, and on the other hand many affirm it; it may fairly, indeed, be deemed a matter for inquiry, but not a heresy.'[21] Yet, on May 1, 418 the synod meeting in Carthage condemned Pelagianism.[22] This condemnation,

> did not imply an unconditional endorsement of Augustinianism, which had in many ways gone beyond even the Western theological tradition (not to mention the Eastern tradition) by positing a doctrine of predestination, including predestination to damnation, and of the irresistibility of grace.[23]

Although the condemnation of Pelagius was not a full embrace of Augustinianism, it did, however, affirm the sinfulness of human nature from birth.[24]

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[18] Augustine, *De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione, et de Baptismo Pervulorum* 1.9, *NPNF1* 5:19.
[19] Augustine, *De Gestis Pelagii* 23.11, *NPNF1* 5:193.
[20] Pelikan, *CT1*, 316.
[21] Augustine, *De Peccato Originali* 26, *NPNF1* 5:245.
[22] In its defense, the Council cited the Latin mistranslation of Romans 5:12 (Wiley, *Original Sin*, 72). But Pelagius's, and later Julian's, version of Romans 5:12 had the correct form of 'because all have sinned' (Augustine, *Opus Imperfectum contra Julianum*, 2.174, *WSA* 1.25.241).
[23] Pelikan, *CT1*, 318.
[24] Wiley, *Original Sin*, 72.

After Pelagius and Caelestius were declared heretics, Pelagianism had one final, vocal defender, Julian of Eclanum, to whom Augustine had written a large response, *Unfinished Works in Answer to Julian*. Like the debate between Augustine and the African bishops on the one side and Pelagius and Caelestius on the other, the debate between Augustine and Julian was over the origin of sin, human free will, and the role of baptism. However, unlike the timidity of Pelagius and the call for tolerance from Caelestius, Julian had gone on the offensive. One of his most devastating lines of attack was that Augustine had been a crypto-Manichean. Given his history as a former Manichee, Augustine's position on Original Sin was all too close to the Manichean view for Julian's liking. Ultimately Julian had simply shown up too late to the debate to save Pelagianism; it was already condemned. Augustine's arguments against Pelagianism had won the day. Pelagius was condemned because of his belief that the Fall did not affect human nature in any way. This unabated view of human freedom was the position that was universally rejected. Yet questions remained regarding Augustine's own teachings on the doctrine of grace.[25] This is evident by the fact that debate broke out in North Africa, southern Gaul, Rome, and as far east as Constantinople regarding Augustine's view (or implications thereof) on predestination, God's limited salvific will, and perseverance of the saints.

> [T]he most remarkable feature of the sequel to the condemnation of Pelagius and Caelestius and their supporters in 418 is a negative one: the absence of any strong reaction from the movement at large. It was not the Pelagians but the Massilians, the so-called Semi-Pelagians of Southern Gaul, who had no sympathy with Pelagius but who were horrified by the implications of Augustine's predestinarian theology, which seemed to take away all freedom from the individual, who constituted the most formidable opposition to the triumph of the Augustinian deterministic theology.[26]

This historical observation provides justification to analyzing Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin for the scope of this project. In spite of the fact that the Gallic monks and

[25] Weaver, 'Introduction,' *Grace for Grace*, xi.
[26] Bonner, 'Pelagianism and Augustine,' 46.

Augustine wrote about predestination, grace, and free will, we believe that the essential focus of the debate is, like the Pelagian controversy, rooted in Original Sin.

Before exploring Augustine's understanding of the effects of the Fall, it is relevant to mention a few preliminary factors.

Regarding the state of humanity before the Fall, Augustine believed that Adam and Eve were created good, specifically with original righteousness.[27] In that state, Adam and Eve were able not to sin (*posse non peccare*).[28] Thus, they had the real sense of the freedom of the will (*liberum arbitrium*).[29] The two humans were mortal by design but, at the divinely-given sustenance of fruit from a specific tree, were able to live forever.[30]

What reason would Adam and Eve have for disobeying God? This was a question that Augustine struggled with, ultimately concluding that the *peccatum originis originans* is inexplicable. [31] He believed that Adam and Eve were not given the grace of perseverance, [32] though that itself does not tell us of the reason Adam and Eve chose for sinning. Augustine argued that disobeying God would only happen to those that have pride in their hearts.[33] Consequently, he believed that Adam and Eve first sinned in their hearts and not by performing the act of eating the forbidden fruit.[34] Unlike the Church Fathers

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[27] Augustine, *De Correptione et Gratia* 32, *NPNF1* 5:484, 'God, therefore, at that time gave Adam a good will; he, of course, who created him upright created him with that will; he gave him a help without which he could not remain in that will even if he willed to, but left it up to his free choice to will it.'

[28] Augustine, *De Correptione et Gratia* 33, *NPNF1* 5:485, 'For the first man was able not to sin; he was able not to die; he was able not to abandon the good.'

[29] Augustine, *De Correptione et Gratia* 31, *NPNF1* 5:484, 'Because such was the nature of the aid, that he could forsake it when he would, and that he could continue in it if he would; but not such that it could be brought about that he would.'; cf. *Opus Imperfectum contra Iulianum* 5.1.3, *AP3 WSA* 1.25.514 for discussion on the prelapsarian mind of Adam, 'in whom there was no defect at all.'

[30] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* 6.25.36, *WSA* 1.13.321, 'mortal, that is, because it was able to die, and immortal because it was able not to die.'

[31] Couenhoven, 'St. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin,' 365.

[32] Augustine, *De Correptione et Gratia* 10.26, *AP4 WSA* 1.26.127 '… he did not have perseverance, because he did not persevere in that good state in which he existed without defect.'; *De Dono Perseverantiae* 7.13, *AP4 WSA* 1.26.198, 'That we do to separate ourselves from God does not fall by any means within the powers of free choice such as they are at present; Adam had such a choice before he fell.'

[33] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram* 11.30.39, *WSA* I.13.451, '…if there had not already been in her mind that love of her own independent authority and a certain proud over-confidence in herself…'

[34] Augustine, *De Genesi ad litteram*, 11.5.7, *WSA* I.13.432.

before him, Augustine believed the *peccatum originis originans* was more than merely a carnal sin,[35] because sin occurred first in the will and not in the flesh: 'The initial righteousness of those first human beings consisted in their obeying God and *not having this law of concupiscence in their members* in opposition to the law of their mind.'[36]

For Augustine, sin is a misrelation to God. Humans do not merely commit acts of sin but are in a state of sinfulness. This means that even newborn infants have sin, a concern not shared by Pelagius and Julian.[37] In order to receive salvation infants must receive baptism,[38] a common practice in the church. But this shall be explored further below, as we now parse the sub-tenets to Augustine's understanding of Original Sin.

Couenhoven's taxonomy contains five main points to Augustine's position:[39] (1) The *peccatum originis originans* is the primal sin committed in the Garden of Eden. (2) All humans shared in solidarity with Adam's sin. (3) All humans inherit this sin. (4) All humans receive a penalty for this sin. (5) Original Sin is transmitted from one generation to the next. While Couenhoven's breakdown of the sub-tenets is a welcomed project because of the general lack of such taxonomies in the literature, we believe this could be improved upon. Above we recognized that the *peccatum originis originans* is a distinct issue from identifying *the effects* of the Fall, which seems to be the essential concern regarding the doctrine of Original Sin. Therefore, while we briefly engaged with Augustine's view of prelapsarian Adam and Eve, we shall leave it at that and move to describe the effects of the

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[35] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 118.

[36] Augustine, *De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione, et de Baptismo Parvulorum*. 2.23.37, *AP1 WSA* 1.23.105, emphasis mine.

[37] Augustine, *Opus Imperfectum contra Iulianum* 1.47.4, *AP3 WSA* 1.25.74, 'Original sin … is sin that it is itself also the punishment of sin. It is present in the newborn ….'

[38] Augustine, *De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione, et de Baptismo Parvulorum* 1.23, *NPNF1* 5:23-24, 'For what Christian is there who would allow it to be said, that any one could attain to eternal salvation without being born again in Christ, - [a result] which He meant to be effected through baptism, at the very time when such a sacrament was purposely instituted for regenerating in the hope of eternal salvation?' *De Peccato Originali* 21-24, *NPNF1* 5:244-245; *Opus Imperfectum contra Iulianum* 1.50, *AP3 WSA* 1.25.78, '…why do you not believe that little ones in being baptized are rescued from the power of darkness….'

[39] Couenhoven, 'St. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin,' 363.

Fall. We believe the relevant points of delineation can be better categorized by the following three questions: 'Why is Original Sin passed on?' 'How is Original Sin passed on?' and 'What is passed on?'

Solidarity with Adam: Why Original Sin is Passed on

The Latin fourth century author Ambrosiaster lays claim to holding the earliest surviving set of commentaries on Paul. He was a crucial commentator for Augustine, because it was in his commentaries that he read his text of Romans 5:12. In his reading of Ambrosiaster's commentary on Romans, Augustine remarks,

> In fact, the holy Hilary understood in that way the passages, In whom all have sinned (Rom 5:12), for he says, 'In whom, that is, in Adam, all have sinned.' Then he added, 'It is clear that all have sinned in Adam as in a single mass, for all whom he begot, after he was corrupted by sin, were born under the power of sin.' In writing these words, Hilary indicated without any ambiguity how one should understand: in whom all have sinned.[40]

In following with Ambrosiaster's text, Augustine's own translation of Romans 5:12 read, 'By one man sin entered into the world, and by sin, death, and so spread to all men, *in whom* all sinned.'[41] This mistranslation went unnoticed for a thousand years, until 'Erasmus' realization that the Greek "eph ho" has the sense of "because" or "considering that."'[42] Erasmus's view, 'because all sinned' instead of 'in whom all sinned,' is widely accepted today as the correct translation.[43] Rondet also notes that the second mention of 'death' in the verse was suppressed,[44] which made it seem like sin was what spread to all men and not death.[45]

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[40] Augustine, *Answer to the Two Letters of the Pelagians*, 'Book 4,' *AP2 WSA* 1.24.191.

[41] Augustine, *De Natura et Gratia* 48.41, *NPNF1* 5:137. Observing the mistranslation issue: Allison, *Historial Theology*, 348; Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 308, et. al..

[42] Herbert Haag, *Is Original Sin in Scripture?* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969), 98.

[43] Haag, *Is Original Sin in Scripture?*, 98.

[44] 'Death' is missing between 'so' and 'spread' in Augustine's quotation of it, as that word is in Greek manuscripts (and present in English translations today).

[45] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 129.

In Alan Jacobs's historical, cultural reflection on Original Sin, he observes that Augustine knew little Greek and did not have Jerome's Vulgate. Instead he was using the Old Latin translations. Jacobs describes that to Augustine, 'the key to Paul's argument came … in the fifth chapter, where Paul conducts an extended comparison between' Adam and Christ.[46] Jacobs peculiarly glosses over the Romans 5:12 mistranslation and instead treats Augustine's view as *prima facie* Pauline: 'Here is what Augustine clearly understood to be the linchpin of Paul's argument: Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned … .'[47] In this case, Jacobs utilizes the modern and accurate translation of that passage, neglecting to mention the aforementioned suppression of 'death' and the lack of a causal connection ('because'). Examples such as this gloss over the historical truths of the situation and continue to perpetuate false ideas about what it precisely was that Augustine 'clearly understood.'

For Augustine, because humanity was "in Adam" at the Fall, all humans were metaphysically present at that moment in history. In Question 68 of *De Diversis Quaestionibus LXXXIII*, which was one of Augustine's earlier writings (an indication that he affirmed this sub-tenet before his shift on grace and free will), he wrote,

> Therefore from the time that our nature sinned in paradise, we are formed by the same divine providence, not according to heaven, but according to earth that is, not according to spirit, but according to the flesh by mortal generation, and we are now made from the same lump of slime, which is the lump of sin.[48]

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[46] Jacobs, *Original Sin: A Cultural History* (Harper Collins: New York, 2008), 30.

[47] Jacobs, *Original Sin*, 30.

[48] Bonner, 'Augustine and Pelagianism,' 32, trans. Bonner's, cf. De diversis Quaestionibus LXXXIII 68.3; Latin also found in Beatrice, 51, ftnt 48, 'Ex quo ergo in paradiso natura nostra peccavit, ab eadem divina providentia non secundum caelum sed secundum terram, id est, non secundum spiritum sed secundum carnem, mortali generatione formamur, et omnes una massa luti facti sumus, quod est massa peccati.'

Humanity, our nature, was present at the Fall and as a result all humans are now made from the lump of sin (*massa peccati*[49]). This phrase (*massa peccati*) is also seen in *Ad Simplicianium*, 'Therefore, all human beings—since, as the Apostle says, *all die in Adam* (1 Corinthians 15:22), from whom the origin of the offense against God spread throughout the whole human race—are a kind of single **mass of sin** owing a debt of punishment to the divine and loftiest justice…'[50] This understanding of solidarity is not merely a legal standing but is rooted in a metaphysical framework viz. our seminal presence in Adam.[51] But how exactly this is the case is something about which Augustine never went into detail.[52] His belief in our solidarity with Adam would provide the foundation for his beliefs on free will, grace, and predestination.

> It will be clear that the concept of the *massa peccati* holds a truly central place in the thought of Augustine. It is the result of his unique religious and historical experience and constitutes the point of departure and theological premise for the development of his soteriological teaching, which would take the form of an ever more rigid predestinationism.[53]

Transmission of Sin: How Original Sin is Passed on

For Augustine, sin itself was passed on from Adam to his posterity. According to Carol Scheppard, ' … sin is transferred by "affection" and "contagion." [Augustine] states further that sin is indeed mixed in with the seed, because without it children would not be born dead as Paul claims in 2 Corinthians 5:14.'[54] For Augustine, women conceive and

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[49] Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 328, notes that Augustine likely received this phrase 'mass of sin' (*massa peccati*) from Ambrosiaster's commentary on Romans 5:12, 'all have sinned in Adam as in a lump' (*Commentaries on Romans and 1-2 Corinthians: Ambrosiaster*, *Ancient Christian Texts* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press Academic, 2009), 40).

[50] *De Quaestionibus Ad Simplicianum* 1.2.16, *Responses to Miscellaneous Questions WSA* 1.12.198, bold emphasis mine. Cf. Thomas McCall, *Against God and Nature: The Doctrine of Sin*, (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2019), 166-170, 289.

[51] Couenhoven, 'St. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin,' 371.

[52] Couenhoven, 'St. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin,' 368, 'Unfortunately, it is difficult to say much more than this about Augustine's views of solidarity. He never makes clear exactly how we were in Adam, or how Adam acted on our behalf.'

[53] Beatrice, *The Transmission of Sin*, 52.

[54] Carol Scheppard, 'The Transmission of Sin in the Seed: A Debate between Augustine of Hippo and Julian of Eclanum' *Augustinian Studies*, vol. 27, no. 2 (1996), 100.

bear children, but it is men who generate their offspring; thus, original sin passes through the sperm. This explains how Jesus was human and like postlapsarian Adam, but did not have sin. (Perhaps interesting to some is that for Augustine, 'Jesus could have procreated but he chose not to.'[55])

While it might seem natural to describe the rational basis of the transmission of sin coming from the solidarity with Adam, this is not necessarily the route Augustine took to defend his position on transmission. Instead, Augustine argued that infant baptism proved 'the presence in infants of a sin that was inevitable.'[56] He thought there was a reason why the Church baptized infants; in his mind, the practice must have meant there was something to wash the infants from.

> That infant children, even before they have committed any sin of their own, are partakers of sinful flesh, is, in my opinion, proved by their requiring to have it healed in them also, but the application in their baptism of the remedy provided in Him who came in the likeness of sinful flesh.[57]

Wiley finds this thinking to be odd: 'Augustine's argument worked *backward* from the church's sacramental practice to the existence of an actual sin for which the practice was needed.'[58] In his study, Williams concludes, '*Legem credendi statuit lex orandi* : there is no clearer instance of the control exercised by liturgical or devotional practice over the growth of [a] dogma than that provided by the study of the relations between the custom of Infant Baptism and the doctrine of Original Sin.'[59] So instead of recognizing a theological truth and formulating a church practice from that truth, Augustine posited a theological truth for a preexisting church practice. Moreover, Augustine did question his rationale, instead believing that his theological position was always the position of the church:

> The Christians of Carthage have an excellent name for the sacraments, when they say that baptism is nothing else than "salvation," and the sacrament of the body of Christ nothing

[55] Scheppard, 'The Transmission of Sin in the Seed,' 101. Cf. *Opus Imperfectum contra Iulianum* 4.48, *AP3 WSA* 1.25.427.
[56] Pelikan, *CT1*, 292.
[57] Augustine, 'Letter 143,' 6, *NPNF1* 1:492.
[58] Wiley, *Original Sin*, 49-50, emphasis mine.
[59] Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 223.

> else than "life." Whence, however, was this derived, but from that primitive, as I suppose, and apostolic tradition, by which the Churches of Christ maintain it to be an inherent principle, that without baptism and partaking of the supper of the Lord it is impossible for any man to attain either to the kingdom of God or to salvation and everlasting life?[60]

Augustine believed that sin was transmitted like a disease, something that was contagious from person to person. In his letter to Boniface (written sometime between 408 and 413), Augustine replied to the concern that parents could harm their infants with sacrifices to demons. He cited Ezekiel 18 and, in almost what seems to be a refutation to an anticipated objection, he follows it with a defense of his model of transmission:

> But a soul does not sin when its parents or anyone else performs for it a sacrilegious rites of the demons, while it knows nothing of this. The soul of the infant, however, **contracted** from Adam the sin that is removed by the grace of that sacrament, because it was not yet a soul living a separate life, that is, another soul of which it might be said, *And the soul of the father is mine, and the soul of the child is mine*. Now, therefore, after it has become a human being in itself, having become another individual from its parent, the child is not held bound by the sin of another without its own consent. The children **contracted** the guilt because it was one with Adam and in Adam from whom the child **contracted** it when the sin that was contracted was committed.[61]

Augustine here (and elsewhere) uses the language of 'contracting' Original Sin, though there is one place in *Opus Imperfectum contra Iulianum* where he uses the language of 'imputation.' He wrote, 'The injustice of the first man is imputed to little ones when they are born so that they are subject to punishment, just as the righteousness of the second man is imputed to little ones who are reborn.'[62] In that same work we see Augustine citing a previous authority but using the language of "contraction" again. 'That same Cyprian cuts off your breath on this question, when he says that a little one born of Adam according to the flesh contracts the infection of that ancient death by its first birth.'[63]

How is sin exactly passed on from one generation to the next? The *tradux peccati*, 'created a serious problem for him that would torment him for the rest of his days and for

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[60] Augustine, *De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione, et de Baptismo Pervulorum* 1.33, *NPNF1* 5:28.
[61] Augustine, 'Letter 98,' *Letters (1-99)*, *WSA* 2.1.427, bold emphases mine.
[62] Augustine, *Opus Imperfectum contra Iulianum* 1.57, *AP3 WSA* 1.25.85.
[63] Augustine, *Opus Imperfectum contra Iulianum* 1.50.2, *AP3 WSA* 1.25.78.

which he was not able to arrive at a definitive solution.'[64] It would seem that the transmission from flesh to flesh would account for the temptations of the flesh, but for Augustine, rebellion was a matter of the will (located in the soul). Thus in order to defend a theory of the transmission of sin from soul to soul, he 'would need to transcend the physical sphere of procreation so as to involve the spiritual dimension of the human person.'[65]

There were three key theories regarding the origin of the soul: First, that all human souls come from Adam (Traducianism); Second, that God creates each soul when each human body is formed (Creationism); Third, that the souls were pre-existent and joined with the body during their formation (Pre-existence). Augustine, in some texts such as *Ad Simpliciaum* sympathizes with the Traducian theory. However, Beatrice notes that during his final years in writing against Julian, Augustine distances himself from the Traducian model and becomes agnostic: '… Augustine concludes his process of speculation on the subject by retreating to a profession of agnosticism.'[66] In one of his last written remarks on the transmission of sin, Augustine expressed,

> Some sort of invisible and intangible power is located in the secrets of nature where the natural laws of propagation are concealed, and on account of this power as many as were going to be able to be begotten from that one man by the succession of generations are certainly not untruthfully said to have been in the loins of the father. They were … though unknowingly and unwillingly, because they did not yet exist as persons who could have known and willed this.[67]

So while he could not explain exactly how sin was passed on from soul to soul, Augustine believed that it was. Ultimately, 'Augustine himself had no consistent theory as to how Adam's sin comes to be applied to subsequent generations of human beings ….'[68]

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[64] Beatrice, *The Transmission of Sin*, 71.
[65] Beatrice, *The Transmission of Sin*, 71.
[66] Beatrice, *The Transmission of Sin*, 74-75. Cf. *Retractationes* 1.8, *WSA* 1.2.42-43.
[67] Augustine, *Opus Imperfectum contra Iulianum*, 6.22.5, *AP3 WSA* 1.25.658.
[68] Ian McFarland, *In Adam's Fall: A Meditation on the Christian Doctrine of Original Sin* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 34.

Nevertheless, he believed that as a consequence of this transmission, sin's effects were also passed on. This we shall now consider.

Guilt, Mortality, & Fallen Human Nature: What is Passed on

Sin carries with it certain consequences; 'the entire mass of our nature was ruined beyond doubt.'[69] These effects of inherited sin can be detailed into the finer points of the doctrine of Original Sin. Some of these finer points, or the subtle nuances even therein, find themselves to be the distinguishing factors between Augustinians and those skeptical of the bishop of Hippo's position.

Guilt

One of those distinguishing features to Augustine's doctrine is the notion of inheriting the very guilt of Adam's sin. In his letter to Boniface, sometime around the start of the Pelagian controversy, he wrote, 'the chain of guilt contracted from Adam' is also inherited.[70] This same sentiment is echoed some twenty years later in *Opus Imperfectum contra Iulianum*: 'the guilt from our origin which was contracted by birth.'[71]

Like the issue of transmission, Augustine believed he was following in the tradition laid before him. Bonner posited that one of the supporting documents on inherited guilt for Augustine and the African bishops was from a letter written by Cyprian. Therein he wrote,

> No one is denied access to baptism and grace. How much less reason is there then for denying it to an infant who, being newly born, can have committed no sins! The only thing that he has done is that, being born after the flesh as a descendant of Adam, he has contracted from that first birth the ancient contagion of death. And he is admitted to receive remission of his sins all the more readily in that what are being remitted to him are not his own sins but another's.[72]

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[69] Augustine, *De Peccato Originali* 34, *NPNF1* 5:249.
[70] Augustine, 'Letter 98,' *Letters (1-99)*, *WSA* 2.1.430.
[71] Augustine, *Opus Imperfectum contra Iulianum* 5.29, *AP3 WSA* I.25.554.
[72] Cyprian, 'Letter 64,' 5.2, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage*, vol 3., ACW 46.112.

Thus, for Augustine, infants inherit the guilt of Adam but have no personal guilt themselves. 'Infants have committed no sin of their own since they have been alive. Only original sin, therefore, remains, whereby they are made captive under the devil's power, until they are redeemed from it by the laver of regeneration and the blood of Christ.'[73] The belief that baptism was the means through which to receive salvation was very important to Augustine (recall in the previous section it was explained that the sacramental practice provided Augustine with the theological reason for it). Augustine is quite clear in his *On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins and On the Baptism of Infants* on his position:

> if they shall depart this life without this grace, they will have to encounter what is written concerning such – they shall not have life, but the wrath of God abideth on them.[74]
>
> If, therefore, as so many and such divine witnesses agree, neither salvation nor eternal life can be hoped for by any man without baptism and the Lord's body and blood, it is vain to promise these blessings to infants without them.[75]
>
> So that infants, unless they pass into the number of believers through the sacrament which was divinely instituted for this purpose, will undoubtedly remain in this darkness.[76]
>
> Now, inasmuch as infants are not held bound by any sins of their own actual life, it is the guilt of original sin which is healed in them by the grace of Him who saves them by the laver of regeneration.[77]

McFarland observes the soteriological line of thinking for Augustine on guilt: '… if newborn infants are not guilty of sin, then the gospel doesn't apply to them.'[78] And yet, as all Christians hold as true, the gospel applies to every person. So for Augustine, that meant that infants must be guilty.

Being born to Christian parents who have been baptized does not counteract the guilt of Original Sin because 'The fault of our nature remains in our offspring so deeply impressed as to make it guilty, even when the guilt of the self-same fault has been washed

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[73] Augustine, *De Nuptiis et Concupiscientia* 1.22, *NPNF1* 5:273.
[74] Augustine, *De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione, et de Baptismo Pervulorum* 1.28, *NPNF1* 5:25.
[75] Augustine, *De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione, et de Baptismo Pervulorum* 1.33, *NPNF1* 5:28.
[76] Augustine, *De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione, et de Baptismo Pervulorum* 1.35, *NPNF1* 5:29.
[77] Augustine, *De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione, et de Baptismo Pervulorum* 1.24, *NPNF1* 5:24.
[78] McFarland, *In Adam's Fall*, 33.

away in the parents by the remission of sin ….'[79] Therefore, on the day of judgment, both infants and adults will be judged by the guilt that they inherited from Adam.

> For only the little ones who do not yet have their own actions, whether good ones or bad ones, *will be condemned by reason of original sin alone*, if the grace of the savior does not come to their aid by the bath of rebirth. But all the rest who, in using free choice, have added their own personal sins on top of original sin, if they are not rescued from the power of darkness by the grace of God and transferred to the kingdom of Christ, will receive judgment, not only according to the merits of their origin, but also according to merits of their own will.[80]

While this passage does not explicitly mention the concept of guilt, it is implied in virtue of the condemnation of infants based upon their original sin. Adam Harwood observes that 'Although Augustine mentioned original sin in his earlier writings, he did not include in that concept inherited guilt until he reacted against the Pelagians.'[81]

In Augustine's day, it was the Pelagians who rejected infant baptism. 'And so they try to ascribe to unbaptized infants, by the merit of their innocence, the gift of salvation and eternal life, but at the same time, owing to their being unbaptized, to exclude them from the kingdom of heaven.'[82] So, once the Pelagian controversy began, Augustine's doctrine was on full display because 'the foundation of Augustine's anti-Pelagian polemic is his belief in the need for baptism for all ages as a remedy for the guilt inherited from Adam, *in whom all sinned*.'[83] For Augustine, not only was it the case that unbaptized infants are deserving of condemnation because they are guilty, but even if someone were to teach against that doctrine they [i.e., the Pelagians] are greatly deceived.[84]

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[79] Augustine, *De Peccato Originali* 44, *NPNF1*, 5.253.

[80] Augustine, 'Second Letter of Augustine to Abbot Valentine,' in *AP4 WSA* 1.26.47, emphasis mine.

[81] Adam Harwood, *The Spiritual Condition of Infants: A Biblical-Historical Survey and Systematic Proposal* (Eugene: Wipfi and Stock, 2011), 106.

[82] Augustine, *De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione, et de Baptismo Pervulorum* 1.26, *NPNF1* 5:25.

[83] Bonner, 'Augustine and Pelagianism,' 31.

[84] Augustine, *De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione, et de Baptismo Pervulorum* 1.21.XVI, *NPNF1* 5:22-23, 'It may therefore be correctly affirmed, that such infants as quit the body without being baptized will be involved in the mildest condemnation of all. That person, therefore, greatly deceives himself and others, who teaches that they will not be involved in condemnation ….'

The issue of the eternal state of unbaptized infants also plays out in Augustine's response to the Gallic monks. Recall that in *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* Augustine believed if unbaptized infants were judged according to their counterfactual future works, then God's justice is based upon merits. And that, for him, is Pelagian. So unbaptized infants cannot be judged upon their future works, but rather judged upon their present state. Thus, 'when infants die, they pass, on the one hand, by the merit of regeneration from evil to good, or on the other, by the merit of their origin from evil to evil.'[85]

Mortality

The mortality of every human is further evidence of Original Sin, for Augustine. In *Ad Simplician*, Augustine wrote

> If it is asked how he knows that in his flesh dwellth no good thing, which means that sin dwells there, how but from his inherited mortality and from his addiction to pleasure? The former is the penalty of original sin, the latter of repeated sinning. We are born into this life with the former, and add to the latter as we live.[86]

Additionally, in *City of God* he wrote that 'what existed as punishment in those who first sinned, became a natural consequence in their children.'[87]

This position on Original Sin is not controversial; from East to West we see a universal acceptance that mortality is a result of the Fall, and the bishop of Hippo is no exception. 'Augustine maintained that both death – the punishment for sin – and the corruption of human nature are passed down from Adam …'[88] Where we might find nuanced disagreement is in the models which explain why all humans die.

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[85] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*, 24, *NPNF1* 5:509.

[86] Augustine, *Ad Simplician* 1.1.10, *LCC* 6.380, 'Quod si quaesierit aliquis: Unde hoc est, quod dicit habitare in carne sua non utique bonum, id est peccatum? Unde nisi ex traduce mortalitatis et assiduitate voluptatis? Illud est ex poena originalis peccati, hoc ex poena frequentati peccati; cum illo in hanc vitam nascimur, hoc vivendo addimus.'

[87] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 10.3, *NPNF1* 2:246.

[88] Allison, *Historical Theology*, 348.

Fallen Human Nature

> Properly, we speak of nature in one way when referring to that nature in which man was first made guiltless as the first of his race, and in another way when we speak of that nature in which we are now born, condemned by the sentence passed upon Adam, ignorant and enslaved in the flesh ….'[89]

Given the solidarity with Adam and the transmission of sin, it follows for Augustine that humans inherit a fallen human nature. What interests this author is exploring which aspects of human nature have fallen and to what degree. The sub-issues here ultimately become the center of the debate between Augustine and the Gallic monks. We will present three thematic (and by no means chronological) stages, concluding with the linchpin of Augustine's doctrine: the *imago dei*, spiritual death, and the inability to choose the good.

Imago Dei

The *imago dei* is a concept that theologians might point to as evidence of the divine creator's handiwork in both prelapsarian humanity and postlapsarian humanity. However, in *Genesi Ad Litteram* Augustine writes that 'this image, impressed on the spirits of our minds that Adam lost by his sin'; he later retracts this statement for its severity and states instead that the image is so deformed that it needs to be 'refashioned.'[90] While the loss or destruction of the *imago dei* might have seemed like an option for describing how fallen humans were, it would not prove to be the keystone.

Spiritually "Dead"

Augustine believed we are all dead in our sins,[91] but this should not be controversial as the text in Ephesians 2 states the same thing. The issue is what one means by stating that

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[89] Augustine, *De Natura et Gratia* 67.81, in Bonner, 'Augustine and Pelagianism,' 34.
[90] *Genesi Ad Litteram* 6.27.38, *ACW* 41.206; *Retractationes* 2.24.51.2, *WSA* 1.2.132.
[91] Augustine, *Opus Imperfectum contra Julianum* 5.9.3, *AP3 WSA* I.25.522, 'we say that [infants] are dead in their sins and in the uncircumcision of their flesh…'

humans are "dead in their sins." Does dead mean wholly unable to do anything toward one's own salvation? Or is dead a metaphor to convey the concept that we simply cannot save ourselves? Augustine's position would be more aligned with the first question. 'Why should he [Pelagius] presume so much on the capacity of his nature? It is wounded, hurt, damaged, *destroyed*. … It needs the grace of God, not that it may be created, but that it may be restored.'[92] Pelikan makes an interesting point when he recognizes that Augustine's view has overtones of Manicheanism (the same accusation that Julian made): 'The use of such a term as "destroyed" rather than only "damaged" to describe human nature after the fall of Adam … had been Augustine's personal belief during the nearly nine years that he was a Manichean.'[93] Perhaps there were still some Manichean undertones, but nevertheless Augustine had a number of biblical passages which seemed to support his position. However, what exactly does one mean by 'spiritually dead'? After all, prior to his retraction on the *imago dei*, in *De Natura et Gratia* he noted that postlapsarian humans have some rightly-ordered desire to be healed of their unsound nature.[94] Are humans spiritually half-dead or are humans completely spiritually dead? Like the concept of the *imago dei*, "spiritual death" as a term would be insufficient, too, in describing the severity of the Fall, this time on the basis of the ambiguity of the phrase.

Inability

Augustine had once believed that humans could freely choose to accept the gift of salvation (the *initium fidei* belonging to humans).[95] He also thought that God's election was

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[92] Pelikan, *CT1*, 300, cf. Augustine *De Natura et Gratia* 5.62, *NPNF1* 5:142, emphasis mine.

[93] Pelikan, *CT1*, 300.

[94] Augustine, *De Natura et Gratia* 3.3, *NPNF1* 5:122, '…but that nature of man in which every one is born from Adam, now wants the Physician, because it is not sound.'

[95] Augustine, *Exposition of 84 Propositions Concerning the Epistle to the Romans*, 61, 'It is up to us to believe or will, and it is up to God to give those believing and willing the power of good action through the Holy Spirit.'

based upon his divine foreknowledge.[96] But in 396/397, he changed his position. This shift in beliefs on predestination and grace would have implications for his anthropology, ultimately buttressed by his view of Original Sin. In layman's terms, Augustine's new position meant a change in the nature that is passed on: humans no longer had the ability to choose the good. By this we do not mean to say that humans commit the worst evil possible in any given situation,[97] but rather, that humans could not choose the truly, objectively good action apart from postlapsarian superadded grace.

> Neither free will of itself nor instruction in the law and will of God would suffice to achieve righteousness, for free will was good *only for sinning* unless a man knew the law, and even after he knew it he still lacked a love for it and a delight in it; this came only though the love of God shed abroad, 'not by the free will whose spring is in ourselves, but through the Holy Spirit.'[98]

Augustine 'insists that through Adam humanity has fallen victim to lust and no longer exercises control over the will.'[99] To the former, this is Augustine's concept of *cupiditas* (more specifically *libido*) which carries with it guilt, but we will not explore this further in this project.[100] To the latter, because humans no longer control their wills, they are unable to do any objective good. Before the Fall, Adam was able not to sin (*posse non peccare*) but after the Fall, humans are not able not to sin (*non posse non peccare*). As Allison explains, by this 'Augustine did not mean that people have no free will whatsoever. Rather, he meant that whenever unbelievers use their free will, they always use it to choose evil instead of good.'[101]

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[96] Bonner, 'Augustine and Pelagianism,' 35.

[97] Couenhoven, 'St. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin,' 366, 'I want to point out here, however, that Augustine's view is not, as some have thought, that human nature is completely corrupted by the primal sin; rather, his view is that it is seriously harmed in every part.'

[98] Pelikan, *CT1*, 301, cf. Augustine *De Spiritu et Littera* 5, *NPNF1* 5:85, emphasis mine.

[99] Scheppard, 'The Transmission of Sin in the Seed,' 98.

[100] For further exploration see Bonner, 'Augustine and Pelagianism,' 33, 40; Couenhoven, 'St. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin,' 377-379, who notes 'Augustine does not consider concupiscence itself original sin.'

[101] Allison, *Historical Theology*, 347-348.

This idea of inability is seen in many places in the later Augustine's writings. It first appears in his letter to Simplician. In that letter Augustine's reflects upon a previous work: 'The second question concerns Romans 9:10-29. In answering this question I have tried hard to maintain the free choice of the human will, but the grace of God prevailed.'[102] By this Augustine draws a distinction between the two forces. Phan describes it as follows: 'he now recognizes for the first time the existence of a divine working which achieves its purposes without independent consent of the human will, a grace which causes the will's assent and cooperation, an operative grace.'[103] Again, for Augustine it is not God's grace working through man's free will, but God's grace working prior to man's choice. 'Unless, therefore, the mercy of God in calling precedes, *no one can even believe*, and *so begin* to be justified and *to receive power to do good works*.'[104] Twenty years later, in 418, Augustine wrote to Sixtus of Rome. Therein he affirms his previous distinction, 'What merit, then, has a person before grace which could make it possible for him to receive grace, when nothing but grace produces good merit in us; and what else but his gifts does God crown when he crowns our merits?'[105]

Augustine's belief in inability is also seen in the writings of his toward the monks at Hadrumetum and Gaul. Recall that Florus discovered Augustine's letter to Sixtus and sent to the monks at Hadrumetum. It was to their concerns that Augustine wrote *On Grace and Free Will*. In chapter 33 he explains:

> He operates, therefore, without us, in order that we may will; but when we will, and so will that we may act, He co-operates with us. We can, however, ourselves do nothing to effect good works of piety without Him either working that we may will, or co-working when we will.[106]

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[102] Augustine, *Retractationes* 2.1, *LCC* 6.370
[103] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition*, 274.
[104] Augustine, *Response to Various Questions from Simplician*, 2.7, *LCC* 6.391, emphases mine.
[105] Augustine, 'Letter 194,' *Letters, vol 4. (165-203)*, *FOTC* 30.313.
[106] Augustine, *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio* 33, *NPNF1* 5:458.

After learning from Florus that *On Grace and Free Will* was unsuccessful in convincing at least some of the monks at Hadrumetum, Augustine penned *On Rebuke and Grace*, which also includes his belief in inability.[107] Lastly, in *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*, written regarding the Gallic monks, Augustine contrasts free will and divine grace as it pertains to the *initium fidei*. He remarks, 'I myself also was convinced when I was in a similar error, thinking that faith whereby we believe on God is not God's gift, but that it is in us from ourselves ….'[108] He labored over how to make sense of free will's role in the *ordo salutis*, but 'In the solution of this question I laboured indeed on behalf of the free choice of the human will, but God's grace overcame ….'[109] This indicates that for Augustine, there were two mutually exclusive options, either free choice or the grace of God. That is, free choice could never make any objectively, truly good choice apart from a *superadded* act of grace (in this instance, accepting the gift of salvation), which is why God's grace is needed for salvation.

Inability serves as the crown of Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin as it pertains to the tenet of fallen human nature. Humanity is so fallen that it is not only *non posse non peccare*, but also *non posse bonum facere* ("not able to do good") without superadded postlapsarian grace.

Motivations

What were Augustine's motivating factors for affirming a controversial doctrine? First, he attempted to remain faithful to the Scripture and second, he attempted to understand the church's tradition. To the first, Augustine was concerned that if there are ways to be saved apart from Christ's work, then Christ died in vain.[110] On this point,

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[107] Augustine, *De Correptione et Gratia* 34, *NPNF1* 5:485, 'For the aid is not only that without which that does not happen, but also with which that does happen for the sake of which it is given.'

[108] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 7, *NPNF1* 5:500.

[109] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 8, *NPNF1* 5:502.

[110] Augustine, *De Natura et Gratia* 10.9, *NPNF1* 5:124; *Opus Imperfectum contra Iulianum* 2.146.

Augustine shares the concern of other church Fathers: 'Common to all the Fathers was the conviction that mankind needed a saviour who was Jesus Christ, the incarnate Logos of God. It was this belief, rather than any specific understanding of human sin, which set them apart from their contemporaries.'[111]

To the second, Augustine genuinely believed that his position was in alignment of the teachings of the Church Fathers. 'It was not I who devised the original sin; which the catholic faith holds from ancient times.'[112] We concur with Couenhoven, against the general understanding, 'while Augustine was the great systematizer, developer, and defender of the doctrine, he was not its inventor. He certainly pursued the doctrine more than any before him, and a few since, and he pressed it into a form peculiar, in many ways, to himself … but it did not originate with him.'[113] But if Williams (*et. al.)* are correct that there are two traditions in the early church on Original Sin between the East (Methodius, Athanasius, and the Cappadocians) and the West (Cyprian, Ambrose, and Ambrosiaster),[114] then in which ways did Augustine (or his predecessors) depart from the Eastern tradition (the historically older branch of Christendom)? This question plays a critical role in our assessment of if and how the Gallic monks disagreed with Augustine not only on grace and free will, but also Original Sin. So now we will turn to analyze the pre-Augustinian sources, first starting with the Western tradition and then moving along to the Eastern.

Some scholars believe that there is scant evidence of Original Sin in the Fathers before Augustine. Rondet is correct insofar as 'When one attempts to reconstruct [the] ideas on the primitive state of man, the sin of Adam and its consequences, one must guard against making much of certain texts that perhaps are important but which are isolated

[111] Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' 37.
[112] Augustine, *De Nuptiis et Concupiscientia* 2.25.12, *NPNF1* 5:293.
[113] Couenhoven, 'St. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin,' 390.
[114] Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, xviii.

statements in works whose purpose is altogether different.'[115] However, utilizing such statements as indicators of what the individuals believed about those topics is still a useful study, as is obvious from Rondet's own method. Thus, in our survery of the Latin and Greek sources existing before Augustine, we find ourselves bound to understand statements made in slightly different contexts. Nevertheless, the statements can be applied to a new context (i.e., extrapolating their beliefs on what today we call 'Original Sin') so long as we understand their statements accurately in their contexts.

Original Sin Pre-Augustinian Latin Sources

Since Augustine believed he was upholding the orthodox tradition on Original Sin, it would make sense that we see some semblance of this doctrine in earlier, western sources that he read. To be sure, we have already mentioned some of these sources and Augustine's reasoning from these sources. However, in this section we shall recognize the ways in which Augustine utilized or departed from those four authoritative voices: Ambrosiaster (literally 'would-be Ambrose'), the real Ambrose, Cyprian, and Tertullian.

First, we shall look at Ambrosiaster, the name given to the author of commentaries on Paul's epistles, which were written sometime between 366 and 384. While Ambrosiaster played a pivotal role for Augustine, 'This is not to say, however, that Ambrosiaster's understanding of original sin is the same as, or even similar to, Augustine's definitive stance.'[116] For example, Ambrosaister had 'in whom' in his Latin translation of Romans 5:12, but he never went so as to say that Adam's progeny were present at the Fall (solidarity). Rather, 'when this passage is situated in the larger context of Ambrosiaster's thought, and even simply in the larger context of his commentary on this verse, it becomes

[115] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 51.

[116] Joshua Papsdorf, '"Ambrosiaster" in Paul in the Middle Ages,' in *A Companion to St. Paul in the Middle Ages*, ed. Steven R. Cartwright, (Boston: Brill, 2013), 64.

obvious that there is a significant difference in meaning.'[117] For example, in *Ad Romanos* Ambrosiaster notes with regard to Romans 5:12 that it is physical death which comes from Adam: 'Death is the separation of body and soul. There is another death as well, called the second death, which takes place in hell. We do not suffer this death has a result of Adam's sin, but his fall makes it possible for us to get it by our own sins.'[118] Soon thereafter he contrasts physical death with spiritual death, something that occurs as a result of imitating Adam's sin (not precisely inherited from Adam).

> It is clear that not everyone has sinned in the manner of Adam's transgression, that is to say, not everyone has sinned by despising God. Who are those who have sinned by despising God, if not those who have ignored the Creator and served gods which they have made for thsemlves out of the creation, whom they worship to God's detriment? … and the sin of Adam is not far from idolatry, because he transgressed by thinking that even though he was only a man he would become a god himself. … Likewise those who disobey God by serving a creature sin in a similar way even if it is not exactly the same, because *likeness* applies to something which is basically different, and it cannot be said that these people had received a commandment from God not to eat of the tree, as Adam had. There were also those who sinned without any previous knowledge of God, but rather according to the natural law. For if someone who has understood and worshipped God and has not given the honor of his name and majesty to anyone else sins (and it is impossible not to sin), he does so under the law which he has broken.[119]

From these remarks, it quickly becomes clear that for Ambrosiaster, Adam's posterity commit sins of a different type than Adam and are guilty only for their own sins. 'For, in commenting on *v.* 14 of the same fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, he lays down a principle which logically seems to exclude '"Original Guilt" altogether.'[120] This has brought Joshua Papsdorf to call into question Augustine's 'creative use of sources' and to recognize that Ambrosiaster's interpretation of Paul is not proto-Augustinian.[121]

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[117] Joshua David Papsdorf, 'Ambrosiaster's theological anthropology: Nature, law and grace in the commentaries on the Pauline epistles and the "Quaestiones veteris et novi testamenti CXXVII"' (2008). *ETD Collection for Fordham University*. AAI3310423. http://fordham.bepress.com/dissertations/AAI3310423, 68.

[118] Ambrosiaster, *Commentaries on Romans and 1-2 Corinthians*, 40.

[119] Ambrosiaster, *Commentaries on Romans and 1-2 Corinthians*, 40. Cf. Papsdorf, 'Ambrosiaster's Theological Anthropology,' 68.

[120] Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 309.

[121] Papsdorf, '"Ambrosiaster" in Paul in the Middle Ages,' 66.

The creative use of sources continues with his explanation of a passage from Cyprian, which even Teske suggests 'might be taken in the opposite sense' than the original meaning.[122] This we shall attend to momentarily.

Second, we shall consider Ambrose (c. 340 – 397), the Bishop of Milan, whom Augustine highly revered because of his influence upon his conversion to Christianity. In chapter 47 of *On Original Sin*, Augustine explicitly quotes Ambrose from a few of his different writings:

> I fell in Adam, in Adam was I expelled from Paradise, in Adam I died; and He does not recall me unless He has found me in Adam, so as that, as I am obnoxious to the guilt of sin in him, and subject to death, I may be also justified in Christ.[123]
>
> We men are all of us born in sin; our very origin is in sin; as you may read when David says, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' Hence it is that Paul's flesh is 'a body of death;' even as he says himself, 'Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' Christ's flesh, however, has condemned sin, which He experienced not by being born, and which by dying He crucified, that in our flesh there might be justification through grace, where previously there was impurity through sin.[124]
>
> [In speaking of Christ's birth,] Whosoever, indeed, is free from sin, is free also from a conception and birth of this kind.[125]
>
> For the Lord Jesus alone of those who are born of woman is holy, inasmuch as He experienced not the contact of earthly corruption, by reason of the novelty of His immaculate birth; nay, He repelled it by His heavenly majesty.[126]

Ambrose's thought on the virgin birth confirmed, in Augustine's mind, that the transmission of original sin occurred through insemination.[127] But as it pertains to the person of Jesus Christ, 'Even though he assumed the natural substance of this very flesh, he was not conceived in iniquity nor born in sin…' as Ambrose thought all humans were.[128] The transmission of sin brought about a need to cleanse one from hereditary sin through the washing of feet (contra baptism). 'Peter was clean, but he should have washed his feet, for

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[122] Teske, in Augustine, 'Letter 98,' *Letters (1-99)*, *WSA* 2.1.426.
[123] Ambrose, *De Exc. Sal*. 2.6, in Augustine, *De Peccato Originali*, *NPNF1* 5:254.
[124] Ambrose, *De Pœnitentia*, 1.2, 1.3, in Augustine, *De Peccato Originali*, *NPNF1* 5:255.
[125] Ambrose, *On Isaiah*; noted as no longer extant in *NPNF1* 5:254.
[126] Ambrose, *Commentary on Luke* 2.56, in Augustine, *De Peccato Originali*, *NPNF1* 5:255.
[127] Pelikan, *CT1*, 289-290.
[128] Ambrose, *Exposition on the Psalms* 37.5, in Augustine, *De Peccato Originali*, *NPNF1*, 5:254.

he had the sin of the first man by succession, when the serpent overthrew him and persuaded him to sin. So his feet are washed, that hereditary sins may be taken away; for our sins are remitted by baptism.'[129]

In his *De Apologia Prophetae David*, we see others instances of human solidarity with the first man: 'Adam is in each one of us. It was in him that the human race fell, because it was through one man that sin passed to all.'[130] He also took a 'momentous step that Tertullian did not'[131] by embracing the idea of inherited guilt: 'Assuredly we all sinned in the first man, and by the inheritance of his nature there has been transferred from that one man into all an inheritance of guilt.'[132] Peter Phan advises skepticism when viewing Ambrose as thinking all humans inherit the *actual* guilt of Adam. Instead, 'however, it must be said that for Ambrose the inherited "sin" consists rather in a congenial propensity to sin … than in positive guilt.'[133] The reason for this caution is that 'Ambrose speaks of sin and its consequences after the manner of the Cappadocians … i.e. as though *we* were Adam.'[134] This is to speak of each individuated human's existence at the Fall analogically, not actually.

One final consideration for Ambrose is the source of the first sin: Pride. 'This new idea, which apparently originated with Ambrose, goes far beyond the views which were typical of the Eastern Church, because for the first time it indicated that the locus and responsibility for Adam's sin was internal.'[135] Hitherto, explanations for the first sin had been Adam's limitedness, immaturity, or the Devil himself. But here Ambrose strictly places the blame of the Fall on Adam's rebellious spirit. While the Bishop of Milan was a

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[129] Ambrose, *On the Mysteries* 32, in Augustine, *De Peccato Originali*, *NPNF1* 5:254.
[130] Ambrose, *De Apologia Prophetae David* 2.11.71, in Edwin Zackrison, *In the Loins of Adam: A Historical Study of Original Sin in Adventist Theology* (Lincoln: iUniverse, 2004), 57.
[131] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 68.
[132] Ambrose, *De Apologia Prophetae David* 2.11.71, in *In the Loins of Adam*, 57.
[133] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 220.
[134] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 112.
[135] Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' 40.

strong factor for Augustine's defense of his view of Original Sin, the heart of tradition was perhaps felt stronger from church leaders of North Africa: Cyprian and Tertullian.

Thirdly, in looking at Cyprian (d. 258), we see that he was the first of the Fathers to postulate that infants be baptized before the eighth day after birth (as was the custom, perhaps in accordance with the Old Testament laws on circumcision). [136] He wrote,

> how much less right do we have to deny [baptism] to an infant, who, having been born recently, has not sinned, except in that, being born physically according to Adam, he has contracted the contagion of the ancient death by his first birth! [The infant] approaches that much more easily to the reception of the forgiveness of sins because the sins remitted to him are not his own, *but those of another*.[137]

Cyprian did not formulate a robust understanding of Original Sin, but 'he did invoke a doctrine of original sin to account for a practice about whose apostolic credentials and sacramental validity he had no question whatever.'[138]

Finally, Tertullian (c. 160 – 240) is the earliest Latin father. He lived in Carthage and has claim to holding the earliest corpus of Latin works on Christianity. The earliest evidence for Augustine's view of transmission is found in the end of the second century, in Tertullian's writing.[139] Tertullian believed that Adam was 'the originator of our race and of our sin.'[140] He thought, 'Man is condemned to death for having tasted the fruit of one miserable tree, and from it proceed sins with their penalties; and now all are perishing who have never even seen a single bit of Paradise.'[141] This is the first instance in which a Christian writer (outside of the New Testament text) speaks of an ontological solidarity with Adam.

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[136] Pelikan, *CT1*, 291.
[137] Pelikan, *CT1*, 291, cf. Cyprian, 'Letter 58,' *ANF* 5:354.
[138] Pelikan, *CT1*, 291-292.
[139] Pelikan, *CT1*, 290-291.
[140] Tertullian, *Exhortation to Chastity* 2, *ANF* 4:51.
[141] Pelikan, *CT1*, 290, cf. Tertuallian, *Contra Marcion* 1.22, *ANF* 3:287.

Tertullian presents a view of the transmission of human nature and the soul[142] and its descent from Adam. In *On the Testimony of the Soul* he wrote, 'And (the man) being given over to death on account of his sin, the entire human race, tainted in their descent from him, were made a channel for transmitting his condemnation.'[143] The notion of being 'in Adam,' could be taken from his *On the Treatise of the Soul*, 'Every soul, by reason of its birth, has its nature in Adam until it is born again in Christ'[144] and 'There is, then, besides the evil which supervenes on the soul from the intervention of the evil spirit, an antecedent, and in a certain sense natural, evil which arises from its corrupt origin.'[145] Chapter 40 strongly suggests that, for Tertullian, the soul is sinful, but there he never states that humans are guilty of Adam's sin. In his explanation of how the soul is created simultaneously with the body for each individual, he defends the Traducian model:

> The entire man being excited by the one effort of both natures, his seminal substance is discharged, deriving its fluidity from the body, and its warmth from the soul. … I cannot help asking, whether we do not, in that very heat of extreme gratification when the generative fluid is ejected, feel that somewhat of our soul gas gone from us? … This, then, must be the soul-producing seed, which arises at once from the outdrip of the soul, just as that fluid is the body-producing seed, which proceeds from the drainage of the body.[146]

With his belief in a solidarity with Adam and the transmission of the soul, Tertullian brings about the first evidences of an Augustinian version of Original Sin.[147]

In spite of these features to his view, he never quite went as far as Augustine later would on the inheritance of guilt or the idea of inability. Tertullian's emphasis was on the

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[142] In chapter 27, Tertullian describes how progeneration works: 'For although we shall allow that there are two kinds of seed—that of the body and that of the soul—we still declare that they are inseparable, and therefore contemporaneous and simultaneous in origin.'

[143] Tertullian, *The Soul's Testimony* 3, *ANF* 3:177.

[144] Tertullian, *De Anima*, 40, *ANF* 3:220.

[145] Tertullian, *De Anima*, 41, *ANF* 3:220.

[146] Tertullian, *De Anima*, 27, ANF 3:208.

[147] Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan (Little, Brown, and Company: Boston, 1907), vol 2, 274, ft 3, 'the first beginning of the doctrine of original sin'; Justo Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought: From the Beginnings to the Council of Chalcedon,* vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 183, 'in which one can see the consequences of his Stoic outlook and its ulterior influence in the formation of Western theology'; Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 110, 'will weigh heavily upon Augustinian theology.'

transmission of the corrupted human nature and soul, not on the transmission of guilt.[148] Tertullian 'did not interpret the corruption of Adam's progeny as involving the transmission of actual guilt …'[149] but did find 'the involvement of all humanity in Adam's sin and the resultant tendency toward sinfulness that mankind has inherited.'[150] He did not believe that this involvement was in any way to be considered actual sin. Louis Berkhof admits, 'the doctrine of the direct imputation of Adam's sin to his descendants is foreign' to Tertullian.[151] 'Nevertheless,' says Rondet, 'he advances a thesis that will have considerable repercussions: we are linked with Adam because all souls were first of all contained in his.'[152]

As confirmation that Tertullian did not believe in direct imputation or the inheritance of guilt, we are able to look at his view on infant baptism. Pelikan notes that the first 'incontestable evidence' of the practice of infant baptism in the early church comes from Tertullian.[153] However, it is not because Tertullian is an advocate for that practice (as his disciple Cyprian would become), but rather a critic.

> Le them 'come,' then, while they are growing up; let them 'come' while they are learning, while they are learning whither to come; let them become Christians when they have become able to know Christ. Why does the innocent period of life hasten to the 'remission of sins?'[154]

Tertullian believed that infant baptism was a novelty; there was no need for infants to be baptized because there was no guilt ('innocent period of life') on them to necessitate washing. 'This well-known text shows that our author is still far from such preciseness as will be found in Augustinian Africa.'[155] Recall that for Augustine the church baptized

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[148] Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 237.

[149] G. P. Fisher, 'Salvation, Sin and Grace,' in *A History of Christian Doctrine*, ed. Hubert Cunliffe-Jones (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 157.

[150] David Weaver, 'From Paul to Augustine: Romans 5:12 in Early Christian Exegesis,' *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, vol. 27 (1983), 192.

[151] Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 237.

[152] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 61.

[153] Pelikan, *CT1*, 290.

[154] Tertullian, *On Baptism* 18, *ANF* 3:678.

[155] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 52.

infants in order to cleanse them of their inherited sin, whereas for Tertullian the practice of infant baptism was a novelty. Certainly we should think that Tertullian's audience were practitioners of infant baptism, but what their precise reasoning was for the practice remains less certain.

Tertullian did hold to a robust sense of natural free will as he wrote 'the entire order of discipline is arranged in precepts by God's calling men from sin, and threatening and exhorting them; and this on no other ground than that man is free, with a will either for obedience or resistance.'[156] As it pertains to the doctrine of Inability, Tertullian never considers that humans require personal superadded grace in order to be saved.[157]

> Still there is a portion of good in the soul, of that original, divine, and genuine good, which is its proper nature. For that which is derived from God is rather obscured than extinguished.[158]
>
> Thus some men are very bad, and some very good; but yet the souls of all form but one genus: even in the worst there is something good, and in the best there is something bad.[159]
>
> Just as no soul is without sin, so neither is any soul without seeds of good. Therefore, when the soul embraces the faith, being renewed in its second birth by water and the power from above, then the veil of its former corruption being taken away, it beholds the light in all its brightness.[160]

For Tertullian, postlapsarian humans retain goodness from God's creation such that it allows them to choose the good ('embraces the faith') over evil.

It is clear that, for Tertullian, humans inherit the fallen, corrupt nature of Adam … which ultimately leads them to condemnation. But they neither inherit the guilt of Adam nor the inability to choose the good. After having considered Tertullian's position on the matter, it becomes apparent that he 'falls far short of a developed doctrine in the Augustinian sense.'[161]

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[156] Tertullian, *Contra Marcion* 2.5, *ANF* 3:301.
[157] McFarland, *In Adam's Fall*, 31.
[158] Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul* 41, *ANF* 3:220.
[159] Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul* 41, *ANF* 3:220-221.
[160] Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul* 41, *ANF* 3:221.
[161] McFarland, *In Adam's Fall*, 31.

Conclusion

In his critique against those that claim Augustine invented a doctrine of Original Sin, Jacobs notes the historical precedent Augustine had insofar as, 'much pre-Augustinian commentary on Paul bears a close resemblance to Augustine's interpretation.'[162] He describes that historical precedent as follows:

> Two hundred years earlier Tertullian (Augustine's fellow North African) had identified each person closely with Adam, in such a way that we seem to be somehow inside the experience of the first man: 'our participation in transgression, our fellowship in death, our expulsion from Paradise.' True, we are beset by demons, but 'the evil that exists in the soul … is antecedent, being derived from the fault of our origin (ex originis vitui) and having become in a way natural to us.' His contemporary Cyprian of Carthage wrote of a 'primeval contagion' and of the 'wounds' we all receive from Adam. In North Africa, at least, Augustine's reading of Paul is amply anticipated.[163]

Jacobs's defense of Augustine qua defender of tradition has an ideological limit, specifically a geographical one. Two of Augustine's few critical sources ministered in the same region as he had: North Africa. One familiar with St. Vincent's *Commonitorium* cannot help but wonder if these men are the ones he had in mind when he wrote, 'But what, if in antiquity itself there be found error on the part of two or three men, or at any rate of a city or even of a province?'[164] Furthermore, in *The Predestination of the Saints* and *The Gift of Perseverance*, Augustine cited Cyprian far and away more than any other church father. Ambrose he cites the second most between those two works. Augustine believes that, 'I think that they who ask for the opinions of commentators on this matter ought to be satisfied with men so holy and so laudably celebrated as Cyprian and Ambrose….'[165] Yet by citing only those two writers, Augustine closes himself off to the vast tradition of the Greek church fathers. Thus, his position that 'the catholic Church maintains against those

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[162] Jacobs, *Original Sin*, 32.
[163] Jacobs, *Original Sin*, 32, ftnt ⋆.
[164] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 3, *NPNF2* 11:132.
[165] Augustine, *De Dono Perseverantiae* 48, *NPNF1* 5: 545.

very Pelagians, asserting as she does that it is original sin, the guilt of which, contracted by generation, must be remitted by regeneration'[166] is founded upon too few sources. As Bray explains, 'It is only when we turn to Latin theology in the period immediately before Augustine that we begin to find a concept of inherited guilt similar to his.'[167]

Nevertheless, Jacobs is correct: Augustine was not the inventor of the doctrine of Original Sin. 'The theology of original sin developed incrementally in the patristic writings.'[168] The church leaders explored in this section were in part responsible for the development and innovation of the doctrine of Original Sin that would culminate in the writings of Augustine. The best and earliest line of support being 'in Adam' comes from Tertullian, the teacher of Cyprian. The strongest correlation between infant baptism and Original Sin is seen in Cyprian. Humanity's solidarity with Adam is seen in Ambrose. Augustine read this Latin tradition and so surmised that his collecting some of their own positions constituted the traditional position of the whole church.[169]

Augustine's attempt to ground his doctrine of Original Sin on the line of orthodoxy is shaky for three reasons. First, his ideological predecessors never quite held to the fuller doctrine that Augustine passionately defended. They came close but never explicitly stated that the *actual* guilt of Adam was inherited, and as best as this research has indicated, none of them affirmed Augustine's view of inability.

Secondly, there happens to be one Christian Latin writer who rejected a strong solidarity with Adam: Lactantius. Lactantius was a rhetorician born in North Africa but who lived most of his life north of the Mediterranean. He believed that the soul of each individual was created directly by God (a position he defends in *On the Workmanship of*

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[166] Augustine, *De Dono Perseverantiae* 27, *NPNF1* 5:536. Latin: '*quam contra ipsos pelagianos catholica defendit Ecclesia, quae asserit originale esse peccatum, cuius reatus generatione contractus, regeneratione solvendus est?*'

[167] Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' *Churchman*, vol. 118, no. 1 (1994), 43.

[168] Wiley, *Original Sin*, 38.

[169] Pelikan, *CT1*, 292; Wiley, *Original Sin*, 53; Rondet, *Original Sin*, 123-124.

God) and 'he simply affirms that human beings, because of their bodily constitution, experience a corruption of their nature.'[170] His views align more closely to the Greek tradition than the newer and smaller Latin tradition.

Thirdly, Augustine's doctrine also held that to be sinful was not merely to transgress God's law, but to be in a state of rebellion. 'The resulting extension of the semantic range of the term "sin" to include not only particular *acts* that contravene God's will, but also a congenital *state* of opposition to God raises the specter of a God who makes creatures that are intrinsically evil, since they are guilty from conception and can thereafter only sin.'[171] This was concerning to the Gallic monks, especially as these ideas saw their entailments in fate of unbaptized infants and the issues of predestination. For prior to Augustine, those ideas of guilt and inability,

> were not present in earlier theologies, and which remain largely absent in later Orthodox theologies little influenced by Augustine. Within these non-Augustinian frameworks it remains conceptually possible to view all fault as personal (i.e., as a matter of individuals' *actual* sin), even if it is conceded that human beings are in practice predisposed to sin by virtue of the psycho-physiological effects of the first sin of Adam on human nature.[172]

Those ideas of inherited (actual) guilt and inability were not present in the Latin tradition and the case against such notions are stronger in the larger Greek tradition, which outright repudiated the idea of inherited guilt and adamantly defended natural free will.

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[170] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 118.
[171] McFarland, *In Adam's Fall*, 35.
[172] McFarland, *In Adam's Fall*, 34.

Chapter 4

Original Sin in Pre-Augustinian & Contemporaneous Greek Sources

While in the West we have seen how Original Sin gradually came into a coherent doctrine under Augustine, the same cannot be said of the East. 'Greek patristic writers do not express this fall in terms of a doctrine of original sin, such as that which would later be associated with Augustine. Most Greek writers insisted that sin arises from an abuse of the human free will.'[173] Not only did the Eastern church fathers express the Fall in terms different than that of Augustine, but they also rarely placed the type of reverence given to "the Fall" (capital 'f') as a term. Andrew Louth, author of *Introducing Eastern Orthodoxy*, explains that they merely wrote about what Adam did: 'he sinned, he was disobedient, he turned away from God. The consequences were disastrous: the world of harmony that God had intended in creating the cosmos with the human central to it was destroyed.'[174] While the Greek fathers did not formulate a doctrine of Original Sin, they still had beliefs about what it was like. Chadwick confirms this: 'The Fall has not caused total depravity in mankind, so the Greek fathers had taught.'[175]

Much more could be written about the thought of many Greek patristics, other than what is written below, but for our purposes it is relevant to explore the data of their beliefs about the Fall. This will be done so that we will be able to compare the eastern tradition against the Gallic authors' own statements about Original Sin or beliefs connected to it. Our argument will not be based upon correlation, comparing statements to statements, but

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[173] Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 442.

[174] Andrew Louth, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013), 69.

[175] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 129. Cf. Bethune-Baker *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine to the Time of the Council of Chalcedon* (London: Metheun & Co., 1903), 307.

rather to study if and how the Gallic monks are situated in a broader theological tradition. This will help us to discern whether the Gallic monks were sympathetic to an Augustinian/Western view of Original Sin, a Greek/Eastern view of Original Sin, or if they had their own distinct position.[176] As it will be shown, there is a monolithic, almost exhaustively universal, distinct understanding within the Greek tradition regarding some aspects to Original Sin.

In the very early church, 'The early Greek Christian theological emphasis on free will and human accountability was a deliberate counter to the various forms of determinism and fatalism of much classical religion and philosophy from the time of Homer through the era of the Roman Empire.'[177] More specifically, one such philosophy that the Church Fathers dealt with was that of Judeo-Christian origin: Gnosticism. Gnosticism was, broadly speaking, the idea that there was hidden knowledge in the human which had to be divinely revealed in order for one to achieve salvation. Gnosticism was 'deeply pessimistic,' fatalistic, and believed that moral responsibility was meaningless because of the inevitability of sin (a belief that Christians fought against).[178]

For the patristics, human 'freedom was of central importance in the Christian apologetic against pagan fatalism and the influence of astrology, and in the orthodox repudiation of Gnostic determinism, especially, from the middle of the third century onwards, in its Manicaean form.'[179] Jaroslav Pelikan remarks:

> Most of the doctrinal development in the first four centuries had, like Luther, faced only one option; but in this instance it was the deterministic alternative that constituted the major opposition, with the result that Christian anthropology, as formulated in the course of the ante-Nicene and immediately post-Nicene debates, leaned noticeably to one side of the dilemma, namely, the side of free will and responsibility rather than the side of inevitability and original sin.[180]

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[176] As previously mentioned and evidenced, some scholars are apt to believe the Gallic monks created a middle ground, a new theological model of grace and free will, so as to fit between Augustine and Pelagius on a theological spectrum.

[177] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 61.

[178] Wiley, *Original Sin*, 39-40.

[179] Fisher, 'Salvation, Sin and Grace,' 155.

[180] Pelikan, *CT1*, 279-280.

The Gnostics denied liberty, assuming 'that those who are capable of sinning have been created not by God, but by some demiurge or an evil angel.'[181] The anti-Gnostic Christian writers denied the inevitability to sin and instead posited man's free will. The early Christian writers thought, 'If a man were subject to the bondage of evil, it would be unjust of God to base rewards and punishments on human conduct.'[182]

> Indeed, Augustine's denial of humanity's capacity to avoid sin challenged a virtual consensus among theologians of the first four centuries, who saw human beings' freedom to choose good over evil as one of the features that most clearly distinguished Christian faith from pagan and Gnostic thought.[183]

Interestingly enough, in the second-century church it is the Gnostics, not the orthodox Christians, who have something closer to a doctrine of Original Sin.[184] The early Christian writers fought against that doctrine of sin, one that is quite similar to the position later embraced by the West a few centuries later. As we describe the positions held by the Greek fathers, we will focus (albeit not exclusively) on two of the issues distinctive to Augustine: the inheritance of the actual guilt of Adam and the inheritance of a human nature which is *non posse non peccare*, unable to do any objective good action toward one's own salvation apart from a post-lapsarian superadded act of grace. It will become apparent that the East's position on (or better yet, against) those two distinctive features (guilt and inability) existed earlier than Augustine's, was more widely believed by Christians in different parts of Christendom, and was believed in much greater numbers.[185]

The Apostolic Fathers

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[181] Henri Rondet, *Original Sin*, 43.

[182] Pelikan, *CT1*, 283.

[183] McFarland, *In Adam's Fall*, 33.

[184] Pelikan, *CT1*, 282-283, '… the theories of cosmic redemption in the Gnostic systems were based on an understanding of the human predicament in which man's incapacity to avoid sin or to evade destiny was fundamental. … In one way or another, the various schools of Gnosticism depicted man as the victim and slave of forces over which he had no control, and therefore they diagnosed sin as inevitable.'

[185] Not unintentionally, those two distinctive features (i.e., the rejection thereof) qualify to meet the criterion of the Vincentian canon.

The earliest of church fathers after the Apostles themselves are referred to as the Apostolic Fathers, for they either knew or were strongly influenced by the Apostles.

Hermas was the author of a well received work called *The Shepherd*. This writing has five visions, twelve mandates, and ten parables. It was a very popular work among Christians in the second and third centuries, and was even considered canonical by Irenaeus. Hermas believed that only an individual could be held accountable for his or her sin and that sin brought death.[186] Infants are 'innocent'[187] and 'they who believed from the twelfth mountain, which was white, are the following: they are as infant children, in whose hearts no evil originates, nor did they know what wickedness is, but always remained as children.'[188] Those that persevere '… and be as children, without doing evil, will be more honoured than all who have been previously mentioned; for all infants are honourable before God, and are the first persons with Him.'[189]

Rondet considered, 'There is no point in emphasizing the fact that he declares infants to be innocent, for this innocence is opposed only to sin freely consented to by adults. The problem of original sin *originatum* is not yet on the horizon.'[190] For Hermas, the concept of inherited guilt had not ever been conceived in his mind; any guilt that a human has is a result of his or her own sin.

The author of the *Epistle of Barnabas* 'argued explicitly that the souls of children are entirely innocent and born without sin.'[191] The author takes an allegorical approach to the Genesis 3 narrative but also finds Eve to be the one to blame for bringing sin into the world, not Adam.

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[186] Wiley, *Original Sin*, 38-39; Rondet, *Original Sin*, 26.
[187] Hermas, *Pastor of Hermas* 3.9.29, *ANF* 2:53.
[188] Hermas, *Pastor of Hermas* 3.9.27, *ANF* 2:53, emphasis mine.
[189] Hermas, *Pastor of Hermas* 3.9.27, *ANF* 2:53.
[190] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 26. Cf. Hermas, *Pastor of Hermas* 2.2, ANF 2:20, 'you will be as the children who know not the wickedness that ruins the life of men.'
[191] Wiley, *Original Sin*, 39.

Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch, wrote several epistles to churches in the Greco-Roman world, in some of which he displays soteriological reflection. In his letter to the Ephesians he notes that the Eucharist is 'is the medicine of immortality, and the antidote to prevent us from dying, but a cleansing remedy driving away evil [which causes] that we should live in God through Jesus Christ.'[192] In his letter to the Magnesians, he describes the conditional framework humans are placed in:

> Seeing, then, all things have an end, and there is set before us life upon our observance [of God's precepts], but death as the result of disobedience, and every one, *according to the choice he makes*, shall go to his own place, let us flee from death, and make choice of life. … I do not mean to say that there are two different human natures, but that there is one humanity, sometimes belonging to God and sometimes to the devil. If anyone is truly religious, he is a man of God; but if he is irreligious, he is a man of the devil, made such, *not by nature*, but by his own choice.[193]

In writing of Ignatius, Rondet asks, 'Was the faith of Ignatius the same as ours? Did he believe in original sin, or at least in the original fall? One cannot decide *a priori* that he did not. But as yet those truths remain implicit.'[194] Which 'truths' *precisely* are those that Rondet has in mind he does not say. From the two passages cited above, we may draw two conclusions. First, given the medicinal language Ignatius used, the very least we can say is that for him, the human condition is one of sickness (a theme we will continue to see in the East). Second, from the conditional framework passage, Ignatius believed that disobedience was not the default status of all humans but one acquired 'according to the choice he makes' and that being a 'man of the devil' occurs 'not by nature, but by his own choice.' Rondet, Wiley, and Toews (the last of whom does not mention Ignatius at all) fail to make use of this passage,[195] perhaps to their own chagrin, because its explicit rejection of the

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[192] Ignatius, *Epistle to the Ephesians* 20, *ANF* 1:57.
[193] Ignatuis, *Epistle to the Magnesians* 5, *ANF* 1:61, emphases mine.
[194] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 27.
[195] The authenticity of Ignatius's epistles has been questioned over the past couple of centuries, but Rondet and Wiley make no reference to these disputations. As such, we will treat them as authentic, especially considering that Eusebius speaks of them as authentic and lists them in the thirty-sixth chapter of his third book on *Ecclesiastical History*.

natural state of rebellion serves as an a fortiori argument for their own cases that the East held a milder view of the Fall.

The Apologists

The next class of church fathers we will explore are the apologists: Justin Martyr, Tatian, and Theophilus. The apologists were Church leaders who neither presented a systematic theology nor wrote treatises to combat theological disagreement from within the church. Instead, their writings, generally speaking, attempted to find common ground between Christianity and pagan beliefs.

Justin Martyr, who lived in the second century, argued that despite the fallen nature, humans retained 'the capacity to choose and decide to live in ways acceptable to God.'[196] He believed that the origin of sin was from the individual's own choices. Adam's sin brought corruption and weakened the will, but nevertheless humans retained the ability to choose to be Christian. In his fictionalized *Dialogue with Trypho* he argued that Christ died for, 'the human race, which from Adam had fallen under the power of death and the guile of the serpent, and each one of which had committed personal transgression'[197] for which 'each is to be judged and convicted, as were Adam and Eve.'[198] 1

Wiley remarks that 'Justin's understanding of the relation between Adam's sin and humankind is better described as a doctrine of *original corruption* rather than a doctrine of *original sin*.'[199] Humankind is cursed[200] but not under fault. 'He did not construct his soteriology upon original sin. What he says about the effects of baptism only indirectly refers to original sin in us.'[201] For Justin, baptism (not necessarily infant baptism) was

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[196] Wiley, *Original Sin*, 43.
[197] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 88, *ANF* 1:243.
[198] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 124, *ANF* 1:262.
[199] Wiley, *Original Sin*, 44.
[200] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 95, *ANF* 1:247.
[201] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 29.

necessary so that our 'wayward inclinations' could be washed away, not guilt to be cleaned.[202] Given that, Rondet observes, 'All the more should one not seek to find in him the idea of a hereditary fault transmitted by procreation.'[203]

The second apologist to consider is Tatian, who was a disciple of Justin's. He rejected determinism and emphasized the nature of free will.[204] Fate is a belief taught by the demons to humans (chapter eight of his *To the Greeks*). Demonology plays a large role in Tatian's theology. While he never mentions Adam and Eve explicitly, he remarks in his chapter on the Fall:

> And each of these two orders of creatures [humans and angels] was made free to act as it pleased, not having the nature of good, which again is with God alone, but is brought to perfection in men through their freedom of choice, in order that the bad man may be justly punished, having *become depraved through his own fault*, but the just man be deservedly praised for his virtuous deeds, since in the exercise of his free choice he refrained from transgressing the will of God.[205]

Here, Tatian rejects natural depravity by holding that depravity is a state acquired through the misuse of free will.[206] This is a trait seen 'in Hebrew thought, on the action of the spirit,' which was previously seen in Justin's thought and will also be seen in Theophilus's.[207] Tatian continued, 'We were not created to die, but we die by our own fault. Our free-will has destroyed us; we who were free have become slaves; we have been sold through sin.'[208] According to Rondet, 'this passage seems very suited to join a series of texts in favour of a tradition on original sin.'[209]

The last Apologist we will consider is Theophilus, a lesser known early Christian father, who wrote to Autolycus around 180 A.D. His interpretation of the Genesis narrative

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[202] Wiley, *Original Sin*, 42; Rondet, *Original Sin*, 27-28.

[203] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 29.

[204] Tatian, *To the Greeks* 11, *ANF* 2:67-68, 'And the power of the Logos, having itself a faculty to foresee future events, not as fated, but as taking place by the choice of free agents ….'

[205] Tatian, *To the Greeks* 7, *ANF* 2:67, emphasis mine.

[206] Tatian, *To the Greeks* 7, *ANF* 2.68, 'through their freedom of choice [they] have been given up to their own infatuation,'

[207] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 30.

[208] Tatian, *To the Greeks* 11, *ANF* 2:69-70.

[209] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 30.

would later reflect that of the eastern churches for its position on the immaturity of Adam and Eve:

> The tree of knowledge itself was good … knowledge is good when one uses it discreetly. But Adam, being yet an infant in age, was on this account as yet unable to receive knowledge worthily. For now, also, when a child is born it is not at once able to eat bread, but is nourished first with milk, and then, with the increment of years, it advances to solid food. Thus, too, would it have been with Adam; for not, as one who begrudged him, as some suppose, did God command him not to eat of knowledge. But he wished also to make proof of him, whether he was submissive to His commandment. … if it is right that children be subject to parents, how much more to the God and Father of all things?[210]

Further describing man's prelapsarian state he continued, 'Man was by nature neither mortal nor immortal. He would have gained immortality as a reward for keeping the commandments of God; he would thus become God. If, however, he disobeyed the commandments of God he would become the cause of death.'[211] The key feature here from Theophilus is not to point out his position on Adam's free will, but rather his position that Adam was neither mortal nor immortal. What he would be was his fate to decide and the choice to eat the fruit was an immature choice. As Toews notes, 'Theophilus did not spell out the consequences of Adam and Eve's transgression on the rest of humanity, but he planted a very important seed.'[212]

Theophilus, unlike his predecessors, takes the Creation and Fall accounts literally.[213] He believes that the consequences of the Fall are obvious: women experience pain in childbirth, serpents slither on the earth. Now, 'from his disobedience did man draw, as from a fountain, labour, pain, and grief, and at last fall a prey to death'[214] This broken human is not the one ultimately responsible for sin, but Satan is.

Rondet observes that the Apologists and the Apostolic Fathers did not attempt to write a treatise on the Christian faith and as such did not devote their focus to Original Sin.

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[210] Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 2.15, *ANF* 2:104.
[211] Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 2.15, *ANF* 2:104.
[212] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 51.
[213] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 34.
[214] Theophilus, *To Autolycus* 2.15, *ANF* 2:104.

This explains why there is little to no reference to Romans 5. This observation led him to believe, 'There remains but one valid explanation. During the first two centuries, or at least up to the last quarter of the second century, the question of original sin is still very obscure.'[215]

Thus far we have seen how the Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists held to a milder view of the Fall. 'The dogma of the redemption is not primarily founded upon the sin of Adam as upon a primeval catastrophe.'[216] Adam was a participant of this catastrophe but not its instigator.

Irenaeus

Irenaeus, the Bishop of Lyons, lived in the Latin speaking West but wrote in Greek. He is considered by some to be 'the most important and influential Christian theologian of the second century.'[217] He was from Asia Minor and was discipled by Polycarp, the disciple of John the Apostle. He moved to Lyons but escaped during the persecution brought by Marcus Aurelius. Upon his return to the city he was appointed the bishop before Photinus had been martyred. Irenaeus has two surviving works to his name: *Against Heresies* and *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*. *Against Heresies* was written against the Gnostics and this work would become widely popular. *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* would be written toward the end of his life. References to Adam can be seen as few and 'tend to be relatively brief and occasional rather than matters of sustained systematic analysis, often making it difficult to reconstruct the exact perspective of any given theologian with confidence, let alone to identify a "doctrine" held by Christians more broadly.'[218] This difficulty notwithstanding, it is with Ireneaus that we find

[215] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 36.
[216] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 36.
[217] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 51.
[218] McFarland, *In Adam's Fall*, 31.

one of the most well constructed theologies in the early church of the Fall and its consequences.

In both of his works 'Irenaeus developed and amplified Theophilus' reading of the Genesis story of Adam and Eve as children, *nepioi*, in the Garden; they were imperfect, undeveloped, and infantile persons.'[219] In *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, we find Ireneaus arguing,

> And Adam and Eve … *were naked, and were not ashamed*; for there was in them an innocent and childlike mind, and it was not possible for them to conceive and understand anything of that which by wickedness through lusts and shameful desires is born in the soul. For they were at that time entire, preserving their own nature; since they had the breath of life which was breathed on their creation: and, while this breath remains in its place and power, it has no comprehension and understanding of things that are base. And therefore they were not ashamed, kissing and embracing each other in purity after the manner of children.[220]

And in *Against Heresies* he notes their child-like state,

> And even as she, having indeed a husband, Adam, but being nevertheless as yet a virgin (for in Paradise "they were both naked, and were not ashamed," inasmuch as they, having been created a short time previously, had no understanding of the procreation of children: for it was necessary that they should first come to adult age, and then multiply from that time onward), having become disobedient, was made the cause of death, both to herself and to the entire human race.[221]

When Adam and Eve sinned, it was not so much out of rebellion inasmuch as it was out of ignorance.[222] The Fall was not a fleshly error but more like an error of innocence. As a consequence of the Fall, man was not cursed but the ground and the serpent were.[223] The Fall, in the mind of Irenaeus, was not so severe as it is in Augustine's thought. 'One should note here that this understanding of the Fall as an interruption in human development is very different from what later became common in Western theology.'[224]

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[219] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 52.

[220] Irenaeus, *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* 14, in Iain M. MacKenzie, *Irenaeus's Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching: A Theological Commentary and Translation* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 5.

[221] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.22.4, *ANF* 1:455.

[222] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 52; Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 189-199, Weaver 'From Paul to Augustine,' 191-192; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 170-174

[223] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.23.3, *ANF* 1:456.

[224] Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought*, vol. 1, 164.

The most notable difference between Augustine and Irenaeus is that for Irenaeus, humans retained *posse non peccare*. He wrote, 'all human beings are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it.'[225] Irenaeus had been combating the Gnostics, who denied liberty.

> They conceive various classes of men of whom some would be good or bad by nature. They assume that those who are capable of sinning have been created not by God, but by some demiurge or an evil angel. Ireaneus reacts strongly, affirming the freedom of the will, a gift from God. One appreciates God's gifts all the more, according as one merits them.[226]

This explains why 'the prophets used to exhort men to what was good, to act justly and to work righteousness … because it is in our power so to do, and because by excessive negligence we might become forgetful….'[227] The Gnostics considered one of the classes of men to be animalistic and it is only through a special, irresistible possession of grace that one could be saved.[228]

The power of free choice is something that Irenaeus considered to be an

> ancient law of human liberty because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey behests (*ad utendum sentential*) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God. For there is no coercion with God, but a good will [towards us] is present with Him continually. And therefore does He give good counsel to all.[229]

Salvation is synergistic, involving the cooperation of man with God. Fisher remarks that for the early, eastern church grace is 'the necessary source of all virtues in the present life, the means by which sin and the devil are overcome and, … the ground and the agency of ultimate deification.'[230] So it is God who, 'in man, as well as in angels, He has placed the power of choice (for angels are rational beings), so that those who had yielded obedience

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[225] Ireneaus, *Against Heresies*, 4.37.2, *ANF* 1:519.
[226] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 43.
[227] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.37.2, *ANF* 1:519.
[228] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.6.2 & 1.6.4, *ANF* 1:324-325.
[229] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.37.1, *ANF* 1:518.
[230] Fisher, 'Salvation, Sin and Grace,' 136.

might justly possess what is good, given indeed by God, but preserved by themselves.'[231] Again, grace and free will work in cooperation with each other, not separately. The duty of the human is to respond to God's action who 'did kindly bestow on them what was good; but they themselves did not diligently keep it, nor deem it something precious, but poured contempt upon His super-eminent goodness.'[232]

Compared to Augustine's view of inability, Irenaeus is clearly of the position that humans retain the ability to choose objectively good actions. Those 'who work [the good] shall receive glory and honour, because they have done that which is good when they had it *in their power not to do it*' and conversely those 'who do it not shall receive the just judgment of God, because they did not work good when they had it *in their power so to do*.'[233] He utilizes a number of passages from the Gospels to 'demonstrate the *independent* will of man, and at the same time the counsel which God conveys to him….'[234] Finally, he affirmed man's God-given ability 'of free will *from the beginning*,'[235] meaning that he did not believe the Fall so injured human nature to render free will unable to choose the good. Instead, the good was God-given to all humans and it 'is in man's power to disobey God, and to *forfeit* what is good.'[236]

Regarding the *initium fidei*, Ireneaus's position is distinct from Augustine's. Recall that for Augustine, faith is a gift from God, and even the gift of perseverance is a gift from God. For Irenaeus, however, 'God preserved the will of man free and under his own control' and subsequently in quoting Matthew 9:29 he argues, 'thus showing that there is a faith specially belonging to man, since he has an opinion specially his own.'[237] Lest there

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[231] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.37.1, *ANF* 1:518-519.
[232] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.37.1, *ANF* 1: 518-519.
[233] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.37.1, *ANF* 1:518-519, emphases mine.
[234] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.37.3, *ANF* 1:519.
[235] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.37.4, *ANF* 1:519, emphasis mine.
[236] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.37.4, *ANF* 1:519, emphasis mine.
[237] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 4.37.5, *ANF* 1:519-520.

be any confusion as to what 'specially' means, Irenaeus is clearer even still: 'Now all [these] such expressions demonstrate that man is in his own power with respect to faith.'[238]

How does the *initium fidei* play into a discussion on the doctrine of Original Sin? Recall that for Augustine, if the human were able to do anything toward her own salvation, then that would constitute a work and therefore be works righteousness. But human beings are *non posse non peccare* and thus cannot do anything toward their own salvation. But here we now see that under Irenaeus's thought, the God-given human ability to freely work the good (which God had already given) is the origin of faith from the human. Therefore, we may recognize that if the *initium fidei* can be found in the human act, then postlapsarian humans are able to choose the good (a position incompatible with Augustine's notion of inability). 'Since God, therefore, gave [to man] such mental power (*magnanimitatem*) man knew both the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience, that the eye of the mind, receiving experience of both, may with judgment make choice of the better things ….'[239] Irenaeus also provides a warning to those who reject the notion of a truly free choice: 'But if any one do shun the knowledge of both these kinds of things, and the twofold perception of knowledge, he unawares divests himself of the character of a human being.'[240] While Irenaus's context is different than Augustine's, we might consider that the same principle of the illustrated point could apply in other contexts. That is, according to Irenaeus, it is wrong and disparaging to human nature to understand that humans cannot know the good of obedience prior to making a decision to obey or disobey God.

Regarding the doctrine of inherited guilt, we find that Irenaeus rejects the idea. 'It is not surprising that Irenaeus did not attach a high degree of guilt or culpability to Adam's sin.'[241] Yet two passages stick out as seemingly not fitting with the rest of Irenaeus's

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[238] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 4.37.5, *ANF* 1:520.
[239] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 4.39.1, *ANF* 1:522.
[240] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 4.39.1, *ANF* 1:522.
[241] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 53.

thought, his quotation of 1 Corinthians 15:22, 'in Adam we all die'[242] and 'Now "the pain of the stroke" means that inflicted at the beginning upon disobedient man in Adam, that is, death.'[243] In these passages Irenaeus uses the term "in Adam." But lest one begin reading further into it than he originally intended, 'it is necessary to put these texts back into their immediate context and see them as a whole in order to judge their historical and traditional import.'[244] That broader context being, as Toews observes of Irenaeus, 'Adam's transgression, though not an infection transmitted to subsequent generations, did lead to death….'[245]

We see here that Irenaeus made ample statements concerning the Fall, certainly different in nature than Augustine's position.

The Alexandrians

Clement

Clement of Alexandria (150-215) affirmed that Adam and Eve were spiritually immature and were to utilize their free will in order to mature.[246] 'On some points, Clement's anthropology approaches that of Irenaeus in a manner that is surprising in two theologians of such different leanings.'[247] Bray describes that for Clement, 'Unaware as he was of God's purpose for him, Adam chose to indulge in the pleasures of sexual intercourse before God was ready to allow him to, and thus Adam fell into sin.'[248] This is the first instance in the church fathers where sexual sin is associated with the first sin. This association is 'a characteristic that will increase as we move through the patristic period.'[249]

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[242] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.23.8, *ANF* 1:458.
[243] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 5.34.2, *ANF* 1:564
[244] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 44.
[245] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 53. Cf, Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3,
[246] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 54.
[247] Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought*, vol. 1, 202.
[248] Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' 39.
[249] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 54.

Yet at the same time the appropriate categorization should be recognized that for Clement, it was not the sexual nature (or, in Augustine's thought, concupiscence) but its prematureness that is the pinpoint of wickedness.[250]

Clement rejected that Adam was a historical person, instead opting to interpret Adam as the archetype of all men. Consequently, he did not believe that humans inherited original sin. In his *Stromata*, he wrote,

> Let them tell us, where the newly born child committed fornication? Or how a thing has fallen under the curse of Adam, when it performs nothing? The only remaining answer, for them, it seems, is to say that birth is an evil, not only for the body, but also for the soul, for which the body exists. And when David says: 'In sin I was conceived, and in iniquity my mother conceived me,' he says in a prophetic manner that Eve is his mother; but Eve became the 'mother of the living'; and if he was 'conceived in sin,' yet he was not himself in sin, nor is he himself sin.[251]

For Clement, sin was only a transgression made against God. Infants, being unable to perform sinful actions, could not sin. So he deduces that his opponents must believe that birth itself is an evil of which the infants (somehow) partake. He then had in mind Psalm 51 which his opponents might use to support the aforementioned deduced position. Clement thinks David is not making ontological claims and that David would not have thought of himself as being in a state 'in sin' nor associated his identity to be 'himself sin.' In Book VI he makes clear that people are sinners by choice:

> Let them not then say, that he who does wrong and sins transgresses through the agency of demons; for then he would be guiltless. But by choosing the same things as demons, by sinning; being unstable, and light, and fickle in his desires, like a demon, he becomes a demoniac man. Now he who is bad, having become, through evil, sinful by nature, becomes depraved, having what he has chosen; and being sinful, sins also in his actions.[252]

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[250] Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' 39; Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 54; Weaver, 'From Paul to Augustine,' 193-194.

[251] Clement, *Stromata* 3.16, *ANF* 2:400 (translation not provided by *ANF*; translation my own), 'Dicant ergo bobis, ubi fornicates est infans natus? Vel quomodo sub Adae cecidit exsecrationem, qui nihil est operates? Restat ergo eis, ut videtur, consequenter, ut decant malam esse generationem, non solum corporis, sed etiam animae, per quam exsistit corpus. Et quando dixit David: "In peccatis conceptus sum, et in inquitatibus concepit me mater mea:" dicit prophetice quidem matrem Evam; sed Eva quidem fuit "mater viventium;" et si is "in peccatis fuit conceptus," at non ipse ini peccato, neque vero ipse peccatum.'

[252] Clement, *Stromata* 6.12, *ANF* 5:502.

Sinfulness, if it were a state 'by nature' is something acquired *after* choosing to sin. For Augustine, depravity is the natural state of all humans from birth, but for Clement, depravity is a state arrived at by 'becom[ing].'

Clement would have rejected the Traducian model because of a remark made in the context of the characteristics of what is essential to human nature. This remark contains an explicit rejection of the soul as created from the procreation: 'And the soul is introduced, and previous to it the ruling faculty, by which we reason, not produced in procreation.'[253]

Phan observes, 'Though Clement's thought is less than transparently clear here, it seems correct to say that he does not deny original sin as such but rather understands our disorderly condition as sinful in an analogous sense.'[254] Rondet places Clement in a camp of his own, describing him as, 'even more than of Tertullian, it must be said that he is neither an Augustine nor an Irenaeus.'[255] Yet, as we have shown regarding two distinctive features of Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin, Clement and Irenaeus are of like minds. Clement rejects the idea that infants are guilty of sin and he rejects that the natural state of man is rebellion and *non posse non peccare*.

Origen

Origen (d. 254) is considered 'the second of the three great theologians in patristic Christianity (Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine).'[256] His influence touches Athanasius, the Cappadocians, Evagrius Ponticus, John Cassian, and other monastics, Gregory the Great, and Maximus the Confessor.[257] He had taken over Clement's catechetical school during the persecution of Severus (which occurred in 202 A.D.) because Clement had fled. He taught

[253] Clement, *Stromata* 6.16, *ANF* 5:511.
[254] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 76.
[255] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 70.
[256] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 55.
[257] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 80.

there for thirty years before leaving Alexandria to establish a school in Caesarea. He, interestingly enough, was the first Christian author to use the term 'original sin.'[258]

Origen believed that infants were guilty of sin, but not for the reasons one might think. These souls had sinned before entering the body (from the pre-cosmic Fall) and that was the rationale for believing in the inheritance of guilt … their own, not Adam's. Like his predecessor, he believed that Genesis 3 was not a literal historical account. Rather, the account was an allegory of all of humanity.

> As a result, Origen seems to deny any doctrine of corporate sinfulness, for his allegorical interpretation of Genesis suggests that if human beings are sinful from birth, their wickedness is the legacy of their own misguided choices in the transcendental world, and has nothing to do with the disobedience of any one first man.[259]

Origen held to the platonic notion of the preexistence of the soul, so he believed that infants were guilty 'because of prior choices in the transcendent realm.'[260] He believed that infant baptism was an apostolic tradition and that it was done for the remission of those sins and to cleanse the 'filth of birth.'[261]

Origen's commentary on Romans is one of the earliest sources we have of a church father's view on the controversial passage of Romans 5:12. Origen interprets *eph ho* (modern translations 'because') as a causal link between the protasis and the apodosis. Not only is this the interpretation which Augustine criticized Pelagius for holding, but as Rondet points out, 'This exegesis will be that of the majority of the Greek Fathers.'[262]

A couple of choice passages from his commentary on Romans requires further analysis. Origen does seem to suggest a metaphysical connection to Adam:

> For all the men were in the loins of Adam when he was in paradise, and when he was expelled from it; thus, the death which came from his prevarication passed by him into all those who are of his blood….[263]

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[258] Wiley, *Original Sin*, 46.
[259] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 91.
[260] Wiley, *Original Sin*, 48.
[261] Pelikan., *CT1*, 291.
[262] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 80.
[263] Origen, *Commentary on Romans*, cf. Weaver 'From Paul to Augustine,' 196.

> All, in fact, have been sent into this place of humiliation … whether all the sons of the sons of Adam were in his loins and were expelled with him from paradise, or whether each one of us was banished personally and received his condemnation in some way that we cannot tell and that only God knows.[264]

Recall that for Origen, souls exist prior to their entering the body. So, Origen likely means that all humans have a biological connection to Adam and that if the soul were to be corrupted by sin it would only occur after joining in union to the flesh.[265] But if one were to think Origen believed humans inherit the guilt of Adam, look no further than his comments on Romans 5:15 that humans become liable to death as a result of Adam's *example*.[266]

As it pertains to Origen's view on the freedom of the will, he believed that, 'Northing which God gives to a created nature is given by way of obligation; instead he gives everything as grace …. In no way is eternal life a payment or any kind of debt on the part of God; instead it is his grace.'[267] For Origen, free will and God's grace are not mutually exclusive, but rather concurrent agencies 'because even our ability to do anything at all, or to think, or to talk, we can do only as a result of his gift and generosity.'[268]

In the third book of *De Principiis* Origen devotes his first chapter to arguing for the existence of the freedom of the will. In one section, he engages with the concept of a heart of stone and a heart of flesh (per Ezekiel 11:19-20). He believes that those who think God does all of the work of replacing the stony heart, *at the expense of human cooperation*, are in error. This passage we provide in full:

> For if God, when He pleases, takes away a heart of stone and bestows a heart of flesh, that His ordinances may be observed and His commandments may be obeyed, it will then appear that it is not in our power to put away wickedness. For the taking away of a stony heart seems to be nothing else than the removal of the wickedness by which one is hardened, from whomsoever God pleases to remove it. Nor is the bestowal of a heart of flesh, that the precepts of God may be observed and His commandments obeyed, any other thing than a man becoming obedient, and no longer resisting the truth, but performing works of virtue. If, then, God promises to do this, and if, before He takes away the stony heart, we are unable to remove it from ourselves, it follows that it is not in our power, but

[264] Origen, *Commentary on Romans*, cf. Rondet, *Original Sin*, 80.
[265] Cf. Rondet, *Original Sin*, 81.
[266] Origen, *Commentary on Romans*, cf. Weaver 'From Paul to Augustine,' 196.
[267] Origen, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. in Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 97.
[268] Origen, *Commentary on Romans* 4.1, trans. in Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 97.

> in God's only, to cast away wickedness. And again, if it is not our doing to form within us a heart of flesh, but the work of God alone, it will not be in our power to live virtuously, but it will in everything appear to be a work of divine grace. Such are the assertions of those who wish to prove from the authority of Holy Scripture that nothing lies in our own power. Now to these we answer, that these passages are not to be so understood, but in the following manner. Take the case of one who was ignorant and untaught, and who, feeling the disgrace of his ignorance, should, driven either by an exhortation from some person, or incited by a desire to emulate other wise men, hand himself over to one by whom he is assured that he will be carefully trained and competently instructed. If he, then, who had formerly hardened himself in ignorance, yield himself, as we have said, with full purpose of mind to a master, and promise to obey him in all things, the master, on seeing clearly the resolute nature of his determination, will appropriately promise to take away all ignorance, and to implant knowledge within his mind; not that he undertakes to do this if the disciple refuse or resist his efforts, but only on his offering and binding himself to obedience in all things. So also the Word of God promises to those who draw near to Him, that He will take away their stony heart, not indeed from those who do not listen to His word, but from those who receive the precepts of His teaching; as in the Gospels we find the sick approaching the Saviour, asking to receive health, and thus at last be cured. And in order that the blind might be healed and regain their sight, their part consisted in making supplication to the Saviour, and in believing that their cure could be effected by Him; while His part, on the other hand, lay in restoring to them the power of vision. And in this way also does the Word of God promise to bestow instruction by taking away the stony heart, i.e., by the removal of wickedness, that so men may be able to walk in the divine precepts, and observe the commandments of the law.[269]

What for Origen is an undesirable conclusion, for Augustine is gospel. Origen thinks, 'it follows that it is not in our power, but in God's *only*, to cast away wickedness' and this does a disservice to the role of human beings. For Augustine, salvation is through and through only the work of God, lest any human boast. But for Origen, human free will works concurrently with God's grace.

While Origen did believe infants were born guilty (of their own sin), he still held that humans retained the ability to do spiritual good apart from a superadded grace. He had 'an extreme case of an attitude common to all the eastern fathers: "no accountability without liberty."'[270] Thus, Origen would have denied the inheritance of Adam's guilt and the inability of humans to participate in the process of salvation apart from a superadded act of grace.

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[269] Origen, *De Principiis* 3.1.15, *ANF* 4:316.
[270] Weaver, 'From Paul to Augustine,' 196.

Athanasius

Athanasius (373- circa 297) is perhaps one of the greatest church fathers and most known for his defense of Trinitarianism against Arianism. He lived in the 4th century during a time of much controversy which resulted in numerous exiles. We shall look at two works which are primarily a defense of the Christian worldview but yet communicate some aspects of his view of human nature and the sinfulness of humanity. Gonzales explains, 'Whereas *Against the Heathen* shows how Christian monotheism is one of the pillars on which Athanasius builds his theology' and from which we will gather some information surrounding his view of the Fall and human nature, 'the second part of that work, usually called *On the Incarnation*, shows the other pillar upon which that theology is grounded: the doctrine of salvation.'[271] Like Origen's *De Principiis*, Athanasius's *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione* provide an early look at Christian theological method.

In *Contra Gentes* we see a persuasive attempt to have the heathen look to natural theology to see God, because humans have the capability to do so: 'as God himself is above all, is the road to Him afar off or outside ourselves, but it is in us, and it is possible to find it from ourselves.'[272] After quoting Psalm 19:1, Athanasius remarks that 'the proof of all this is not obscure, but is clear enough in all conscience to those the eyes of whose understanding are not wholly disabled.'[273] By this he does not mean spiritually wholly disabled, but physical disabled. The blind are unable to see the majesty and beauty of God's created order. Each man, having a soul, is able to 'lay aside the filth of all lust which they have put on, and wash it away persistently, until they have got rid of all the foreign matter that has affected their soul.'[274]

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[271] Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought*, vol. 1, 296.
[272] Athanasius, *Contra Gentes* §30.1, *NPNF2* 4:20.
[273] Athanasius, *Contra Gentes* §27.5, *NPNF2* 4:18.
[274]Athanasius, *Contra Gentes* §34.3, *NPNF2* 4:22.

Athanasius writes of the power of creation to serve as a pointer for the existence of God, who is the 'one Power which orders and administers' the creation.[275] Humans have the ability to look to cosmology[276] and human design[277] for the knowledge of God. If that were not good enough for some, 'For the people of the Jews of old had abundant teaching, in that they had knowledge of God not only *from the works of Creation*, but also from the divine Scriptures.'[278] For our purposes, one of Athanasius's most intriguing remarks provides evidence of his view on human inability: 'For left to themselves they could not subsist or ever be able to appear, on account of their mutual contrariety of nature.'[279] For Athanasius, inability is not to lack the ability to make a moral choice but rather to lack the ability to exist apart from divine grace; God's grace in sustaining the created order after the Fall is grounded not as a secondary grace given but as the primary grace.

> Seeing then all created nature, as far as its own laws were concerned, to be fleeting and subject to dissolution, lest it should come to this and lest the Universe should be broken up again into nothingness, for this cause He made all things by His own eternal Word, and gave substantive existence to Creation, and moreover did not leave it to be tossed in a tempest in the course of its own nature, lest it should run the risk of once more dropping out of existence; but, because He is good He guides and settles the whole Creation by His own Word, Who is Himself also God, that by the governance and providence and ordering action of the Word, Creation may have light, and be enabled to abide always securely.[280]

There is a continuity of creation between the prelapsarian state and postlapsarian state by the Word who governs, provides, and enables the creation to abide. If there is continuity, here, then the sustaining and enabling to abide is grounded in God's creative act, not a superadded grace.

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[275] Athanasius, *Contra Gentes* §36.3, *NPNF2* 4:23.

[276] Athanasius, *Contra Gentes* §45.1, *NPNF2* 4:28, 'For just by looking up to the heaven and seeing its order and the light of the starts, it is possible to infer the Word Who ordered these things….'

[277] Athanasius, *Contra Gentes* §45.2, *NPNF2* 4:28, 'And this one may see from our own experience; for if when a word proceeds from men we infer that the mind is its source, and, by thinking about the word, see with our reason the mind which it reveals, by far greater evidence and incomparable more, seeing the power of the Word….'

[278] Athanasius, *Contra Gentes* §45.4, *NPNF2* 4:28, emphasis mine.

[279] Athanasius, *Contra Gentes* §36.4, *NPNF2* 4:23.

[280] Athanasius, *Contra Gentes* §41.3 *NPNF2* 4:26.

In *De Incarnatione* we see Athanasius's argument for the necessity of the Incarnation and atoning work of Christ. As part of his overall argument, Athanasius presents a dismal outlook for humanity. God looked down upon humanity, saw 'the exceeding wickedness of men' in addition to 'how all men were under penalty of death,' and 'He took pity on our race, and had mercy on our infirmity, and condescended to our corruption, and, unable to bear that death should have the mastery … He takes unto Himself a body, and that of no different sort of ours.'[281] For Athanasius, the entrance of sin into the world presents drastic consequences for humanity. He explains, 'if there were merely a misdemeanour in question, and not a consequent corruption, repentance were well enough. But if, when transgression had once gained a start, men became involved in that corruption which was their nature, and were deprived of the grace which they had, being in the image of God, what further step was needed?'[282] Depravity was an acquired state, not the default position, for humans. Athanasius speaks of the human race as in the process of being corrupted, providing an opportunity for the salvation of the human race before the corruption was complete.[283] 'For this cause, then, death having gained upon men, and corruption abiding upon them, the race of man was perishing; the rational man made in God's image was disappearing, and the handiwork of God was in process of dissolution.'[284] Athanasius makes several remarks about the inability of man which present a downright negative picture of the affair.[285]

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[281] Athanasius, *De Incarnatione* §8.2 *NPNF2* 4:40.

[282] Athanasius, *De Incarnatione* §7.4 *NPNF2* 4:40.

[283] Athanasius, *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* §4,5.4, *NPNF2* 4:38, 'were being corrupted according to their devices,' 'even their natural corruption did not come near them.'

[284] Athanasius, *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* §6,.1 *NPNF2* 4:39.

[285] Athanasius, *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei* §11.3, *NPNF2* 4.42, 'But men once more in their perversity having set at nought, in spite of all this, the grace given to them, so wholly rejected God, and so darkened their soul, as not merely to forget their idea of God, but also to fashion for themselves one invention after another.'

De Incarnatione Verbi Dei §11.7, *NPNF2* 4:42, 'And in a word, everything was full of irreligion and lawlessness, and God alone, and His word, was unknown ….'

De Incarnatione Verbi Dei §12.6, *NPNF2* 4:43, 'God's goodness then and loving kindness being so great – men nevertheless, overcome by the pleasures of the moment and by illusions and deceits sent by

Yet given his other remarks from *Contra Gentes* about human ability, it would only be fair to conclude that, in context, his negative outlook of humanity in *De Incarnatione* are best viewed as general statements about the human race in contrast to the righteousness of God so as to call for the necessity of the Incarnation.[286] 'When man had once been made, and necessity demanded a cure, not for things that were not, but for things that had come to be, it was naturally consequent that the Physician and Savior should appear in what had come to be, in order also to cure the things that were.'[287] In accomplishing the work set out before him, 'the Lord touched all parts of creation, and freed and undeceived all of them from every illusion … that no one might be any possibility be any longer deceived, but everywhere might find the true Word of God.'[288]

In Athanasius we see that the Fall presented drastic, but not catastrophic, consequences for humanity. 'As in Irenaeus, the sin of Adam appears less as an appalling catastrophe than as an initial fault that unloosed, with all sorts of evils both physical and moral, the multitude of sins from which Christ redeemed us.'[289] 'Unlike Irenaeus, however, he holds that the protoplast was anything but a "babe," inasmuch as Adam is credited with intellectual, moral, and spiritual powers of the highest order.'[290] So as a result of the Fall, human nature has become corrupted and would have even been completely destroyed if not

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demons, did not raise their heads toward the truth, but loaded themselves the more with evils and sins, so as no longer to seem rational, but from their ways to be reckoned void of reason.'

[286] For example, in chapters 14 and 15 Athanasius provides two analogies to describe the human condition. In the first, humans are like a portrait which has been stained; unable to do anything about the stain, the portrait is wholly dependent upon the artist to outline and restore the portrait. In the second, humans are not unable to do anything about the stain, but are instead ignorant of the 'higher subjects.' 'For as a kind teacher who cares for His disciples, if some of them cannot profit by higher subjects, comes down to their level, and teaches them at any rate by simpler courses.' In this analogy, humans are like students who struggle to understand the harder issues. In the first, there is the inability to do anything about the stain whereas in the second, there is the ability to try to learn the higher subjects, but ultimately a failure, until the material is made more accessible to its audience. The human condition is in conflict between the analogies (if the analogies were pressed too far). But if the analogy were not pressed, then we see that Athanasius simply means to communicate in both analogies that humans have an inability to save themselves.

[287] Athanasius, *De Incarnatione* §44.2, *NPNF2* 4:60.

[288] Athanasius, *De Incarnatione* §45.5, *NPNF2* 4:61.

[289] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 88.

[290] Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 258.

for the work of the Savior. In his thinking, humans are under the penalty of sin, but by which he does not convey it is Adam's guilt for which they, individually and personally, are guilty.

> His occasional statements that 'we' sinned, or perished, in contexts bearing on the Fall of man, might seem *prima facie* to imply a belief in some kind of participation by Adam's posterity in the responsibility for his sin; but it is, I think, more natural to interpret such expressions merely as desultory symptoms of the subconscious influence of the 'Recapitulation'-theory in its vaguest and least rigorous form.[291]

Athanasius does not speak in descriptive terms of how human nature is passed on (transmission), but he certainly speaks of metaphysical changes in human nature which affect Adam's progeny. In spite of those adverse changes, humans have a role to play in the economy of salvation. Their role, however, is insufficient for salvation, which is why Athanasius argues for the necessity of the atonement and the offer of salvation, a gift from God.

The Cappadocian Fathers

Three bishops of the early church are known by their origin and friendship (two of them being brothers): Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa (Basil's brother), and Gregory of Nazianzus. 'The Cappadocian Fathers emphasized that Adam had sinned of his own freewill, though they are quick to insist that this freewill remained intact even after the Fall.'[292]

Basil does not have much to add to the topic concerning the doctrine of Original Sin, but he does, in multiple places, speak of regaining the benefits that were lost in the Garden: 'He who, to the best of his ability, copies within himself the tranquility of the divine nature attains to a likeness with the very soul of God; and … he also achieves in full

[291] Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 261-262.
[292] Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' 40.

a resemblance to the divine life and abides continually in unending blessedness.'[293] For Basil, who developed cenobetic monasticism, the ascetic lifestyle was crucial for recovering what was lost. Williams observes that Basil does make some 'clear and unmistakable affirmations of, or allusions to, the Adam Fall-doctrine in its most general sense, side by side with assertions of human free-will so vehement and unqualified as to seem logically incompatible with that doctrine.'[294] Thus, in Basil we see general references to the Fall but strong statements on free will.

The two Gregories, however, do provide their thoughts on the issues of inherited guilt and inability. McGrath writes, 'Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa both taught that infants are born without sin, an idea which stands in contrast with Augustine's doctrine of the universal sinfulness of fallen humanity.'[295]

Gregory of Nazianzus, like Clement before him, believed that the Fall occurred as a result of immaturity.[296] He believed that all of humankind was fallen, but 'avoids assigning "guilt" of Adam's sin to his children ….'[297] In his *Oration on Holy Baptism* he explains what some of the reasons might be for why someone would avoid baptism, one condition being 'on account of infancy,' which would imply that Gregory did not find it *necessary* for infants to be washed of the guilt of Adam.[298] Earlier in that oration he entreats, 'Have you an infant child? Do not let sin get any opportunity, but let him be sanctified from his childhood; from his very tenderest age let him be consecrated by the Spirit.'[299] What about infants who are close to death? Gregory appears to say something which could be mistaken for inherited guilt:

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[293] Basil, *An Ascetical Discourse*, *FOTC* 9:207.
[294] Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 264, cf. ftnt 1.
[295] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 442.
[296] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 171.
[297] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 171.
[298] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration on Holy Baptism* 40.23, *NPNF2* 7.367.
[299] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration on Holy Baptism* 40.17, *NPNF2* 7.365.

> Be it so, some will say, in the case of those who ask for Baptism; what have you to say about those who are still children, and conscious neither of the loss nor of the grace? Are we to baptize them too? Certainly, if any danger presses. For it is better that they should be unconsciously sanctified than that they should depart unsealed and uninitiated.[300]

Here he notes the importance of it being 'better' for a state of affairs (being upon death, to be sanctified) to occur than otherwise (being upon death and not sanctified). This does not necessarily mean that infants are born guilty, but that it is better to be washed of the fallen nature and to be sealed and initiated into the people of God. His supporting evidence is that of circumcision and placing blood on the doorposts, actions done on behalf of children before they are aware of the stakes. Any concern of ambiguity of Gregory's view on inherited guilt can be answered with his following assessment. 'I give my advice to wait till the end of the third year, or a little more or less, when they may be able to listen and to answer something about the Sacrament; ... at that time they begin to be responsible for their lives, when reason is matured …' then they 'be fortified by the Font.'[301] Thus, Gregory of Nazianzus finds good reason for thinking that children should wait to receive baptism because 'at that time they begin to be responsible for their lives.'

The writings of Gregory of Nyssa (c. 330 – 395) provide for us the fullest treatment on Original Sin from the Cappadocians (and possibly the entire Greek tradition). According to Gregory, God's purpose in creating humans was to share in His attributes. But the ground of rebellion became (and continues to be) free will. In *The Great Catechism*, he describes that evil is a privation of the good, and it comes forth from our wills. 'For as sight is an activity of nature, and blindness a deprivation of that natural operation, such is the kind of opposition between virtue and vice.'[302] This is what happens for all humans when they sin, for 'you will find that it is not God Who is the author of the present evils, seeing that *He has ordered your nature so as to be its own master and free*; but rather the

[300] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration on Holy Baptism* 40.28, *NPNF2* 7.370.
[301] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration on Holy Baptism* 40.28, *NPNF2* 7:370.
[302] Gregory of Nyssa, *The Great Catechism* 5, *NPNF2* 5:479.

recklessness that makes choice of the worse in preference to the better.'[303] For Gregory, it is man's free will, by which he means free to choose between the good and the bad, which is the defining feature to God's creating humans.

> For He who made man for the participation of His own peculiar good, and incorporated in him the instincts for all that was excellent, in order that his desire might be carried forward by a corresponding movement in each case to its like, would never have deprived him of that most excellent and precious of all goods; I mean the gift implied in being his own master, and having a free will. For if necessity in any way was the master of the life of man, the 'image' would have been falsified in that particular part, by being estranged owing to this unlikeness to its archetype.[304]

If humans were not free, then they would cease to be human (because they would not have the divine image). For Gregory, the Fall requires the work of the Creator who 'is the healer of our sinfulness'[305] who works out the evil from us.

The Fall is more closely associated with the body of flesh and earthiness more so than the intellect or divine image. Phan provides an extended block quote of Gregory from his eighth chapter of *The Great Catechism*, but notably leaves out the following segment which further details Gregory's contrast between the flesh and the intellect:

> For since *the senses have a close connection with what is gross and earthy*, while the intellect is in its nature of a nobler and more exalted character than the movements involved in sensation, it follows that as, *through the estimate which is made by the senses, there is an erroneous judgment as to what is morally good*, and this error has wrought the effect of substantiating a contrary condition, that part of us which has thus been made useless is dissolved by its reception of this contrary.[306]

The erroneous judgments made by humans occur, not so much by the intellect, but made by the senses, which for Gregory has associated with the body. And yet the senses are not our master (in the meaning of necessity).

> Thus there is in us the principle of all excellence, all virtue and wisdom, and every higher thing that we conceive: but pre-eminent among all is the fact that we are free from necessity, and not in bondage to any natural power, but have decision in our own power as we please; for virtue is a voluntary thing, subject to no dominion: that which is the result of compulsion and force cannot be virtue.[307]

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[303] Gregory of Nyssa, *The Great Catechism* 5, *NPNF2* 5:480, emphasis mine.
[304] Gregory of Nyssa, *The Great Catechism* 5, *NPNF2* 5:479.
[305] Gregory of Nyssa, *The Great Catechism* 8, *NPNF2* 5:481.
[306] Gregory of Nyssa, *The Great Catechism* 8, *NPNF2* 5:481
[307] Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man*, 16.11, *NPNF2* 5:405.

For Gregory, humans are not *non posse non peccare*, but rather retain the ability to make free will choices without dependence upon superadded grace or under compulsion.

Moving along, Gregory's view on Original Sin is vividly presented in his treatise, *On Infants Who Die Prematurely*. Therein, Gregory describes the effect of the Fall as a 'disease,' which 'the cure, then, of this infirmity is, again to be made friends with God, and so to be in life once more.'[308]

Gregory clearly denies the inheritance of Adam's guilt when he remarks, 'Certainly, in comparison with one who has lived all his life in sin, not only the innocent babe but even one who has never come into the world at all will be blessed.'[309] The infant is seen as 'innocent' and even the unborn infant 'will be blessed.' In comparing the righteous man who 'surrenders himself most diligently to the process of being cured, and undergoes all that Medicine can apply to him' and the wicked man who 'indulges without restraint in baths and wine-drinking, and listens to no advice whatever of his doctor as to the healing of his eyes,'[310] Gregory explains on what basis of justice infants might be judged: 'the innocent babe has no such plague [of ignorance] before its soul's eyes obscuring its measure of life and so it continues to exist in that [truly, good] natural life; … it never admitted the plague into its soul at all.'[311] Infants are not guilty, because they have not been morally corrupted. In his closing thought he notes that 'The premature deaths of infants have nothing in them to suggest the thought that one who so terminates his life is subject to some grievous misfortune,' but rather, 'the more far-seeing Providence of God curtails the immensity of sins in the case of those whose lives are going to be so evil.'[312]

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[308] Gregory of Nyssa, *On Infants' Early Death*, *NPNF2* 5:376.
[309] Gregory of Nyssa, *On Infants' Early Death*, *NPNF2* 5:378.
[310] Gregory of Nyssa, *On Infants' Early Death*, *NPNF2* 5:376.
[311] Gregory of Nyssa, *On Infants' Early Death*, *NPNF2* 5:377.
[312] Gregory of Nyssa, *On Infants' Early Death*, *NPNF2* 5:381.

The case of unborn infants is especially interesting for our project because of the concern that the Gallic monks had over the eternal resting place of them. Having the question posed to him, Gregory recounts it this way: 'If the recompense of blessedness is assigned according to the principles of justice, in what class shall he be placed who has died in infancy without having laid in this life any foundation, good or bad, whereby any return according to his deserts may be given him?'[313] Gregory's solution to this concern is neither that infants inherit the guilt of Adam's sin, nor that they simply inherit the consequences of Adam's sin. Instead, Gregory's answer is that God's foreknowledge detected the infants would have lived wicked lives and so he spared them from doing so by having them live in this world in which they would pass away.

> It is a sign of the perfection of God's providence, that He not only heals maladies that have come into existence, but also provides that some should be never mixed up at all in the things which He has forbidden; it is reasonable, that is, to expect that He Who knows the future equally with the past should check the advance of an infant to complete maturity, in order that the evil may not be developed which His foreknowledge has detected in his future life, and in order that a lifetime granted to one whose evil dispositions will be a lifelong may not become the actual material for his vice.[314]

> This is that achievement of a perfect Providence which I spoke of; namely, not only to heal evils that have been committed, but also to forestall them before they have been committed; and this, we suspect, is the cause of the deaths of new-born infants.[315]

Here Gregory also speaks on behalf of other people ('we suspect'), indicating that his position is not unique nor original. However, who he has in mind that he speaks on behalf of we know not.

In summary, Gregory of Nyssa emphasizes the consequences of the Fall as being like a disease from which we need healing. It does not make infants guilty and it does not cause human nature to be so corrupted that it requires superadded grace in order to perform an objectively good act.

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[313] Gregory of Nyssa, *On Infants' Early Death*, *NPNF2* 5:376.
[314] Gregory of Nyssa, *On Infants' Early Death*, *NPNF2* 5:378.
[315] Gregory of Nyssa, *On Infants' Early Death*, *NPNF2* 5:379.

With regard to Origenism, both Gregorys reject the pre-existence of the soul and Basil and Gregory of Nyssa interpreted Genesis 3 allegorically, seeing Adam as an archetype rather than a historical figure. Other than that, 'They are agreed that Adam's sin resulted in death, and that redemption is the rescue from the effects this [sic] sin. But they never define the mode of solidarity with Adam nor the nature of the sin which was transmitted.'[316] Our further analysis here suggests that if we might draw some conclusions from the Cappodocians, they had a stronger emphasis on the Fall as an infirmity than a legal ruling, one which did not carry guilt associated with the condition, and that the condition was not so debilitating that humans could no longer make a genuinely free, good choice apart from superadded grace.

Antiochene School

The next grouping we shall consider, and possibly most importantly, is the Antiochene School, which Toews notes, 'took a more Semitic and Hebraic approach to biblical interpretation than the more Hellenistic approaches of the Alexandrian school of Clement and Origen.'[317] Specifically we will look at the thought of John Chrysostom (ca. 350-407) and Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428). The reasons why this group is possibly most important of all the Greek fathers we have considered is as follows. First, with regard to volume, Chrysostom comes closest to rivaling Augustine in writing. Philip Schaff notes, 'The memory of St. Chrysostom and St. Augustin can never die. They left their mark on every page of Church history, and their teaching and example will continue to prepare preachers and divines for their work.'[318] Schaff considered Chrysostom to be 'the greatest of

[316] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 59.
[317] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 59.
[318] Philip Schaff, *Saint Chrysostom and Saint Augustine: Studies in Christian Biography* (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1891), v.

the Greek.'[319] It also happens to be the case that Cassian spent time with Chrysostom before heading westward, being the only one of the three monks we shall later review to provide a historical trail from the East. Second, Theodore's work *Against the Defenders of Original Sin* is the only Greek work written in response to the Pelagian controversy. Because of the precise nature of the writing, Theodore plays a more important role than any other Greek Father because 'these "Western" questions, or a certain tentative answer to them were inherent in the systematical structure of his soteriology, so strangely unequaled in Eastern patristic theology.'[320] He was the one who 'alone seems to have taken a lively interest in these [Western] controversies.'[321] First we begin with John Chrysostom.

John Chrysostom

John Chrysostom was the presbyter at Antioch for twelve years, where he garnered the nickname "Golden Mouth" for his eloquent preaching. He built a strong following because his teaching was straightforward and applicable for larger audiences (in contrast to more allegorical interpretations of the Bible). Chrysostom proves to be a relevant source for our project for at least three reasons. First, his corpus of works is second only to Augustine and 'Among the Greek Fathers none has left so extensive a literary legacy as Chrysostom, which, fortunately is well preserved.'[322] Second, he lived contemporaneous to Augustine, providing not just another perspective of a bishop but of an archbishop. Third, Chrysostom had ordained John Cassian to the diaconate, so we have a direct relationship of Cassian to a well-known Church Father. Like the Greek fathers before him, Chrysostom rejected both propositions that infants inherit the actual guilt of Adam and that they are powerless to choose the good *sans* superadded grace.

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[319] Schaff, *Saint Chrysostom and Saint Augustine*, v.
[320] Kavvadas, 'An Eastern View,' 275.
[321] Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, 712.
[322] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 195.

In Homily 10, in addressing Romans 5:19, he described his position that a person is not considered a sinner until they transgress the law:

> For the fact that when he had sinned and become mortal, those who were of him should be so also, is nothing unlikely. But how would it follow that from his disobedience another would become sinner? For at this rate a person of this sort will not even deserve punishment, if, that is, it was not from his own self that he became a sinner.[323]

Being a sinner is not a default position for Chrysostom, but a status acquired by one's self. 'His conclusion is that the word *sinners* gives us to understand that as a consequences of Adam's sin we are inclined to sin and are made mortal.'[324] When children die, their souls do not go to Hell 'for neither are they wicked.'[325] Chrysostom thought it wrong to 'blame somebody else and impute the guilt to others, but attribute it all to his own negligence.'[326]

Scholars have drawn general observations regarding the Eastern tradition and Western tradition on Original Sin. For example, many state that Augustine's view is more legalistic than the East. However, from time to time, just as we have seen in Augustine references to the sickness of a disease that is contracted, so too we may see legal language in the East. Chrysostom explains, 'For it was Adam who began contracting the *debt*; and we, on our part, have increased the *charges* with our subsequent sins. And the *debt* brought forth malediction, sin, death, and condemnation by the law.'[327] In spite of the legal language, Chrysostom (contra Augustine) still sees a doctrine of the Fall as having minimal effect upon human nature. For instance, he believed that all humans inherited mortality, as is evident by his reading of Romans 5:12.[328]

What the Fall did not affect completely was man's ability to choose the good. In Homily 45, Chrysostom engages with Matthew 13:10-11 wherein Jesus says 'To you it has

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[323] Chrysostom, 'Homily 10,' *Homilies on Romans*, *NPNF1* 11:403.
[324] Rondet, *Original Sin*, 107.
[325] Chrysostom, 'Homily 28,' *Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, *NPNF1* 10:192.
[326] Chrysostom, 'Homily 23,' *Homiilies on Genesis*, in *FOTC* 82:100.
[327] Chrysostom, *Baptismal Instructions* 3.21, *ACW* 21, trans. Paul W. Harkins (New York: Newman Press, 1963), 63, emphases mine.
[328] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 60.

been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.' Chrysostom argues that

> It by no means follows, however, because it is a gift, that therefore free will is taken away; and this is evident from what comes after. To this purpose, in order that neither the one sort may despair, nor the other grow careless, upon being told that 'it is given,' He signifies the beginning to be with ourselves.[329]

Here Chrysostom thinks that verse twelve[330] indicates the initiative role free will plays. Furthermore, when Jesus speaks of their blindness in verse thirteen, Chrysostom understands this as voluntary, not natural, blindness. 'Chrysostom can even preach that man's effort has to take the initiative, so that grace is in some measure a response of God to man.'[331] The idea of the human taking the initiative and God's grace responding to that choice features in Cassian's *Conlatio* 13 and serves as a point of contention for some. We shall later more fully explore Chrysostom's (and Cassian's) thought on the relationship between grace and free will. Suffice it for the time being, as described in *Nine Homilies on Genesis*, Chrysostom writes of the cooperation that grace has with free will.[332] For Chrysostom 'Because our being rendered virtuous, and believing, and coming nigh unto Him, even this again was the work of Him that called us Himself, and yet, notwithstanding, it is ours also.'[333] Free will and grace are not in conflict (contra Augustine). Instead, grace 'enlightens the free will.'[334]

We have shown here how Chrysostom's view of Original Sin did not include the notions of inherited guilt or inability. Nevertheless, we sometimes still find that scholars view Greek Patristics through the lens of Augustine.[335] Phan (in describing Chrysostom)

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[329] Chrysostom, 'Homily 45,' in *Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew*, *NPNF1* 10:284.

[330] Matthew 13:12, 'For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.'

[331] Fisher, 'Salvation, Sin and Grace,' 156. Cf. Chrysostom, 'Homily 11' in *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles*, *NPNF1* 11:70-75.; 'Homily 45' in *Homilies on the Gospel of St. Matthew*, *NPNF1* 10:284-287.

[332] Chrysostom, *Nine Homilies on Genesis*, *FOTC* 82.25:7; *FOTC* 87.58:5.

[333] Chrysostom, 'Homily 1,' in *Homilies on Ephesians*, *NPNF1* 13:52.

[334] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 207.

[335] Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' 43, 'Far less defensible is the usual Greek interpretation' of Romans 5:12; Tennant, in critiquing Chrysostom: 'In his exegesis of Rom. v. 12ff., he

remarks, 'In brief, then, though *falling short of Augustinianism*, there was here an **outline of a doctrine of original sin** which would be *elaborated in greater detail by Augustine*, especially in his struggle against Pelagius and his disciples.'[336] The claims herein are misguided for two reasons. First, why ought we to evaluate a contemporary of Augustine's on Augustine's position? Second, Augustine did not 'elaborate in greater detail' Chrysostom's own position because Augustine's position was not informed by Chrysostom's view, but instead arose from the Latin tradition. Here we shall explore two relevant examples detailing Chrysostom's own position and Augustine's failure to accurately elaborate on it.

First, during the final skirmishes of the Pelagian controversy, Julian of Eclanum used a passage from Chrysostom[337] to argue that Chrysostom did not believe in Original Sin. Augustine *responded* by writing, 'He said that infants do not have sins—he meant sins of their own. … Therefore, John, comparing them to adults whose personal sins are forgiven in baptism, said they do not have sins.'[338] Phan observes that Augustine's 'retort is ingenious' but off the mark.[339] This is because Chrysostom lays out ten benefits of baptism and leaves one of those benefits absent when discussing baptism for infants: being freed from the shame of sin. Phan deduces, 'Chrysostom deliberately omitted the first benefit, namely the deliverance from sins (*eleutheroi*), precisely because they are free from all sins.'[340]

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appears to be evidently out of harmony with the thought of the apostle upon whose words he is commenting; and his interpretation of them is sometimes arbitrary and otherwise unsatisfactory.'

[336] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 203, emphases mine.

[337] John Chrysostom, *Baptismal Instructions* 3.6, *ACW* 31.57 'It is for this reason that we baptize even little children, even though they have no sins …'

[338] Augustine, *Contra Julian* 1.6.22, *AP3 WSA* 1.24.282.

[339] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 202.

[340] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 202.

Second, we perhaps find ourselves with another translation problem.[341] According to Augustine, Chrysostom wrote, 'It is clear that it is not the sin which comes from the transgression of the law, but that sin which comes from the disobedience of Adam, which has **defiled** all.'[342] The Latin word here used for 'defiled' was *contaminavit*. However, λοιμενομένη in the Greek is better translated as 'plague' or 'pestilence,' [343] an indicator toward a more contagion-like model of Original Sin present in the Greek than the Latin, which would not necessarily have had that same implication.

Given these two examples alone, we can conclude that the later Augustine did not elaborate on Chrysostom's view but failed to accurately understand it.

> It is clear that Augustine read these same texts, but completely ignored the passages which explicated clearly the position of Chrysostom on the issue, probably because he was already convinced of the correctness of his own belief and his main concern was to combat Julian rather than present the true belief of St. John Chrysostom.[344]

The simple fact is that Augustine did not elaborate on Chrysostom's doctrine of Original Sin, because the two held to different views. 'Chrysostom was in many respects the hermeneutical counter to Augustine's interpretation of Paul,' and we ought to interpret him as such, instead of placing him subordinate to Augustine's view.[345]

Theodore of Mopsuestia

Theodore was also a contemporary of Augustine's. He was born in Antioch in 350 and lived to 428. He held the bishopric of Mopsuestia from 392 until his death. As it pertains to our study, we will not consider Theodore's writings against the Origenists,

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[341] Fr. Panayiotis Papageorgiou, 'Chrysostom and Augustine on the Sin of Adam and its Consequences,' presented at the Eleventh International Conference on Patristic Studies, Oxford 1991. Later published in *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 4, 1995.

[342] Augustine, *Contra Julian*, 1.6.27 in FOTC 35.32.

[343] Papageorgiou, 'Chrysostom and Augustine on the Sin of Adam and its Consequences,' 14, 'A Greek word for defile, however, would have been μολύνω - (perf. Tense pass. μεμόλυσμαι), μιαίνω - (perf. tense pass. μεμίασμαι), or κηλιδόω.

[344] Papageorgiou, 'Chrysostom and Augustine on the Sin of Adam and its Consequences,' 17.

[345] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 59. See footnote 52.

Arians, or numerous other works against those who were deemed heretics. Instead, we shall look at one of the few (if not only) Greek works against the Latin view of Original Sin. Arguing in *Against the Defenders of Original Sin*, Theodore defends the position that a corrupt nature could be inherited, but that sin itself could not.[346]

Against the Defenders of Original Sin has been lost but survives in the form of excerpts preserved in Latin and Syriac, and in the form of a summary in Photius's *Bibliotheca*. The work targets Jerome's anti-Pelagianism. Photius notes five criticisms of Theodore against Jerome.[347]

1. Adam's immortal nature had been rendered evil and mortal such that sin is ascribed to the human nature and not human choice.
2. Newborn infants have sin.
3. No human being could achieve righteousness.
4. Jesus assumed a human nature disparaged by sin.
5. Sexual desire, marriage, and procreation are now ascribed to the Fall.

Photius is pleased with Theodore's remarks, especially given Theodore's equal condemnation of Pelagianism. However, Photius was displeased with the 'precursor of Nestorianism' and the appearance of the Origenist position on temporary Hell.[348]

The Latin excerpts of Theodore's work come from the translation by Marius Mercator. Four fragments survive: one from the fourth book and three from the third book.[349] Theodore wrote five books, according to Photius. The first and third fragments corroborate Photius's description of the first objection, Theodore's criticizing the immortal view of Adam's nature. The second fragment tells us of Theodore's criticizing the belief that God punishes all humans with death because of Adam's sin. Theodore cites Ezekiel 18:2-4 (no inheriting of generational guilt) and Romans 2:6 (individual responsibility) in his defense. Theodore encountered a view not uncommon in today's debate: the

[346] Pelikan, *CT1*, 285-286.
[347] Photoius, cod. 177, 122a5-40 (II:177-179); Kavvadas, 'An Eastern View,' 275.
[348] Kavvadas, 'An Eastern View,' 276.
[349] The fourth fragment contains two arguments against the eternity of hell, and therefore is not pertinent to this study.

transmission of punishment entails the transmission of guilt. To this he replied that since Christ

> possesses a complete human nature, if human nature were sinful then even He would not be free from sin. According to Theodore, the fact that the Savior was really free from sin, but experienced death, clearly demonstrates, firstly, that mortality belongs to human nature while sinfulness does not, and secondly, that mortality is not a punishment for sin, since in that case one should draw from Christ's death the conclusion that He was guilty of sin.[350]

The Syriac excerpt of Theodore comes from Isaac of Nineveh. Isaac notes that the passage is 'against those who say that sin is present by nature.'[351]

What shall we make of Theodore's view on Original Sin? Kavvadas correctly points out that any understanding of the issue of causation of sin must consider that Theodore affirmed both the causal nature of the free will and Adam's mortality. Therefore, death cannot be the cause of sin, as some have defended.[352] The difficulty with Theodore is that a number of his beliefs are original and stand out not only from the Western camps of Augustine, Pelagius, and the Gallians, but from Eastern church fathers as well. F. R. Tennant believed 'that he stands out in a somewhat isolated position in that he repudiates the practically universal belief that Adam's transgression was the cause of mortality to all mankind.'[353] This would cause concern that Theodore was in cahoots with the Pelagians,[354] a position he has often been accused of affirming.

Upon further examination, however, that conclusion is misguided for at least three reasons. First, we have reason from Marius Mercator to believe that Theodore associated himself with the condemnation of Pelagianism at the Synod of Cilicia (423 A.D.). Second, Theodore agreed with Chrysostom and the other Greek fathers that Adam's sin brought

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[350] Kavvadas, 'An Eastern View,' 278-279.
[351] Isaac in Kavvadas, 'An Eastern View,' 280.
[352] Kavvadas, 'An Eastern View,' 286-287.
[353] F. R. Tennant, *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 327
[354] Julian of Ecalunam had apparently stayed with Theodore for a period of time.

about mortality and a propensity to sin.[355] Third, Theodore was never accused of Pelagianism during his lifetime; instead he was revered as a bishop of the church. The idea that a Patristic Father who held views different from Augustine could be perceived, in retrospect, as a Pelagian ought not surprise the reader. This false dichotomy was placed upon the Gallic monks by Prosper of Aquitaine and also finds itself in Augustinian-sympathetic scholars (as we have previously shown and will contend further on). J. N. D. Kelly nicely remarks, 'Tradition has branded [Theodore] as an Eastern Pelagius, the author of a treatise denying the reality of original sin; but there are few, if any, traces of the alleged Pelagianizing strain in his authentic works, unless the Eastern attitude generally is to be dismissed as Pelagian.'[356]

What we can conclude about Theodore and Original Sin is that he is in line with the Eastern tradition. It is clear that he denied that infants inherit the guilt of Adam. On Romans 5:12, Theodore interpreted *eph ho* as 'because of' and not 'in whom.'[357] Theodore also rejected that baptism removed the inherited effects of Adam's sin.[358] We may also conclude that Theodore rejected man's inability to participate in salvation (apart from a superadded act of grace). By way of a parable, Theodore utilizes a farming parable as an analogy of free will in *In Ep ad Gal.*[359] Such a parable will later be used by Cassian to describe his view of free will.

Ancillaries

[355] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 60, 'agreed with Chrysostom that as a result of Adam's transgression, death passed to all human kind. Adam's sin resulted in a powerful bias (*hrope*) towards sin, but actual sins were not inevitable.'; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 373, 'Actually he seems to have shared the widespread view that, as a result of Adam's rebellion, death and sin passed to all mankind.'

[356] Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 373.

[357] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 60.

[358] Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 373.

[359] Theodore, *In Ep ad Gal* 5:23-24, *Theodori Epidscopi Mopsuesteni: In Epistolas B. Pauli Commentarii*, *vol. 1, Introduction: Galatians-Colossians*, ed. H. B. Swete (Cambridge: Cambrdige University Press 1880), 101.

Methodius of Olympus

Methodius (260-311) criticized Origenism with respect to the allegorical interpretation of Genesis 3 and the notion of the pre-existence of the souls. However, he still agreed with Origen and others that Adam was an immature man. Toews notes that Methodius 'was strongly committed to human free will.' It is noteworthy that Methodius appears to be the first Christian author to refer to the first sin as a 'corruption' (*thphora*) and perhaps more importantly, the 'Fall.' 'The new word had enormous consequences; it implied an exalted condition before Adam disobeyed God, an implication which the biblical and early patristic word "transgression" (*parabasis*) did not have.'[360]

Cyril of Jerusalem

Cyril (315-386) thought that children were sinless at birth but had a propensity to sin. He had a robust sense of free will. 'There is no hint of the idea of original guilt in his writings.'[361] For him, baptism is not about the remission of inherited sins. '…[H]is references to the "remission of sins" imparted in baptism make it clear that he is thinking only of actual personal sins and of adult baptism, and that the idea of "original guilt" is completely absent from his mind.'[362]

Cyril of Alexandria

Cyril (ca. 375 - d. 444) was a contemporary of Augustine's and played a critical role in Christological debates. He believed 'that Adam did not lose' rationality and freedom, 'that is, he still remained "capable of understanding and knowledge" and of self-determination.'[363] But the Fall did affect the ability for humans to make moral judgments

[360] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 58.
[361] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 58.
[362] Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 263.
[363] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 149.

clearly, and it took away his holiness, sonship, and glory. This error had devastating consequences for Adam's progeny:

> But since he produced children after falling into this state we, his descendants, are corruptible, coming from a corruptible source. Thus it is that we are heirs of Adam's curse; for surely we have not been visited with punishment *as though we disobeyed with him* the divine command which he received, but because … become mortal he transmitted the curse to the seed he fathered. We are mortal because we come from a mortal source.[364]

For Cyril, all humans inherit the consequences of Adam's actions but not his guilt. The hint of solidarity with Adam must be understood as analogical because he writes 'as though' we were with Adam, indicative that Cyril did not think we were *actually* with Adam.

Cyril speaks of the Fall in terms of a disease. In his commentary on Romans 5 he wrote,

> Human nature has, therefore, contracted the malady of sin through the disobedience of one man, Adam. It is in this way that the many have been made sinners—not as though they had transgressed with Adam (for they did not yet exist), but because they are of his nature, the nature that fell beneath the law of sin….[365]

Here in his commentary, Cyril 'states quite explicitly that we did not actually sin in Adam.'[366] Cyril's anthropology had been, and remains to be, ignored in the West along with other contemporaries of Augustine because 'Augustine's doctrine of grace monopolized' the attention.[367]

The Greek Fathers Distinguished on Original Sin

Allow us to conclude this survey of the Eastern tradition by noting the two important distinctive features of the Greek fathers on Original Sin. Toews writes, 'Their understandings of Genesis 3 and of Adam's sin are quite similar and in many respects quite different from what we will find in the Latin-speaking western churches.'[368] They are, at the

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[364] Cyril of Alexandria, *Doctrinal Questions and Answers* 6, in Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition*, 150, cf. ftnt 26, emphasis mine.
[365] Cyril of Alexandria, *In Romans*, 5:18
[366] Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' 46.
[367] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 152.
[368] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 60.

very least, similar insofar as they agree that Adam's sin has affected humanity, that all humans are now mortal, and that all humans suffer from a propensity to sin. Where the two traditions may be said to differ is regarding the inheritance of Adam's *actual* guilt (even that is suspect after analyzing the Latin tradition) and the inheritance of a human nature that is unable to do anything toward her own salvation apart from a superadded act of grace.

The Greek fathers consistently rejected the inheritance of guilt. Alister McGrath writes, 'The idea of transmitted *guilt*, a central feature of Augustine's later doctrine of original sin, is totally absent from the Greek patristic tradition.'[369] As previously shown, the Greek patristic tradition exemplified in Chrysostom and Theodore, *contemporaneous to Augustine*, affirmed the innocence and sinlessness of infants. David Weaver, writing on the meaning of Romans 5:12, observes,

> Whatever their opinion on the grammatical question, the Greek writers without exception understood this inheritance to be an inheritance of mortality and corruption only, without an inheritance of guilt—which for them could only result from a freely committed personal act.[370]

This same conclusion is reached by Fisher, who remarks,

> The idea of an inheritance of actual guilt is expressly repudiated through the assertion that infants are born free from sin. … All men are involved in these consequences, which include moral infirmity and bias towards sin, and the progressive disintegration of making, individually and socially.[371]

Finally, Bray states, 'the Fathers were almost unanimous in repudiating what would later become the Augustinian position. In their minds, guilt could only be attached to actual sins, and almost all of them rejected the idea that newly-born babies were guilty in this sense.'[372] Thus, from our survey we may conclude that for the Eastern tradition, not only is there

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[369] McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 442, emphasis his.
[370] Weaver, 'From Paul to Augustine,'188.
[371] Fisher, 'Salvation, Sin and Grace,' 157.
[372] Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' 43. Bray's remark does not need to be seen in conflict with McGrath's observation that inherited guilt is 'totally absent' in the Greek patristics. We may conceive that Bray means the collective remarks about human nature serve as a defeater for Augustine's view of inherited guilt, such that the Greek patristics would have rejected it if they had been writing directly against it.

scant evidence which would support the idea of inheriting Adam's guilt (and even less evidence for the claim that we inherit the *actual* guilt of Adam), but also there is a host of evidence contrary to that position.

The Greek fathers consistently rejected the notion of inability, that humans are unable to accept the gift of salvation without superadded grace correcting their will. They believed that humans retained the God-given free will from his creative act to accept, in conjunction with God's grace, the gift of salvation. 'According to the tradition and teaching of the Eastern Orthodox Church, grace and human freedom are expressed concurrently and may not be understood the one without the other. They are not two separate moments.'[373] Unlike Augustine, who believed that a free will act must occur logically second to divine grace's initial prompting, the Greek church fathers did not accept the dichotomy but believed in a concurrent model. This understanding allowed them to retain their belief that 'Freewill, as a property of the soul, was *universally* regarded by the Fathers as necessary, both to protect the responsible agency of fallen man and to ensure that his salvation did not involve a denial of his humanity.'[374]

There are other aspects to the Greek tradition worth noting. However, we might consider that these other aspects were tendencies or in some cases widely believed, but which did not receive the practically universal support as the two main distinctive features. For example, there was a tradition of interpreting Genesis 3 in a non-historical or non-literal way.[375] Instead, they viewed the story of Adam, Eve, the serpent, and the Fall as allegorical (in some cases, more specifically, archetypal). Additionally, there is a tradition that viewed Adam and Eve as immature, childish beings who were being matured but fell short and were deprived from the benefits of the Garden.

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[373] Daniel B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 190.

[374] Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' 42, emphasis mine.

[375] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 61.

Today, contemporary Orthodox theologians try to differentiate their view of the Fall against the western notion by calling their doctrine "Ancestral Sin" (contra "Original Sin").[376] Louth describes it as this:

> What is being affirmed is that something of the sinful condition in which we find ourselves is inherited from our forefathers and foremothers, who are in some way represented by Adam and Eve. It is not claimed that we are *responsible* for **ancestral sin**, simply that we are affected by it.[377]

Attempts to understand this tradition, which is not as systematic or intentional about parsing out distinctions as the West, has led to some misconstrued proposals. For example, Toews believes that the Greek fathers viewed the Fall as 'a deprivation or loss (*deprivatio*) rather than a fundamental corruption or deformity of human nature (*depravatio*).'[378] Additionally, he believes they had 'the interpretation of the transmission of sin as social heredity—children being born outside of Paradise and being influenced by the example and instruction of their parents—rather than by biological heredity.'[379] While each of these descriptions has some truth to it (deprivation language, example language), it ultimately misses the mark as we will next prove. After all, if the Greek Fathers had believed that there were no corruption of human nature or a biological heredity, then they could easily be categorized as Pelagians. It was previously noted that some have believed Theodore to have been a Pelagian, and yet Kelly rightly notes that the evidence does not lend to that conclusion.[380]

There were six charges against Pelagius and his friend Caelestius at Carthage:

> (1) Adam was created mortal, and would have died whether he had sinned or not sinned; (2) that Adam's sin injured only himself and not the human race; (3) that the law no less than the gospel leads us to the kingdom; (4) that there were sinless men previous to the coming of Christ; (5) that new-born infants are in the same condition as Adam was before the fall; (6) that the whole human race does not, on the one hand, die through Adam's death

[376] John S. Romanides, *The Ancestral Sin*, trans. George S. Gabriel (Zephyr Publishing, 2002).
[377] Louth, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology*, 78, bold emphasis mine.
[378] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 61.
[379] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 61.
[380] Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 373.

> or transgression, nor, on the other hand, does the whole human race rise again through the resurrection of Christ.[381]

These six ideas were not ideas that came into existence from Pelagius's own mind, or even a vacuous reading of the Bible. Both Pelagius and Caelestius were known for holding to orthodox teaching concerning the Trinity and the person of Christ. In fact, Pelagius wrote a treatise titled *On the Faith of the Trinity*. Therefore, 'if the touchstone of orthodoxy was adherence to the true faith concerning the Trinity and the person of Christ, it was incorrect to call this doctrine of sin and grace a "heresy."'[382] Still, on May 1, 418 the Council of Carthage condemned Pelagianism.[383]

> The official condemnation of Pelagianism did not imply an unconditional endorsement of Augustinianism, which had in many ways gone beyond even the Western theological tradition (not to mention the Eastern tradition) by positing a doctrine of predestination, including predestination to damnation, and of the irresistibility of grace.[384]

However, it did affirm the sinfulness of human nature from birth.[385] Pelikan notices, 'Much of this [Pelagius's beliefs] could claim support from the tradition as well as from contemporary Eastern theologians.'[386] Consider that some of the early Church Fathers wrote of our sinning as imitating Adam's sin. When Pelagius wrote of our imitating Adam, he believed he understood it in the same way as the early Church Fathers used it. Weaver explains,

> … what is the common opinion of the Eastern Fathers, namely, that although mankind may inherit death and corruption from Adam by way of generation, they participate in his sin only insofar as they 'imitate' his sin; not in the sense that they consciously look to the figure of Adam as an exemplar, and then repeat his actions, but simply insofar as they repeat his act of disobedience.[387]

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[381] Augustine, *De Gestis Pelagii* 23, *NPNF1* 5:193, numbers included are mine.
[382] Pelikan, *CT1*, 316.
[383] The Council also cited the Latin mistranslation of Romans 5:12 (Wiley, *Original Sin*, 72).
[384] Pelikan, *CT1*, 318.
[385] Wiley, *Original Sin*, 72.
[386] Pelikan, *CT1*, 316.
[387] David Weaver, 'The Exegesis of Romans 5:12 among the Greek Fathers and its Implications for the Doctrine of Original Sin: The 5th-12th Centuries (Part 2),' *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, vol. 29 (1985), 138.

So while the East did believe that humans inherit some consequences of Adam's sin, they did not consider the contracting of *sin itself* to be one of those consequences. In the East, 'Pelagius had made almost no impact, and the arguments of Augustine were simply not understood or discussed.'[388] So, what makes Pelagianism distinct from the Eastern view?

One of the key distinctions between Pelagius and the Church Fathers is that he believed there were no directly inherited consequences from the Fall; all humans are born just as Adam was created. The Greek fathers certainly said differently. 'All were agreed that sin entered the human race because of the transgression of Adam.'[389] They thought, at the very least, Adam had passed on a corrupted human nature and mortality. 'To a quite remarkable extent, the Greek Fathers carried on in their time-honoured fashion, emphasizing above all else the universal mortality which has spread as the result of Adam's sin, but steering clear of any imputation of his guilt.'[390] The corruption of human nature, the inheritance of mortality, and the propensity to sin were features the Greek tradition held in common with the West on Original Sin. But yet,

> No theologian prior to Augustine had addressed these issues in such stark terms: most shied away from a strictly literalistic reading of the Paradise story, few spoke in terms compatible with the idea of an 'original guilt,' and none saw the fall as entailing a fundamental abrogation of human freedom to avoid sin.[391]

The church fathers did not go so far as to argue 'that men were inherently incapable of directing their wills to the fulfillment of God's demands.'[392] Performing an objectively good action was, first, done in cooperation with divine grace,[393] and second, still insufficient on its own to merit salvation.[394] Therefore, we can see that the Eastern tradition

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[388] Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' 46.
[389] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 60.
[390] Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' 46.
[391] McFarland, *In Adam's Fall*, 33.
[392] Fisher, 'Salvation, Sin and Grace,' 156.
[393] Fisher, 'Salvation, Sin and Grace,' 156-157.
[394] Fisher, 'Salvation, Sin and Grace,' 165, 'in commenting on Paul many theologians taught that we are justified "by faith alone." The actual phrase occurs in Basil, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and others, including (surprisingly, at first sight) Pelagius himself.'

on Original Sin is distinct from Pelagianism and the Western tradition. 'It is only when we come to the Latin writers of the fourth-century that we meet with a theory of Adam's fall which we can recognize as typical of the later Western tradition.'[395]

The discussion on nature and grace was far from over after the Pelagian controversy. There remained some who were insistent that the will of man was free, in conjunction with God's divine grace. Predestination was a tricky issue for patristic authors, but 'patristic commentators, such as Origen and Chrysostom in particular, sought to explain in terms which would not impugn the freedom of the human will to take the initiative in repentance and faith.'[396] Augustine recognized that there were some non-Pelagians who disagreed with him. Pelikan notes, 'They were admirers and followers of Augustinian teaching in every issue of doctrine except the issues relating to predestination.'[397] These Semi-Pelagians, as the term would be coined 1,000 years later under the pen of Theodore Beza, rejected the teachings of Pelagius, though they did not affirm Augustinianism.

> More than perhaps anything else, the doctrine of original sin stands as a monument to two different, and mutually incompatible ways of thinking. Whether we believe, as our own theological tradition has taught us, that one of these approaches is superior to the other … [or whether it is] ultimately mysterious truth, the fact remains that we cannot readily move from one to the other. In the end we must opt for Augustine or against him, and allow the rest of patristic thought on the matter to be seen in the light of that fundamental choice.[398]

As we enter into the thought of the so-called Semi-Pelagians on the doctrine of Original Sin, let us consider which tradition they more closely identified with: Augustine or 'the rest of patristic thought.' In search of understanding their doctrine of Original Sin, as best we can, it is to the Gallic monks of the 5th century that we now turn.

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[395] Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' 40.
[396] Fisher, 'Salvation, Sin and Grace,' 155.
[397] Pelikan, *CT1*, 318.
[398] Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' 47.

Chapter 5

John Cassian and his view of Original Sin

> Modern research has not paid too much attention to the way how Cassian incorporated the concept of original sin in his theological system, conceived as a theoretical basis for Christian ascetic life. This is perhaps due to the fact that the transmission of Adam's sin was not a point of discussion between Cassian and the 'Augustinian faction' in Provence.[1]

As noted in chapter one, a need exists to analyze and establish what Cassian believed about Original Sin. In this chapter, we shall look at who Cassian was, his perspective on grace and free will, and his doctrine of Original Sin. First we provide a biographical background and description of Cassian's writings. Then we will explain Cassian's concern about Augustinianism, especially in light of his remarks from the (in)famous *Collationes* 13. Next we will explore a way to harmonize what many scholars see as a difficulty for Cassian's position on grace and free will. Finally, we will explore how his view of human nature is informed by his doctrine of Original Sin.

John Cassian – *Ex Oriente Lux*

Cassian, it is traditionally believed, was born around A.D. 360 in Dobrogea (a region shared by modern day Romania and Bulgaria). Gennadius wrote of this in his *De Viris Illustribus* (61), though some have argued that Cassian was a native of Gaul.[2] As a boy he received a good education because of the rigorous work ethic instilled by his tutor which brought about thoughts of poets and song instead of praying when required.[3] In his *Institutis*, Cassian tells us that he and his friend Germanus traveled to Bethlehem where they lived for several years at a monastery. They believed they needed further guidance in

[1] Raúl Villegas Marín, 'Original Sin in Provençal Ascetic Theology: John Cassian,' 289-90, ftnt 1.

[2] Gennadius, *De Virus Inlustribus* 62, *NPNF2* 3.395, wrote that Cassian is 'of the Scythian people.' For other suggestions on Cassian's homeland, see Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 5 (especially footnotes 18 and 19). Stewart remarks, 'There is no consensus and probably never will be.'

[3] Gibson, 'Prolegomena,' *NPNF2* 11:183.

seeking the perfect life and so traveled south to Egypt to learn from the Desert Fathers. They ended up in the desert of Scetis under the spiritual guidance of Evagrius Ponticus and they spent roughly twenty years there until moving back north around the turn of the 5th century. Cassian was ordained by John Chrysostom to the diaconate in Constantinople.[4] A few years later he and his companion Germanus traveled to Rome to deliver a letter on behalf of Chrysostom to Pope Innocent (no later than 407, given Chrysostom's death). He presumably spent some time in Rome, befriending Leo, who later become pope. It is unknown whether Cassian stayed there, returned back to Constantinople, or went further east back to Bethlehem (a place he had once considered home). In the mid-to-late 410's Cassian reappears on the map this time in southern Gaul, specifically the city of Marseilles.[5]

As the tradition holds, in Marseilles he founded two monasteries, one for men and one for women.[6] Monasticism was growing in Gaul but had been 'at present without monasteries,'[7] and also lacked guidance. 'Every ascetic did as he or she thought fit, following the whims that appealed to an untrained mind rather than looking to a broader framework of established practice.'[8] Cassian, unlike his contemporaries who spoke more theoretically, provided practical guidance for the actual renunciation of the world and sin.[9] For 'these things cannot possibly be taught or understood or kept in the memory by idle

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[4] Cassian, *De Incarnatione*, 7.31, *NPNF2* 11:620.

[5] Cassian dedicates the *Institutis* to Castor, the bishop of Apta Julia from 419 to his death in 426 (this date provided by Gibson, *NPNF2* 11:189). Castor had requested the *Institutis* be written, so Cassian must have been there for a few years in order for Castor to connect with him and respect his opinion as an experienced monastic. If Cassian were placed in Gaul in the early-to-mid 420's, there would supposedly not be enough time for him to have completed the three segments of the *Collationes* or *De Incarnatione* on the timeline.

[6] Contesting the traditional view is Richard J. Goodrich, appendix 1 'Cassian of Marseilles?' in *Contextualizing Cassian: Aristocrats, Asceticism, and Reformation in Fifth-Century Gaul* (Oxford University Press; Oxford, UK), 211-234.

[7] Cassian, *Institutis*, preface, *NPNF2* 11:199.

[8] Richard J. Goodrich, *Contextualizing Cassian*, 50.

[9] Richard J. Goodrich, '*Renuntiatio* and the "Rhetoric of Renunciation,"' in *Contextualizing Cassian: Aristocrats, Asceticism, and Reformation in Fifth-Century Gaul*, 151-207.

meditation and verbal teaching, for it depends entirely upon experience and practice.'[10] With his experience as a disciple of the desert Fathers, he was set apart to become the leading figure of monasticism in Gaul. 'Cassian's long residence in the East and his intimate knowledge of the monastic system in vogue in Egypt made him at once looked up to as an authority, and practically as the head of the movement which was so rapidly taking root in Provence.'[11] Immature Gallic monasticism required order and obedience. Cassian's wisdom provided the bedrock for it.

It was in these later years of life that he wrote three extant works, all of which 'having never yet appeared in an English press' until Gibson's translation of 1894.[12] *De institutis coenobiorum* (*Institutes of the Coenobia*) are twelve books detailing life in the monastic community. The first four books are on monastic activities such as garb, nightly routine, prayers, psalms, etc. and the final eight books are on the renunciation of the deadly sins. Commissioned by Castor of Apt Julia, this work is 'inescapably a critique of the native monastic tradition associated especially with Martin of Tours.'[13] This is because Cassian focuses on the day-to-day struggle with the deadly sins instead of the tales of miracles which he claims to have seen but yet 'minister to the reader nothing but astonishment and no instruction in the perfect life….'[14] The concern against monasticism in Gaul becomes quite evident: individuals set their own rules, there is no set time for prayer

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[10] Cassian, *Institutis*, preface, *NPNF2* 11:199. Experience is a theme for Cassian not only in his *Institutis* but also appears in the *Collationes*. *Conlatio* 14.9 indicates how serious Cassian takes issue with those who speak of the holiness of the monastic life but do not act it out: 'And therefore you must be careful not to be led on to teach by the example of those who have attained some skill in discussion and readiness in speech and because they can discourse on what they please elegantly and fully, are imagined to possess spiritual knowledge, by those who do not know how to distinguish its real force and character. For it is one thing to have a ready tongue and elegant language, and quite another to penetrate into the very heart and marrow of heavenly utterances and to gaze with pure eye of the soul on profound and hidden mysteries; for this can be gained by no learning of man's, nor condition of this world, only by purity of soul, but means of the illumination of the Holy Ghost.'

[11] Gibson, 'Prolegomena,' *NPNF2* 11:189.

[12] Gibson, 'Prolegomena,' *NPNF2* 11:197.

[13] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 17.

[14] Cassian, *Institutis*, preface, *NPNF2* 11:200.

or hymnody, monks take naps frequently, and in one instance, a junior monk had openly objected to the instruction of his superior. Thus, Cassian provides a framework for the coenobitic monks.

The *Collationes patrum in scetica eremo* (*Conferences of the Desert Fathers*) are a collection of sayings or teachings of the desert fathers pertaining to monastic living such as how to deal with temptation, spiritual battles, perfection, the deadly sins, etc. The style of writing,

> is familiar from the rules of Basil and the subsequent Apophthegmata partum: Cassian or Germanus, his student, addresses questions to the desert fathers, which the latter answer in keeping with *what may be imagined as the actual instruction given to the monks*, who came to the spiritual masters with their spiritual and practical problems.[15]

This is to say, the *Collationes* are not intended to be understood as historical narrative. The *Collationes* were 'written to instruct and edify a community seeking the special protection of God and so presumably living the disciplined life characteristic of a vocation to Christian sanctity.'[16] There are details such as the landscape and historical figures, but 'when one moves from incidental remarks about Egypt to the narrative level, Cassian's theological intentions predominate: for him, history is in the details, and the bigger picture is theological.'[17] Chadwick further describes it:

> The *collatio* was a usual practice among the ascetics. It had sprung from the belief of the desert that the fathers and saints had merited a peculiar indwelling of the Holy Spirit which guided them and lent higher authority to their words. In the *Apophthegmata* the young students repeatedly demand of their 'pneumatic' elders [spiritual leaders], 'Father, speak to me a word by which I may live'; and the custom of extended discourses and dialogues upon spiritual problems must be as old as the simple logia which oral tradition has preserved. … In later years Cassian wrote his twenty-four *Conferences*, in which he supposedly gives summaries of the discussions at which he was present.[18]

These *Collationes* were tailor-made of eastern ascetic cloth for Gallic bodies.

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[15] Drobner, *The Fathers of the Church,* 375.
[16] O'Keeffe, 'The *Via Media* of Monastic Theology,' 158.
[17] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 7.
[18] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 26-27.

The *De Incarnatione Domini Contra Nestorium* (*On the Incarnation of Christ Against Nestorius*) is the 'only Western attempt at refuting Nestorian Christology.' The chief error of Nestorius was in holding that there are two persons in Christ, the second person of the Trinity and Jesus of Nazareth. Cassian's old friend in Rome, Leo, who had become archbishop, asked of Cassian to pen a response against Nestorius (who at the time was bishop of Constantinople). The date of the writing is estimated to be 430 (Nestorius became bishop in 428 and was condemned by the Council of Ephesus in 431, so the work must have been completed within that timeframe).[19] Cassian also mentions Augustine by name, which has piqued the interest and brought a variety of theories as to Cassian's intention.[20]

Squires rightly points out that 'Although a discussion of Cassian's Christology and his understanding of Nestorius' Christology would [seem to be outside of discussions on grace and free will] … *De incarnatione* reveals much about Cassian's position against Pelagius—scholars, therefore, need to give it proper attention.'[21] For example, Cassian makes an intriguing argument in *De Incarnatione* by connecting Nestorius's error to Pelagianism:

> If Christ who was born of Mary is not the same Person as He who is of God, you [i.e., Nestorius] certainly make two Christs; after the manner of that abominable error of Pelagius, which in asserting that a mere man was born of the Virgin, said that he was the teacher rather than the redeemer of mankind; for he did not bring to men redemption of life but only an example of how to live.[22]

Gibson also observes this as Cassian describes the errors of Leporius of Treves who,

> in propagating Pelagian views of man's sufficiency and strength, had applied them to the case of our Lord, not shrinking from the conclusion that He was a mere man who had used his free will so well as to have lived without sin, and had only been made Christ in virtue of His baptism, whereby the Divine and human were associated in such a manner that

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[19] Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St. John Cassian*, 229.

[20] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 146; Casiday, 'Cassian, Augustine, and De Incarnatione,' 46-47.

[21] Squires, 'Reassessing Pelagianism,' 72. Squires observes that Weaver (*Divine Grace and Human Agency*) ignores *De Incarnatione* entirely, and others think poorly of the document (Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 153-167; Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 31; Ogliari, *Gratia et Certamen*, 123-124). Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St. John Cassian*, 254, finds the work valuable.

[22] Cassian, *De Incarnatione* 6.14, *NPNF2* 11:598.

> virtually there were two Christs. The connexion [sic] between Nestorianism and Pelagianism has often been noticed by later writers, but to Cassian belongs the credit of having been the first to point it out.[23]

We will, therefore, be able to gather some evidence as to Cassian's view on Original Sin from *De Incarnatione*.

Before continuing to Cassian's theology on grace, free will, and Original Sin, it would be beneficial to describe his influences. Cassian 'offered an ascetic system that rested squarely on the Origenistic formulation of his master, Evagrius.'[24] Evagrius Ponticus was his 'principle teacher' and 'chief authority for his ascetical doctrine.'[25] Six of the first eight chapters of *Institutis* are from Evagrius's instruction (the first two being from Basil's). 'In the West the monastic tradition is represented chiefly by Cassian, who introduced Evagrian tradition in a modified form: the heretical elements were elided, the teaching about contemplative prayer very much modified, so it was the practical wisdom of Evagrius the monk which was made known to the West.'[26] And yet Cassian never mentions Evagrius by name, perhaps because of the trouble Evagrius had found under the anthropomorphism controversy. Cassian had his own disagreements with Evagrius's teaching, e.g. Cassian believed perfection 'consists in the charity that flows into an undisturbed mind' contra the Evagrian view of complete self-denial of thoughts.[27] Thus, Cassian was 'perfectly capable of making independent contributions' to his tradition.[28] In addition to the Evagrian influence, Cassian was affected by the likes of Origen, Jerome, Basil, and perhaps most importantly John Chrysostom. Unlike Evagrius, Cassian mentions

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[23] Gibson, 'Prolegomena,' *NPNF2* 11:190. While Gibson writes highly of the work, Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 23 et. al. consider it 'second-rate' and 'A great work of Christology this is not.'

[24] Goodrich, 77, cf. ftnt 46.

[25] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 86; see also Munz, 'John Cassian,' 1-2; Kathryn Hager Conroy, *Shifting Foundations: Understanding the Relationship between John Cassian and Evagrius Ponticus* (doctoral diss., Oxford University, 2014).

[26] Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 127.

[27] Munz, 'John Cassian,' 7.

[28] Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St. John Cassian*, 6.

Chrysostom by name, refers to him as his teacher, and laments the state of Constantinople in the conclusion of *De Incarnatione*.[29] Michael Azkoul regards, 'Surely [Cassian] was grateful to the holy men of the Egyptian Thebaid, but for his theology Cassian had the Patriarch of Antioch as his teacher.'[30] In *De Incarnatione*, Cassian sings high praises for Chrysostom, [31] so it would not be surprising if Chrysostom had a greater influence about Cassian's doctrinal positions than previously considered by contemporary scholars.[32] Whereas, 'the general lines of the *ascetical ideas* which Cassian propagated to the western Church are found in Evagrius,'[33] we will show that the *doctrinal ideas* under which Cassian operates are found in the Eastern tradition at large, not belonging uniquely to Evagrius or Origen. 'Cassian can not be rightly understood without understanding his context; neither can Semi-Pelagian thought in its entirety be rightly understood apart from Cassian's context since the Massilians were under the eastern influence he brought with him to Gaul.'[34] In Cassian we have a person conversant in matters both East and West, and this provided him an opportunity to bring his eastern experience to the fledging monastic movement in Gaul.

Cassian and the Augustinian Contention

Recall in §2.3 the historical backdrop of Prosper and Hilary's letters to Augustine. Whether they had in mind Cassian's written work remains to be seen. The dating of

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[29] Cassian, *De Incarnatione* 7.31, *NPNF2* 11.620.

[30] Azkoul, 'Peccatum Originale,' 48.

[31] Cassian, *De Incarnatione* 7.31, *NPNF2* 11:620-621, 'Remember your ancient teachers … John a marvel of faith and purity. John, I say; that John who like John the Evangelist was indeed a disciple of Jesus and an Apostle; and so to speak ever reclined on the breasts and heart of the Lord. Remember him, I say. Follow him. Think of his purity, his faith, his doctrine, and holiness. … Read his writings. Hold fast his instruction. Embrace his faith and merits. … He then should ever be in your minds and almost in your sight: he should live in your hearts and in your thoughts.'

[32] Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, 687, 'perhaps in all these traits we may discern the spirit of the great Chrysostom, with whom he long lived in the capacity of deacon, and whose disciple he delighted to call himself.'

[33] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 86, emphasis mine.

[34] Fach, 'Semi-Pelagianism and Grace,' 62.

Cassian's *Collationes* is imprecise and we do not know exactly when Prosper wrote to Augustine, whether Prosper had read *Collationes* by then is unknown. We do know from his letter that at the time of his writing, Prosper is aware that the monks have Augustine's *De Correptione et Gratia*.[35] The Gallic monks were certainly aware of the Augustinian teachings, because they were using Augustine's earlier writings against Prosper's position. Hilary, Prosper's friend, describes that anti-Augustinian sentiment was coming from Marseilles and other places in Gaul. Very likely this is a reference to Cassian's doing.

Cassian's *Collationes* were intended to provide guidance for the young monastics in Gaul. He was no foreigner to theological controversy, having left Egypt near the peak of the anthropomorphism controversy and also having left Constantinople around the time Chrysostom was exiled. Cassian was very likely informed of the Augustinian-Pelagian controversy, as this is seen most clearly in *Collationes* 13, where 'he turns his full attention to the interplay of human effort and divine grace.'[36] So to dismiss Cassian's position as merely practical and non-systematic would be unwarranted (see §1.4). After all, Augustine was a monk himself and the two may not have had much difference by way of putting to death the desires of the flesh. 'But in theological reflection on experience (and in controversy) Augustine and the monks of Gaul moved in opposite directions.'[37]

Collationes 13 was not explicitly written in reply to Augustine, but rather is part of a broader project of Cassian's to equip and train others for the monastic life. 'Because *Collationes* 13 fits so well into the overall scheme of the *Conferences* it is better seen as a general response to aspects of Augustine's thought—already well known in Gaul—than as a tactical move in response to Augustine's latest works.'[38] Beside, it is impossible for

[35] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 20.
[36] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 77.
[37] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 19.
[38] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 20; Squires, 'Reassessing Pelagianism,' 74-75, agrees to its general anti-Augustinian direction.

Cassian to have been replying directly to Augustine's final letters to Hadrumentum and Prosper and Hillary in Gaul, written toward the end of the 420's.[39] *Collationes* 11-17 was dedicated to Honoratus who was 'presiding as he does over a large monastery.'[40] Honorartus became bishop of Arles in 426, so this segment of the *Conferences* must have been completed before then, otherwise Cassian would have referred to him as Bishop and not one overseeing the monastery at Lérins.

Yet to view *Collationes* 13 as an attack on Augustine or Augustinianism is to see only out of one eye. For Cassian certainly also sees another error in his midst: Pelagianism. In fact, it is Pelagianism which garners most of his attention. 'The anti-Pelagian trends that recur right across Cassians' writings are particular dense in *Conference* 13; it is the supposedly anti-Augustinian bits that are unusual.'[41] The conference is devoted to the necessity of divine grace,[42] an issue not with the Augustinians, but the Pelagians. Consider Cassian's remark that there is a 'profane notion of some who attribute everything to free will and lay down that the grace of God is dispensed in accordance with the desert of each man,'[43] certainly a reference to Pelagianism. So while it may be that *Conlatio* 13 fits as part of a larger puzzle for the monastic life, nevertheless it might have been the case that Cassian was considering competing views on grace and free will. This would include his familiarity with Augustine's doctrine (or supposedly an extreme version of it) in mind when composing this conference. For instance, Cassian wrote, 'For we should not hold that God made man such that he can never will or be capable of what is good : or else He has

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[39] A few believe that Cassian was replying to Augustine's *De correptione et gratia* (Ogliari, *Gratia et Certamen*, 91-97; Boniface Ramsey, 'John Cassian: Student of Augustine,' *Cistercian Studies Quarterly*, vol. 28 (1993), 6; Squires, 'Reassessing Pelagianism,' 76-77.) This is based upon an internal assessment, wherein an allusion 'may be detected in Cassian's' *Conlatio* 13 (Squires, 'Reassessing Pelagianism,' 77). We think the external evidence of the hubbub at Hadrumetum makes *De correptione et gratia* too late for Cassian's knowledge, but does not preclude his interest in Augustinian thought from other sources, Augustine himself or his followers (Prosper of Aquitaine).

[40] Cassian, *Collationes*, preface to the second segment, *NPNF2* 11:413.

[41] Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St. John Cassian*, 114.

[42] See Abbot Chaeremon's remarks in *Collationes* 13.3, *NPNF2* 11:423.

[43] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.16, *NPNF2* 11:433.

not granted him a free will, if He has suffered him only to will or be capable of evil, but neither to will or be capable of what is good of himself.'[44] This remark stands in contrast to the Augustinian doctrine of inability, discussed in chapter three, and serves as evidence that Cassian was critiquing both of the positions he believed were outside the scope of church tradition.

Some writers have sought to make Cassian not an enemy of Augustine (as it has been traditionally believed), but either sympathetic to Augustine or at most an enemy to some extreme version of Augustinianism.[45] For example, Casiday poses as an option that 'What we find in *Conference* 13 are at best paraphrases that approximate to an Augustinian view.'[46] Cassian never quotes Augustine, like he does Evagrius. So perhaps what Cassian was responding to was Augustinian in nature, but not necessarily Augustine himself (or his very position).

One might be able to say that Cassian was Augustinian in the Early-Augustinian sense (i.e., prior to Augustine's shift in his own doctrine). After all, in his letter to Augustine, Prosper admits that the Gallic monks were using Augustine's writings against him. It seems more difficult, however, to say Cassian was friendly to a Later Augustinian view. One hypothesis that Casiday entertains is that Cassian was responding to Prosper's version of Augustinianism, 'a local eruption of objectionable theology.'[47] He observes from Prosper's writing this admission: 'I offered up Your Blessedness's teachings written with countless, strong proofs from the sacred Scriptures and *I crafted one, following the style of*

[44] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.12, *NPNF2* 11:428.

[45] Boniface Ramsey, 'John Cassian: Student of Augustine,' 5-15; McQueen, 'John Cassian on Grace and Free Will,' 15-16; O'Keeffe, 'The Via Media of Monastic Theology,' 157.

[46] Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St. John Cassian*, 116.

[47] Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St. John Cassian*, 118.

your arguments, by which they would be silenced.'[48] This has led Casiday to believe that perhaps Cassian was replying to a document that Prosper wrote, himself.

> It would go a very long way indeed towards accounting for Prosper's fiery attack against Cassian (and, for that matter, against Vincent) if he had cobbled together his own arguments after the manner of Augustine, only to have them spiritedly attacked by those obdurate monks.[49]

A document written by Prosper would also explain the catalyst for the *Objectiones Vincentianae*, as we will explore in the next chapter. 'A brisk trade in homespun Augustiniana would inescapably include Predestinationist tracts of the sort that drew heavy fire from Vincent, not to mention the disapproving remarks that Cassian relates on behalf of Chaeremon' in *Collationes* 13.[50]

Casiday's hypothesis is an intriguing one, but whether Prosper's arguments were reliably consistent with Augustine's is something he does not evaluate.[51] On this matter, we have insufficient explicit evidence to compare because Prosper's document is not extant. Nevertheless, the resemblance between the position Cassian criticizes and the position Augustine held (as we have argued in chapter three) is undeniable. So it appears from our argument that there are sufficient grounds upon circumstantial evidence (i.e., evidence from which we may infer) that Cassian would have rejected the position held by the later Augustine in support of an earlier tradition.[52]

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[48] Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St. John Cassian*, 117, Casiday's translation; cf. 'Letter 225,' *WSA* 2.4.89, '… when we ourselves construct an argument to trap them on the model of your treatises…'

[49] Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St. John Cassian*, 117.

[50] Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St. John Cassian*, 117.

[51] Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St. John Cassian,* 8, 'If he cannot be trusted to evaluate a single contemporary document, then a fortiori he cannot be trusted to synthesize the numerous works of Augustine.' One could reply that it is only his opponents he paints as strawmen, not his hero.

[52] Boniface Ramsey, 'John Cassian and Augustine,' in *Grace for Grace: The Debates After Augustine and Pelagius* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 129-130, 'Augustine's theology of grace, which if anything was exceedingly emphatic and explicit in treatment of its subject, could hardly be made to jibe with this well-established tradition and undoubtedly seemed to Cassian and many of his contemporaries as utterly unprecedented; and so it was, in form if not in substance.'; O'Keeffe, 'The Via Media of Monastic Theology,' 157, 'It seems more natural to interpret the Conference in the context of the Pelagian views apparently held in Gaul which were condemned by the legislation of 425, as an attack not on Augustine's, but on Pelagian, ideas, albeit from a point of view more in line with a pre-Augustinian theological tradition than with Augustine's anti-Pelagian theology.'; Harden Weaver, 'Introduction,' *Grace for Grace*, xxii, 'The monk was acquainted with the views of the bishop and at points

Our proposal has great explanatory power to understand why Prosper takes issue with Cassian's remarks, because Prosper is accurate in interpreting Cassian's remarks as a problem for the Augustinian. Cassian wrote, 'We must be on the watch lest we attribute all the good works of holy persons to the Lord in such a way that we ascribe nothing but what is bad and perverse to human nature.'[53] This description is compatible with what we have explored about the Augustinian notion of Inability, one that Prosper embraces. Prosper would pen multiple works against Cassian, but his critiques were not performed in a fair manner.

That Prosper was aware of Cassian's view is not in doubt. His letters indicate a familiarity with Cassian and the monks of Marseilles, and in other parts of Gaul. Whether he had read *Collationes* 13 at the time of writing to Augustine is unknown, but he certainly reads it within a short window of time: After Augustine's death Prosper published his own work called *Contra Collatorem* (*Against the Conferencer*), which directly attacks Cassian and the thirteenth conference.

Given that Cassian's *Collationes* and Prosper's *Contra Collatorem* have both survived to the present day, we find ourselves in good position to briefly evaluate Prosper's criticism against Cassian's writing. Casiday's evaluation of Prosper's writing is severely damaging to Prosper's reputation. He shows that 'Prosper tinkers with passages from Cassian by offering an invidious paraphrase of his own that purportedly captures Cassian's meaning,' yet does not.[54] Casiday argues that Prosper's use of "grace" is more technical, whereas Cassian's use of "grace" is more ambiguous.

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clearly agreed with him; however, he was also familiar with a theological tradition, primarily Greek, that included writers, such as Athanasius, Basil, and Chrysostom, who emphasized the freedom of the will, sometimes with little attention to grace. It was that tradition to which Cassian referred in *Conference* 13 when he spoke of "the Church's faith," and with that tradition Augustine's theology of grace could not be squared.'

[53] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.12.5, *NPNF2* 11:429.

[54] Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian,' 278.

Prosper conveniently ignores some of Cassian's qualifiers or adds his own in the attempt to present Cassian's position. In evaluating *Collationes* 13, Prosper quotes Cassian:

> In order to see more clearly that at times the beginning of the good will arises from the gifts of nature bestowed by the liberality of the Creator—a beginning, however, that cannot reach the perfection of virtue without the guidance of God's grace—we should listen to St. Paul, who says: For to will is present with me; but to accomplish that which is good, I find not.[55]

But Prosper critiques him on the basis that, 'You were right in [previously] declaring that our salvation originates in grace, but now you assert that it [salvation] comes from the gifts of nature and from free will.'[56] From the source content provided by Prosper himself, one might wonder how his accusation could be fair. Cassian certainly qualifies his statement in saying that the gifts of nature are 'bestowed by the liberality of the Creator' and that even with such gifts humans cannot be saved 'without the guidance of God's grace.' So it is not the case that salvation comes (only) from the gifts of nature and free will.

Elsewhere, Prosper attacks Cassian as believing that human free will is unaided,[57] which is certainly not a position of Cassian's. It becomes evident that Prosper's criticism is a straw-man. 'Prosper's version has that enviable feature of all good conspiracy theories: it is predicated on the assumption that the conspirators are clever enough not to leave any evidence; it flourishes on suspicion, rather than proof.'[58] Prosper's ability to correctly

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[55] Prosper, *Contra Collatorem* 4.2, *ACW* 32.79.

[56] Prosper, *Contra Collatorem* 4.2, *ACW* 32.79.

[57] Prosper, *Contra Collatorem* 10.3, *ACW* 32.98, Prosper argues as a reductio, 'How does he [Cassian] declare that the *unaided* knowledge of sinful nature is apt to make a new man of the smitten old man? As though that knowledge, whether acquired by what remains of our natural gifts or found in the study of the sciences of the law, could *by itself* make us love and do what we know to be our duty …' (emphasis mine).

11.1, *ACW* 32.98, 'Now he attributes to free will not only the knowledge of what is good but also the power to do it; as though the Lord could require of men understanding of their duty and fulfilment [sic] of good works only on the supposition that they are able to produce these by their own natural powers *without any help of God*!' (emphasis mine).

14.1, *ACW* 32.110, 'After this, when *he has attributed to man unaided by grace* as many good works as man could possibly do with the help of grace, our author adds a few ambiguous and confused sentences to show the natural power of free will' (emphasis mine).

15.1, *ACW* 32.114, '… you attribute to free will so much power … to endure unspeakable torments in his own body by the sole strength of his *unaided* will' (emphasis mine).

[58] Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian,' 274.

convey his opponents beliefs is suspect. Chadwick, who tips a pro-Augustinian bias, himself, notes that 'the teaching represented by Prosper's letter is far more Pelagian and much less subtle than the doctrine of Coll. XIII.'[59] Not only in his letter to Rufinus, but also in his written reply to Cassian we see that Prosper ought to be viewed critically because of his unfair reading of Cassian's position.

Augustine Casiday's scathing conclusions on the matter are not unwarranted.[60] 'It can only be regarded as a failure of his principles that Prosper was content to offer decontextualized gobbets of Cassian while denouncing Augustine's opponents for taking his words out of context.'[61] Prosper misunderstood Cassian's position of the relationship between free will and grace, opting instead to paint Cassian as a crypto-Pelagian and opponent of the catholic faith.[62] Even if we had not the writing that Prosper critiques, then we could show from the Gallic monks' other attacks against Pelagius (Cassian's anti-Pelagian critique of Nestorianism, Vincent's rejection of Pelagianism in the *Commonitorium*, and Faustus's rejection of it in *De Gratia)* that Prosper's beliefs about them are horribly awry.

The younger Prosper '… collapses any argument against predestination into an argument against Augustine, which he takes in turn as an argument for Pelagius.'[63] For Prosper, 'The enemies, often treated as heretics, are in fact in a more complex position:

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[59] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 115, footnote 1.

[60] Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian,' 284, 'We have therefore found Prosper's account of Cassian to be deeply and systematically flawed. It is unreliable with respect to its historical value, misapplied in its episodes of theological insight and tendentious to the point of misrepresentation with respect to its interpretive value.'

[61] Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian,' 281.

[62] For misunderstanding and strawman, see De Letter, *ACW* 32.215, ftnt 171-173, 'Prosper interprets Cassian's statement: grace is not the principle of merit, since, in Cassian's mind, free will is; and when grace does everything, then free will does not do anything; and so there is no merit then. But this does not follow necessarily from Cassian's text; all he may mean to say is that free will co-operates with grace.' For crypto-Pelagian accusation see *Contra Collatorem* 1, ACW, 70 and Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian,' 279, 'We can be utterly certain that Prosper aimed at assimilating Cassian to Pelagianism, because in one breathtaking case he actually glosses a phrase of Cassian's with two tenets of Pelagianism that had been formally condemned.' Cf. *Contra Collatorem* 11.2, ACW 32.99.

[63] Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian,' 275.

Cassian and his disciples have, according to Prosper, ceased to be orthodox, without having necessarily become actual and irrevocable heretics.'[64] Yet, at the same time, he invites them to be part of (what he thinks is) the orthodox Christian community. Over time, Prosper's thought matures as it shifted away from strongly Augustinian sentiments. Prosper would eventually move to Rome to serve Pope Leo and spent the rest of his life (d. 455) attempting to find harmony between Augustine's predestinarian view of grace and the tradition (and authority) of the Church.

Unlike Prosper, Augustine never associated his Gallic opposition with the Pelagians. He corrects Prosper, referring to them as 'those brethren of ours.'[65] He describes them as such:

> For as yet they are in darkness on the question concerning the predestination of the saints … And those brethren of ours, on whose behalf your pious love is solicitous, have attained with Christ's Church to the belief that the human race is born obnoxious to the sin of the first man, and that none can be delivered from that evil save by the righteousness of the Second Man. Moreover, they have attained to the confession that men's wills are anticipated by God's grace; and to the agreement that no one can suffice to himself either for beginning or for completing any good work. These things, therefore, unto which they have attained, being held fast, abundantly distinguish them from the error of the Pelagians.[66]

Here, Augustine recognizes that the Augustinian objectors are not Pelagians but are orthodox brothers, on the basis of common agreement of the inheritance of a fallen human nature and the necessity of grace for salvation.

Cassian believes he is already part of the orthodox tradition. In two places in his *Collationes* Cassian cites the authority and universality of the Church. First, in the early chapters of the tenth conference on the errors of anthropomorphism, and second, in his

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[64] Jérémy Delmulle, '"Les vers servent aux saints": Didactic Poetry and Anti-Heretical Polemic in the *Carmen de Ingratis,*' in *Grace for Grace*, 95.

[65] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 2, *NPNF1* 5:498.

[66] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*, 2, *NPNF1* 5:498.

discussion on grace and free will in the thirteenth conference.[67] In the latter he remarks three features of divine grace believed by the Catholic faith.

> And therefore it is laid down by all the Catholic fathers who have taught perfection of heart not by empty disputes of words, but in deed and act, that the first stage in the Divine gift is for each man to be inflamed with the desire of everything that is good, but in such a way that the choice of free will is open to either side: and that the second stage in Divine grace is for the aforesaid practices of virtue to be able to be performed, but in such a way that the possibilities of the will are not destroyed: the third stage also belongs to the gifts of God, so that it may be held by the persistence of the goodness already acquired, and in such a way that the liberty may not be surrendered and experience bondage. For the God of all must be held to work in all, so as to incite, protect, and strengthen, but not to take away the freedom of the will which He Himself has once given. If however any more subtle inference of man's argumentation and reasoning seems opposed to this interpretation, it should be avoided rather than brought forward to the destruction of the faith … for how God works all things in us and yet everything can be ascribed to free will, cannot be fully grasped by the mind and reason of man.[68]

He notes that if anyone were to reject grace or free will that would 'contravene the rule of the Church's faith.' To deny the human ability of choosing good would be 'sufficiently absurd and altogether alien from the Catholic faith.'[69] As we have presented above, *Collationes* 13 is both anti-Pelagian and anti-Augustinian. Ramsey agrees: 'An analysis of the thirteenth conference reveals, first of all, Cassian's unmistakable concern for balance. … The opponents to whom Cassian occasionally makes anonymous reference—Augustine and the Pelagians—have lost their balance.'[70]

The Augustinian contention is, therefore, that the bishop of Hippo (or at least his position as defended by Prosper) has denied the human ability of choosing the good and has strayed away from the orthodox tradition. Prosper, being an Augustinian, disagrees and does not understand the position of his opponents. But he was not the last to misunderstand Cassian. Others, such as Fulgentius of Ruspe, sympathetic to the North African

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[67] Cassian, *Collationes* 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, *NPNF2* 11:401-402; *Collationes* 13.11 & 13.12, *NPNF2* 11.428; *Collationes* 13.18, *NPNF2* 11:434.

[68] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.18, *NPNF2* 11:434-435.

[69] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.12, *NPNF2* 11:428.

[70] Ramsey, 'John Cassian and Augustine,' 124.

perspective, objected to Cassian's doctrine. One North African bishop even edited Cassian's writings to remove the so-called problematic passages.[71]

That Cassian would be seen as anti-Augustinian might be undesirable to some. For example, Chadwick interprets Cassian as a full Augustinian on the doctrine of grace. He remarks, 'In Cassian grace possess its full Augustinian meaning, an interior working of God within the soul.'[72] Chadwick thinks this, in part, because of the texts of Augustine cited by Cassian.[73] However, he thinks, 'because he is writing for the novices and the inexperienced; because he feels impelled, even here, to push his monks into the spiritual fight—he turns with remarkable inconsistency to stating the successive theory of free will and grace in explicit form:'[74]

> When we say that human efforts cannot of themselves secure perfection without the aid of God, we thus insist that God's mercy and grace are bestowed only upon those who labour and exert themselves … It is given to them that ask, and opened to them that knock, and found by them that seek. … For he is at hand to bestow all these things, if only the opportunity is given to him by our good will.[75]

A passage such as this seems to suggest that God's grace acts in response to human merit, a Pelagian notion. This, and other passages difficult to understand, are able to be smoothed over after further analysis. Next we attempt to describe Cassian's view of grace which is compatible with the three stages described above.

Cassian's View of Grace: Concurrent, Necessary, and Varied

If Cassian rejected both Augustinianism and Pelagianism, how could one explain the difficult problem passages from his works? Referring to his position as Semi-Pelagian would not do justice to his view. 'Cassian and many early Christian writers with him,

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[71] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 24.

[72] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 122.

[73] 'It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.' 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.' 'What hast though which thou didst not receive?'

[74] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 122.

[75] Cassian, *Institutis* 12.14, *NPNF2* 11:283-284.

would have been quite opposed to such a distinction.'[76] As it will be argued, for Cassian, God's grace is concurrent with human action, necessary for all good things, and variegated by circumstance.

Expounding on Cassian's views of grace and free will are relevant to his doctrine of Original Sin. These issues are 'ultimately inseparable from Cassian's understanding of how free will was affected by the Fall and the extent to which Adam's original libertas still exists in his descendants.'[77] As it will be argued for our interpretation of Cassian's understanding, we will see that it is certainly not Pelagian and that his view of free will is contingent upon specific beliefs he has about the Fall. These beliefs about the Fall that he has are either explicitly stated or they are implied (those implications we will argue can be deduced from Cassian's remarks).

First, Cassian's doctrine of grace has confounded many of his readers because he makes apparently contradictory statements on the origin of good thoughts or actions: Do they come from God or man?[78] McQueen observes that, 'admittedly, his discussion of the topic—scattered through many works—is deficient in the method and precisions appropriate to a formal treatise on theology.'[79] Fach goes a bit further in claiming, 'That this was no system of grace, no attempt at a philosophical theory of the relationship between grace and free will, is evident in Cassian's thought, which often appears contradictory at worst, paradoxical at best.'[80] It is one thing to dismiss Cassian's *Collationes* as not descriptively philosophical (which happens to be an accurate

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[76] Munz, 'John Cassian,' 9.

[77] McQueen, 'John Cassian on Grace and Free Will,' 15.

[78] McQueen, 'John Cassian on Grace and Free Will,' 11, 'we have still to face the problem that while Cassian sometimes—and in terms quite free from ambiguity—ascribes the beginnings of every virtuous thought and act to God, he also frequently attributes them *simpliciter* to man.'

Alexander Hwang, 'Manifold Grace in John Cassian and Prosper of Aquitaine,' *Scottish Journal of Theology*, vol. 63 (2010), 96, 'Cassian believed it was grace and free will – a relationship of cooperation between the two – *even at the cost of consistency'* (emphasis mine).

[79] McQueen, 'John Cassian on Grace and Free Will,' 24.

[80] Fach, 'Semi-Pelagianism and Grace,' 62.

description), but quite another to be reluctant in giving Cassian's views a rigorous, analytical hearing for his supposedly contradictory or paradoxical remarks. Cassian's perspective on grace and free will still carries important theological value, and this is evident in the attempt to understand what he meant. 'Cassian has a more subtle insight into the workings of grace than most modern thinkers, obsessed with the artificial distinctions between nature and supernature … can aspire to.'[81] While it might appear to Fach that Cassian was contradictory or paradoxical, alternative explanations exist.

Hwang argues that 'There appear [to be] two models of salvation, but they are intermixed in the dialogue and difficult to distinguish.'[82] These models, which may be found within *Conlatio* 13, are the cooperative model and the alternative model. The cooperative model, according to Hwang, has God who initiates action throughout the process, 'but the human will, presumably, has the power to conform to or resist God's grace.'[83] For example, in *Conlatio* 13, Cassian writes that 'the initiative not only of our actions but also of good thoughts comes from God, who inspires us with a good will to begin with, and supplies us with the opportunity of carrying out what we rightly desire …,' and that God 'both begins what is good, and continues it and completes it in us ….'[84] Every human has 'by nature some seeds of goodness' which were 'implanted by the kindness of the Creator; but unless these are quickened by the assistance of God, they will not be able to attain to an increase of perfection ….'[85] Thus, according to the cooperative model, 'the grace of God initiates and inspires the free will towards the good.'[86]

The alternative model, according to Hwang, allows for the initiative of salvation to be taken by the human. In the ninth chapter of *Conlatio* 13, 'Cassian notes that scripture

[81] Munz, 'John Cassian,' 8.
[82] Hwang, 'Manifold Grace in John Cassian and Prosper of Aquitaine,' 97.
[83] Hwang, 'Manifold Grace in John Cassian and Prosper of Aquitaine,' 98.
[84] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.3, *NPNF2* 11:423.
[85] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.12, *NPNF2* 11:429.
[86] Hwang, 'Manifold Grace in John Cassian and Prosper of Aquitaine,' 98.

contains instances where God at times begins the process of the salvation and at other times, it is by the human will.'[87] Therein he goes back and forth between biblical passages which depict God as the initiator and the human as the initiator.

> What is this too which is said: 'Draw near to the Lord, and He will draw near to you,' and what He says elsewhere: 'No man cometh unto Me except the Father who went Me draw Him?' What is it that we find: 'Make straight paths for your feet and direct your ways,' and what is it that we say in our prayers: 'Direct my way in Thy sight,' and 'establish my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps be not moved?'[88]

As with other statements he makes, provided in the previous section, this passage has been seen as problematic for Cassian.

Instead of positing two different models of salvation, we should recognize what Cassian is intending to convey. Cassian believes that the two are mysteriously interwined.

> And so these are somehow mixed up and indiscriminately confused, so that among many persons, which depends on the other is involved in great questionings, i.e., does God have compassion upon us because we have shown the beginning of a good will, or does the beginning of a good will follow because God has had compassion upon us?[89]

This is the same type of question that Hwang attempts to explain in interpreting Cassian, but it is a mistaken conclusion. Cassian's numerous instances comparing and contrasting instances between human free will and God's grace are not meant to draw hard lines in the sand on the issue, but rather to communicate that the work of salvation is synergistic. Salvation is a *both-and* process, not an *either-or*.

Next, we will argue that Cassian's statements are compatible with a doctrine of concurrence. If our argument is successful, this would show that 'contradictory' or 'paradoxical' descriptors are inferior options available to theologians for understanding Cassian's view.

Concurrent

[87] Hwang, 'Manifold Grace in John Cassian and Prosper of Aquitaine,' 99.
[88] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.9, *NPNF2* 11:426.
[89] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.11, *NPNF2* 11:427.

By way of introduction, and in order to understand Cassian's view on grace and free will, allow us to consider the model of John Chrysostom, who ordained Cassian, and whom the latter referred to as his teacher.

In his title-eliciting work "Was St. John Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?"[90] Anthony Kenny explores the thought of Chrysostom on free will and grace. His concern was that Chrysostom was 'a precursor of the error of the Massilienses or semi-Pelagians.'[91] In the first part of his article he describes Chrysostom's view of the necessity of grace, chiefly as it pertains to morally virtuous actions (κατορθοῦν). God's grace is necessary for all morally virtuous actions, as Chrysostom constantly asserts.[92] Not only is divine grace 'necessary for acts of moral virtue [but also] for reaching heaven.'[93] Divine grace varies in the sense that, 'though Chrysostom's common teaching is that grace is necessary for difficult acts, which it makes easier, he also asserts that we need God's help in order to perform even easy actions.'[94] From this we may deduce that God's grace is given more for those harder actions and yet less so for the easier actions.

Yet as it pertains to the tension between grace and free will, Kenny believed that for Chrysostom, humans make the initiative.[95] He makes an important qualification to this conception that 'what is in question is *katorthomata*, the acts of the man **who is already justified**.'[96] Two concerns arise here: First, that such qualification contextually corresponds to Chrysostom's meaning is not defended. Second, that unbelievers cannot perform *katorthomata* (including the acceptance of the Gospel message) is also assumed. Thus, in contrast to Kenny we propose that Chrysostom believed divine grace is concurrent

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[90] Anthony Kenny, 'Was St. John Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?' *Irish Theological Quarterly,* vol. 27, iss. 1 (1960), 16-29.
[91] Kenny, 'Was St. John Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?' 16.
[92] Kenny, 'Was St. John Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?' 17.
[93] Kenny, 'Was St. John Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?' 18.
[94] Kenny, 'Was St. John Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?' 18.
[95] Kenny, 'Was St. John Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?' 21.
[96] Kenny, 'Was St. John Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?' 21, emphasis mine.

in the sense that the issue is not an either/or category but a both/and one. Faith and obedience to God's call are both the work of divine grace and a free will choice. Jonathan R. R. Tallon also has questioned Kenny's assumptions. The meaning of terms like 'faith' or 'justified' and the scope of *katorthomata* are assumed and to import them onto Chrysostom creates a misunderstanding of the bishop's position. Whereas, as Tallon proposes, 'But if obedience can act as a synonym for faith (and obedience will of course include good works), then it becomes clear that Chrysostom is working from wholly different assumptions, which the article doesn't address.' [97]

In the second part of his article, Kenny looks at Chrysostom's doctrine of faith and its relationship to predestination. To his credit, Kenny observes that for Chrysostom, faith (as Kenny's scope is in the initiative of faith) belongs to humans in the 'relative sense' as 'an effect of grace' and thus 'faith is not an achievement of man alone; God, too, plays a part in our acts of faith.'[98] In the six passages provided, Kenny observes allegedly conflicting remarks by Chrysostom about the order of operations (free will first or divine grace first?).[99] His solution was to posit an understanding of a general call or a particular/efficacious call, and that even if such a division were inaccurate Chrysostom would be 'less orthodox.'[100] This conclusion of Kenny's is contingent upon his interpretation of the Second Council of Orange and applying those canons backward 150 years. Suffice it to say, Kenny does not believe Chrysostom was a Semi-Pelagian. This is the proper conclusion, but for wrong reasons: that the so-called Semi-Pelagians were misunderstood and that Chrysostom's doctrine of grace was misunderstood.

[97] Jonathan R. R. Tallon, 'Faith in John Chrysostom's Preaching: A Contextual Reading' (doctoral diss., University of Manchester, 2015), 34.
[98] Kenny, 'Was St. John Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?' 22-23.
[99] Kenny, 'Was St. John Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?' 23-24.
[100] Kenny, 'Was St. John Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?' 25-26.

According to Kenny's view of what the Semi-Pelagians believed, they thought that 'a natural act could be the beginning of salvation,' 'that man's first step strictly merited God's help,' and that 'election they regarded as a reward for merit.'[101] These accusations are historically inaccurate of what the Gallic monks believed. But even if the monks allegedly believed these things, then by Kenny's own standard of analysis John Cassian was not a Semi-Pelagian.

Kenny also misunderstands Chrysostom's doctrine of grace. Above we pointed out that Kenny presumes he and Chrysostom operate under the same notions of justification, faith, and the scope of *katorthomata*. With regard to grace, Neander explains that Chrysostom had a synergistic approach.

> But he felt it to be important also, to set everywhere distinctly forth, that to believe or not to believe depends on man's self-determination; that there was no such thing as a constraining grace, not conditioned in its operations on the peculiar bent of man's own will; but that all grace is imparted according to the proportion of the will's determination.[102]

Chrysostom believed that divine grace and human free will work in tandem together. 'According to the tradition and teaching of the Eastern Orthodox Church, grace and human freedom are expressed concurrently and may not be understood the one without the other.'[103] We would like to suggest that Cassian's view of grace and free will is at the least compatible, if not reflective or even identical, with Chrysostom's model. 'And so these are somehow mixed up and indiscriminately confused, so that among many persons, which depends on the other is involved in great questions, i.e., does God have compassion upon us because we have shown the beginning of a good will, or does the beginning of a good will follow because God had compassion on us?'[104] But unlike those 'many people' Cassian rejects such a dichotomy and instead opts for a concurrent view of grace and free

[101] Kenny, 'Was St. John Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?' 29.
[102] Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, 720.
[103] Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Christianity*, 190.
[104] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.11, *NPNF2* 11:427; cf. Ramsey, 'John Cassian and Augustine,' 122.

will: 'These two; viz., the grace of God and free will seem opposed to each another, but really are in harmony, and we gather from the system of goodness that we ought to have both alike, lest if we withdraw one of them from man, we may seem to have broken the rule of the Church's faith.'[105] Pristas claims that Cassian 'consistently avoids discussion of grace and freedom at the metaphysical level.'[106] Be this as it may, it does not mean his model lacks a metaphysical category. Positing that Cassian held to a doctrine of concurrence would recognize Cassian not only as an ascetic concerned for orthopraxy, but a thinker who is quite concerned for orthodoxy.

It is perhaps not a coincidence that Cassian's doctrine of grace would be closer to Chrysostom than to Augustine on Scriptural interpretation,[107] because Cassian's view is eastern in approach. Cassian writes, 'We assert that God's mercy and grace are bestowed only on those who toil and labor and that, to use the Apostle's words, they are given to those who will and those who run. … He is ready, so long as we have offered him our good will, to grant all these things.'[108] This passage might have the scent of humans allegedly having the initiative devoid of grace, but it is not so. He firmly denies that that is his position:

> But let no one imagine that we have brought forward these instances to try to make out that the chief share in our salvation rests with our faith, according to the profane notion of some who attribute everything to free will and lay down that the grace of God is dispensed in accordance with the desert of each man : but we plainly assert our unconditional opinion that the grace of God is superabounding, and sometimes overflows the narrow limits of man's lack of faith.'[109]

Cassian rejects a strong distinction between grace and free will, a habit Hwang unfortunately demonstrates with his two models of salvation hypothesis. Contemporary

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[105] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.11, *NPNF2* 11:428.

[106] Pristas, 'The Theological Anthropology of John Cassian,' 352.

[107] Kenny, 'Was St. John Chrysostom a Semi-Pelagian?' 28, 'It is also noteworthy that in Scriptural exegesis Chrysostom is often much closer to the interpretations given by the Massilienses than to those of Augustine.' More chronologically accurate, it would be stated that Cassian's view of exegesis is closer to Chrysostom's than it is with Augustine's.

[108] Cassian, *Collationes* 12.14, in Ramsey, 'John Cassian and Augustine,' 128.

[109] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.16, *NPNF2* 11:433.

scholars 'are accustomed to distinguish sharply between [nature and grace] and are therefore always inclined to label a process as either the one or the other,' even as Prosper and Augustine had done.[110] For Cassian, grace and free will is not an either-or circumstance but a both-and attribution. Thus, if one were to ask him, 'Do you believe the beginning of good thoughts come from either God or man?' Cassian would answer, 'Yes.'

Chadwick rejects the concurrent model of grace and free will in Cassian. He thinks that 'from the earliest period of monachism grace and free will tended to be conceived, not as contemporaneous and coinherent, but as successive.'[111] That is, if a human were first to temper or completely cut out the passions, then God's grace would follow. 'Instead, it responds to the moral good that we are able to will and our desire for supernatural good ….'[112] To address one of the previously mentioned problem passages (*Institutis* 12.14), the difficulty is assuaged if the passage included critical qualifications:

> For when we say that human efforts cannot of themselves secure perfection without the aid of God, we thus insist that God's mercy and grace are bestowed only upon those who labour and exert themselves … It is given to them that ask, and opened to them that knock, and found by them that seek; but that the asking, the seeking, and the knocking on our part are insufficient *unless the mercy of God gives what we ask,* and *opens that at which we knock*, and **enables us** to find that which we seek. For he is at hand to bestow all these things, if only the opportunity is given to him by our good will.[113]

Taken as a whole, then, we see that Cassian is not adopting a successive model but a concurrent one. Astonishingly, Chadwick observes that 'a conflicting opinion may be found among the eastern sources, in particular when discussing the sin of pride. … Hence the ascetic writers stress the absolute dependence upon God by placing an almost Augustinian emphasis upon grace whenever they deal with the subject of pride.'[114] This approach is perplexing because Chadwick almost recognizes concurrence ('absolute

[110] Munz, 'John Cassian,' 8.
[111] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 109.
[112] McCall, *Against God and Nature*, 292.
[113] Cassian, *Institutis* 12.4, *NPNF2* 11:283, emphases mine.
[114] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 109.

dependence'), describing it as among *eastern sources*, and yet he describes that view as 'almost Augustinian.' We think an alternative explanation is preferred: Cassian, being trained in the Greek theological tradition, advocated for a concurrent model of grace and free will and to suggest that such a model is Augustinian is historically anachronistic (Augustine was not the first or only church father to write about divine grace). Moreover, in section §3.1.3 we described how Augustine, himself, explicitly describes God's grace as occurring in a successive manner, with grace being given prior to the human choice (and the freedom of the will becoming subservient to grace).[115]

Pristas offers a different solution than Chadwick. She draws a distinction by explaining that Cassian's use of 'meets, guides, and strengthens'[116] are 'positive boosts from God' and classified as cooperative grace.[117] On the other hand, the grace with which God 'stirs our hearts with salutary exhortations, by which a good will is either renewed or formed in us'[118] would be classified as operative grace. While Pristas is cautious in using Augustinian terms[119] these are still categories she uses to explain Cassian's thought. She rightly concludes that he 'believes it necessary to hold both at once.'[120] Pristas's theory recognizes Cassian's variety of case uses for divine grace, but draws sharper distinctions than Cassian himself ever makes. Concurrence makes better sense of the fact that Cassian believes we need to believe in both divine grace and human free will: 'These two then; viz. the grace of God and free will seem opposed to each other, but really are in harmony, and we gather from the system of goodness that we ought to have both alike, lest if we

[115] Recall that Augustine maintained the following: 'The second question concerns Romans 9:10-29. In answering this question I have tried hard to maintain the free choice of the human will, but the grace of God prevailed,' *Retractationes* 2.1, *LCC* 6.370.

[116] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.11, *NPNF2* 11:428.

[117] Pristas, 'The Theological Anthropology of John Cassian,' 292.

[118] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.11, *NPNF2* 11:428.

[119] Pristas, 'The Theological Anthropology of John Cassian,' 350, '… we ought not be too tidy about terminology.'

[120] Pristas, 'The Theological Anthropology of John Cassian,' 293.

withdraw one of them from man, we may seem to have broken the rule of the Church's faith …'[121]

If this theory of concurrence were correct, it would alleviate any tension that exists for the problem passages found in *Conlatio* 13 and elsewhere. For example, Cassian wrote, 'And when He sees in us some beginnings of a good will, He at once enlightens it and strengthens it and urges it on towards salvation, increasing that which He Himself implanted or which He sees to have arisen from our own efforts.'[122] Here he suggests, *prima facie*, a successive view: the good will begins with the human, then God responds. But when taken with other comments Cassian makes, including from the same chapter ('And in His goodness, not only does He inspire us with holy desires, but actually creates occasions for life and opportunities for good results …'[123]), then one begins to see that Cassian does not intend to divide grace and free will, but illustrate their concurrence. The passages which appear at face value to promote a successive model must be understood within the greater context. All good actions results from the grace of God, but that grace is not an overpowering grace so as to limit human freedom.

Necessary

In the absence of a concurrent model of grace, it is understandable why some previously referenced scholars would perceive Cassian's remarks make him out as a so-called Semi-Pelagian. Some of Cassian's remarks appear to indicate that divine grace is not necessary for the initial steps of salvation. The necessity of divine grace (or lack thereof) for the first steps is the defining feature to Semi-Pelagianism. While it has been stated that the alleged Semi-Pelagians did require divine grace for the completion of salvation, they

[121] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.11, *NPNF2* 11:428.
[122] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.8, *NPNF2* 11:426.
[123] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.8, *NPNF2* 11:426.

(allegedly) believed that the initial steps did not.[124] For example, Gibson wrote, 'While it cannot be denied that the teaching of Cassian and his school in denying the *necessity* of initial and prevenient grace is erroneous and opens a door at which Pelagianism may easily creep in, yet it was an honest attempt to vindicate human responsibility ….'[125] Contra Gibson we think the opposite is true: Cassian accepted the necessity of initial grace (though not as a superadded grace). Cassian believed that God's grace was not just necessary for the completion of it, but for all good things (which would include the initial steps of salvation).

That divine grace was necessary for the completion of salvation is evident from Cassian's remarks about the ascetic life. For the Gallic monks, salvation was a process which was to be worked out, only with the help of God. In his *Institutis* Cassian advises that '…none can attain the end of perfection and purity, except through true humility … believing that without His protection and aid extended to him at every instant, he cannot possibly obtain the perfection which he desires and to which he hastens so eagerly.'[126]

> For we ought to believe not merely that we cannot secure this actual perfection by our own efforts and exertions, but also that we cannot perform those things which we practice for its sake … without the assistance of the divine protection, and the grace of His inspiration, which He ordinarily sheds abroad in our hearts either through the instrumentality of another, or in His own person coming to visit us.[127]

Consider the contrast here with Pelagianism, which held that an individual could attain salvation from his own merits. 'However much then human weakness may strive, it cannot come up to the future reward, nor by its efforts so take off from Divine grace that it should not always remain a free gift.'[128] Chadwick observes, 'Cassian never suggests that sin can

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[124] 'Semipelagianism,' *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. Eliizabeth A. Livingstone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 468., 'while not denying the necessity of grace for salvation, maintained that the first steps towards the Christian life were ordinarily taken by the human will and that grace supervened only later.

[125] Gibson, 'Prolegomena,' *NPNF2* 11:193, emphasis his.

[126] Cassian, *Institutis* 12.23, *NPNF2* 11:287.

[127] Cassian, *Institutis* 12.16, *NPNF2* 11:284.

[128] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.13, *NPNF2* 11:430.

be overcome, that the Christian road can be travelled, unless God grants his grace.'[129] Finally, in *Conlatio* 13 Cassian writes of the seeds of virtue which exist in every human as part of God's loving, creative act. 'But unless these are quickened by the assistance of God, they will not be able to attain to an increase of perfection.'[130]

So one can see that Cassian believed that the human will was inadequate to merit salvation and thus had need of divine grace. Yet to reject the role of free will in *ordo salutis* would be erroneous to him.

> The notion that everything was of God struck the monks as ridiculous, absolving humans of the responsibility the monks took so seriously. Yet their conviction regarding the need for grace was equally strong. If grace didn't already flow, there was no hope since the passions were so strong. And lest one took pride in the struggle, there was the continual reminder of the soul's utter dependence on God's grace. That we may miss this fundamental framework is largely due to the fact that, for them, it was taken for granted. We look at their focus—human effort—and see only that.[131]

Divine grace was essential to the monks' *ordo salutis*, but not in the same way as Augustine. 'Cassian treats grace, not so much as a divine gift recreating the whole nature of man, but as an indispensable tonic, a curing rather than a transforming force.'[132] Grace was presumed and taken for granted. 'Any reader … will have no doubt that with Cassian grace was presupposed, not omitted.'[133] This applies to Cassian's view for every good action, including the initial steps of salvation.

That divine grace was necessary for every good action is also seen in Cassian's framework.

> And therefore though in many things, indeed in everything, it can be shown that men always have need of God's help, and that human weakness cannot accomplish anything that has to do with salvation by itself alone, i.e., without the aid of God, yet in nothing is this more clearly shown than in the acquisition and preservation of chastity.[134]

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[129] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 125.
[130] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.12, *NPNF2* 11:429.
[131] Fach, 'Semi-Pelagianism and Grace,' 62.
[132] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 133.
[133] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 125.
[134] Cassian, *Collationes*, 13.6, *NPNF2* 11.424.

Two important segments can be seen here: 1) 'indeed in everything … men always have need of God's help' and 2) 'human weakness cannot accomplish anything that has to do with salvation by itself alone.' These two segments provide defeaters for the common misconception that Cassian was a so-called Semi-Pelagian. For Cassian, free will was not a self-sufficient system but one that necessitated God's grace. It would, therefore, be more appropriate to describe Cassian's view of free will as 'the prevenience of the first grace.'[135] McQueen observes that the idea of free will as being grounded in God's grace from his creative act 'does not differ in any important respect from what Augustine had been teaching *about regula et humina virtutum* as early as his treatise *On Free Will*.'[136] Consider Cassian's claim:

> For we must acknowledge that everything is done either by His will or by His permission, i.e., we must believe that whatever is good is carried out by the will of God and by His aid, and whatever the reverse is done by His permission, when the Divine Protection is withdrawn from us for our sins and the hardness of our hearts, and suffers the devil and the shameful passions of the body to lord it over us.[137]

That passage could easily be passed off as Augustinian, but the issue between Cassian and Augustine comes at the role of free will. Note that that writing is part of Augustine's earlier corpus, prior to his own shift in thinking about God. Additionally, McQueen's observation ought not be surprising given that Prosper writes of the Gallic monks utilizing Augustine's earlier writings against him. So it would not be surprising to find, as Weaver also does, that there is agreement between the earlier Augustine and Cassian on the necessity of grace (even to the extent that they cite some of the same passages from the Scriptures).[138]

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[135] McQueen, 'John Cassian on Grace and Free Will,' 23.
[136] McQueen, 'John Cassian on Grace and Free Will,' 15-16.
[137] Cassian, *Collationes*, 3.20, *NPNF2* 11:329.
[138] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 108.

Since Cassian believed that divine grace was necessary for every action, it follows deductively that Cassian believed divine grace was necessary for the initial steps toward salvation. This can be seen in a formal categorical syllogism[139]:

> Premise 1: All good actions are ones that require divine grace
> Premise 2: Taking the initial steps toward salvation is a good action
> Conclusion: Taking the initial steps toward salvation requires divine grace.

This is not only a position that we can validly deduce from Cassian's remarks as we have above, but one he explicitly presents.

He believes that God's grace precedes the divine call and 'when He sees in us some beginnings of a good will, He at once enlightens it and strengthens it and urges it on towards salvation, increasing that which *He Himself implanted* or which He sees to have arisen from our own efforts.'[140] Cassian's use of *uel* would not necessarily designate exclusivity, because as a logical disjunctive both statements could be true, in which case Cassian's use of *uel* would be the inclusive use of 'or.' In *Collationes* 3, Cassian asserts that the good will of each human comes from the Lord.

> And this plainly teaches us that the beginning of our good will is given to us by the inspiration of the Lord, when He draws us towards the way of salvation either by His own act, or by the exhortations of some man, or by compulsion; … it is in our own power to follow up the encouragement and assistance of God with more or less zeal, and that accordingly we are rightly visited either with reward or with punishment.[141]

If Cassian's view on the necessity of divine grace for the initial steps of salvation still be doubted, further on in that same conference he states that,

> He puts into us *the very beginning of salvation*, and *gives to each the zeal of his free will*; and not grants the carrying out of the work, and the perfecting of goodness; and now saves men, even against their will and without their knowledge, from ruin that is close at hand, and a headlong fall; and now affords them occasions and opportunities of salvation, and wards off headlong and violent attacks from purposes that would bring death; and assists some who are already willing and running, while He draws others who are unwilling and resisting, and forces them to a good will. But that, when we do not always resist or remain

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[139] This categorial syllogism is logically valid, taking the mood-figure form AII-1.

[140] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.8, *NPNF2* 11:426; cf. *CSEL* 13:371, 'qui cum in nobis ortum quondam bonae uoluntatis inspexerit, inluminat eam confestim atque confortat et incitat ad salute, incrementum tribunes ei quam uel ipse plantauit uel nostro conatu uiderit emersisse.'

[141] Cassian, *Collationes* 3.19, *NPNF2* 11:328.

> persistently unwilling, *everything is granted to us by God*, and that the main share in our salvation is to be ascribed not to the merit of our own works but to heavenly grace …[142]

Finally, in his concluding remarks in *Collationes* 13 he lifts up the authority of the Church and church tradition: 'And therefore it is laid down by all the Catholic fathers … that the first stage in the Divine gift is for each man to be inflamed with the desire of everything that is good, but in such a way that the choice of free will is open to either side....'[143] All of these statements depict a man who would soundly reject the claim that he thought humans could take the initial steps of salvation apart from divine grace.

As we have shown, Cassian believed that divine grace was necessary not just for the completion of salvation but for all good actions, which includes the willing to believe. Marín is correct in his assessment that 'Cassian's spiritual doctrine places particular emphasis on the *fragilitas* of human nature and on Man's total dependence on divine grace at every stage of ascetic progress, from God's initial *uocatio* to the attainment of *puritas cordis*.'[144] It would be inaccurate to say that Cassian, representative of the Gallic monks (the so-called Semi-Pelagians), rejected the necessity of grace for the initial steps of salvation, or for any stage of the salvation process.

Varied

Finally, Cassian believed that grace was dispensed variegated. He provides examples of characters in the New Testament to illustrate this, remarks on the inscrutability of divine grace, and writes of the variety of means through which God works.

Within *Collationes* 13 Cassian describes a variety of scenarios mentioning how God's grace was given to a greater degree in some instances over others.[145] Zacchaeus,

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[142] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.18, *NPNF2* 11:434, emphases mine.
[143] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.18, *NPNF2* 11:434.
[144] Marín, 'Original Sin in Provençal Ascetic Theology,' 291.
[145] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.15, *NPNF2* 11:432.

who was willing and anticipated the Lord's arrival, was blessed with his presence. Paul, on the other hand, was shown divine grace against his will. Cornelius was provided a messenger with the Good News. These examples led Cassian to the conclusion:

> And so the manifold wisdom of God grants with manifold and inscrutable kindness salvation to men; and imparts to each one according to his capacity the grace of His bounty, so that He wills to grant His healing not according to the uniform power of His Majesty but according to the measure of the faith in which He finds each one, or as He Himself has imparted it to each one.[146]

Here we see that Cassian believes that some forms of grace are given in a relativistic, variegated manner. 'By those instances then which we have brought forward from the gospel records we can very clearly perceive that God brings salvation to mankind in diverse and innumerable methods and inscrutable ways….'[147] God's grace is given not in a pre-set, pre-packaged manner but in relation to a person's life situation. Weaver rightly assess that 'Perhaps one can say that for Cassian the varieties of grace meant the various ways that God interacts with various individuals, whereas for Augustine the varieties of grace meant the various forms of grace appropriate to the various stages of the human condition.'[148] Whereas Augustine's model of grace has become systematic and ordered, Cassian's variegated grace is somewhat unordered and includes an element of mystery.

The inscrutability of divine grace is realized upon reflection of every day tasks. This is a position Cassian holds in both the *Institutis* and the *Collationes*.

> Not alone giving thanks to Him for that He has created us as reasonable beings, and endowed us with the power of free will, and blessed us with the grace of baptism, and granted to us the knowledge and aid of the law, but for these things as well, which are bestowed upon us by His daily providence; viz., that He delivers us from the craft of our enemies; that He works with us so that we can overcome the sins of the flesh, that, even without our knowing it, He shields us from dangers; that He protects us from falling into sin; that He helps us and enlightens us, so that we can understand and recognize the actual help which He gives us, (which some will have it is what is meant by the law); that, when we are through His influence secretly struck with compunction for our sins and negligences, He visits us with His regard and chastens us to our soul's health; that even against our will we are sometimes drawn by Him to salvation; lastly that this very free will

[146] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.15, *NPNF2* 11:432.
[147] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.17, *NPNF2* 11:433.
[148] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 113.

> of ours, which is more readily inclined to sin, is turned by Him to a better purpose, and by His prompting and suggestion, bent towards the way of virtue.[149]

Cassian's reflection here is echoed in *Collationes* seven. Therein he focuses on the inner turmoil of temptation, defends a robust view of human free will, but associates it with variegated divine concurrence.

> No one who has experienced the conflicts of the inner man, can doubt that our foes are continually lying in wait for us. But we mean that they oppose our progress in such a way that we can think of them as only *inciting* to evil things and not *forcing*. But no one could altogether avoid whatever sin they were inclined to imprint upon our hearts, if a strong impulse was present to force (evil) upon us, just as it is to suggest it. Wherefore as there is in them ample power of inciting, so in us there is a supply of power of rejection, and of liberty of acquiescing. But if we are afraid of their power and assaults, we may also claim the protection and assistance of God against them, of which we read: 'For greater is He who is in us than he who is in this world:' and His aid fights on our side with much greater power than their hosts fight against us; for God is not only the suggester of what is good, but the maintainer and insister of it, so that sometimes He draws us towards salvation even against our will and without our knowing it.[150]

Spiritually dark forces are only able to tempt, not force; yet when they do the protection of God is available. That God is the supporter and defender of the weak in the battle against the flesh is supported in the controversial *Collationes* 13. Cassian provides a list of the tasks that the Father performs for his children. God knows 'whom to carry in the bosom of His grace, whom to train to virtue in His sight by the exercise of free will, and yet He helps him in his efforts, hears him when he calls, leaves him not when he seeks Him, and sometimes snatches him from peril even without his knowing it.'[151] He believed that divine grace is utilized in times when human free will falters, even in times of depravity.[152]

In the variety of divine actions we see a variety of grace. Sometimes God works with the human in a cooperative manner and sometimes God works with the human in an uncooperative manner ('without his knowing it,' a phrase which occurs multiple times in the *Collationes*). By now, we should be able to recognize that Cassian's view of the

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[149] Cassian, *Institutis*, 12.18, *NPNF2* 11:285-286.
[150] Cassian, *Collationes* 7.8, *NPNF2* 11:365.
[151] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.14, *NPNF2* 11:432.
[152] Cassian, *Collationes* 3.12, *NPNF2* 11:326.

uncooperative manner of grace is one that does not impose upon a robust model of free will. But if we were pressed on this matter, we could hold to a narrow interpretation of uncooperative grace. First, Cassian's list of divine action occurs for the Christian, one who has already assented to receive God's help. Second, the snatching from peril would not necessitate a decrease of free will choices. It would, at the least, require God saving a person from some harmful action that would be done to that person. Some actions such as those do not necessitate a victim's choosing for some state of affairs but rather that some state of affairs happens to the victim. This would not constitute as an imposition against a person's free will.

The variegated nature of grace means that 'we know that God creates opportunities of salvation in various ways, it is in our power to make use of the opportunities granted to us by heaven more or less earnestly.'[153] If Cassian's doctrine of grace were to be summed, Weaver formulated it well: 'God interacts with the multitude of individual persons in the multitude of ways necessary to assist them toward salvation while at the same time preserving their freedom.'[154] This doctrine was not created by Cassian, but finds itself situated in a tradition that pre-dates Augustine. Chadwick's position that 'Cassian upon the central fact of dependence still alines himself with Augustine'[155] on grace is too general a conclusion. In the sense that divine grace is needed for salvation, the two monks are in agreement. In the sense that divine grace is needed to resurrect the human will prior to conversion (sometimes referred to as "regeneration"), the two monks are not in alignment. Instead, 'Cassian's perspective was very much that of the eastern Christian and monastic traditions that formed him.'[156] This also holds true for his doctrine of Original Sin, to which we now turn. With the personal background of Cassian described and the relevant

[153] Cassian, *Collationes* 3.12, *NPNF2* 11:325.
[154] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 72.
[155] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 78
[156] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 78.

theological points of grace and free will explained (especially to ward off Pelagian suspicions), we are now in a position to explore Cassian's doctrine of Original Sin.

Cassian's Doctrine of Original Sin

John Cassian's view of the Fall has received little attention by scholars, but yet his doctrine of Original Sin forms the underpinnings for his view on the nature of man, sin, salvation, and Christology. For example, Cassian only makes one explicit reference to Original Sin ('original or actual sin'[157]), but he 'uses the notion of original sin to reject Augustine's theses about God having a salvific will restricted to only some people.'[158] In this particular section we can see how Original Sin effects his position on the scope of those who are offered salvation.

While we have shown that Cassian had an eastern influence with regard to his asceticism and his other doctrinal beliefs, we will demonstrate that Cassian's view of Original Sin is more closely aligned with the Greek theological tradition.

> [T]he Eastern Church has always held a milder view of the effect of the Fall than that which has been current in the West since the days of Augustine; and, indeed, Cassian, in making his protest against the rising tide of Augustinianism, was in the main only handing on the teaching which he had received from his Eastern instructors.[159]

As a monk, Cassian was no foreigner to recognizing the drastic weaknesses of the human body and will, but on some issues his view of Original Sin never went as far as Augustine's. 'Cassian's spiritual doctrine places particular emphasis on the *fragilitas* of human nature and on Man's total dependence on divine grace at every stage of ascetic progress, from God's initial *uocatio* to the attainment of *puritas cordis*.'[160] First we will

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[157] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.7, *NPNF2* 11:425.

[158] Marín, 'Original Sin in Provençal Ascetic Theology,' 293. Cf. *Collationes* 13.7, *NPNF2* 11:425. Marín notes that this is the only time Cassian refers explicitly to the concept of Original Sin, in the context of 1 Timothy 2:4.

[159] Gibson, 'Prolegomena,' *NPNF2* 11:193.

[160] Marín, 'Original Sin in Provençal Ascetic Theology,' 291.

show that Cassian's sense of the sinfulness of man is best described by his understanding of the carnality of man. Then we will show that he believed there remains, post-Fall, some natural goodness in human nature. Finally, we will explain Cassian's version of inability. These three concepts describe the most critical aspects of Cassian's view of Original Sin.

Carnality

The first sin, which had terrible consequences, occurred as a result of pride. Pride 'is the reason of the first fall, and the starting point of the original malady, which again insinuating itself into the first man, through him who had already been destroyed by it, produced the weaknesses and materials of all faults.'[161] In the *Collationes*, Cassian adds to the list of sins of the Fall by including gluttony and vainglory. 'For it was gluttony through which he took the fruit of the forbidden tree, vainglory through which it was said "Your eyes shall be opened," and pride through which it was said "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."'[162] While these descriptors tell us Cassian's view on why Adam sinned, this would not necessarily show how he differed from the Pelagians on the consequences of the Fall.

Cassian believed that the first sin was a 'sale' which 'makes us carnal.' [163] It was by Adam's 'ruinous transaction and fraudulent bargain we were sold. For when he was led astray by the persuasion of the serpent he brought all his descendants under the yoke of perpetual bondage….'[164] Cassian continually describes the first sin as an ill-advised transaction, false advertising, or in simple terms: a bad deal.

> For by eating of the forbidden tree he received from the serpent the price of his liberty, and gave up his natural freedom and chose to give himself up to perpetual slavery to

[161] Cassian, *Institutis* 12.5, *NPNF2* 11:281.

[162] Cassian, *Collationes* 5.6, *NPNF2* 11:341. Cassian correlates these three sins against the temptation of Jesus comparing both of them as Adams, 'the one being the first for destruction and death, and the other the first for resurrection and life.'

[163] Cassian, *Collationes*, 23.12, *NPNF2* 11:526.

[164] Cassian, *Collationes*, 23.12, *NPNF2* 11:526.

> him from whom he had obtained the deadly price of the forbidden fruit; and thenceforth he was bound by this condition and not without reason subjected all the offspring of his posterity to perpetual service to him whose slave he had become. For what can any marriage in slavery produce but slaves?[165]

The consequences of this bad deal were quite drastic (all of Adam's posterity were born into slavery).

In his explanation that all humans are born into slavery he makes it clear that the Creator-God's sovereignty was not undone by the devil's work. As such, humans retain a sufficient amount of free will and it is those 'who contrary to right had sold themselves by the sin of greedy lust' who are guilty.[166] Chadwick rightly compares, 'this equilibrium between good and the evil differs from the Augustinian conception where the human will has descended wholly upon the side of the flesh.'[167] Weaver confirms this difference when she writes, 'In contrast to Augustine, Cassian perceived the condition of the will not as enslaved to sin, free only for evil, but as "more readily inclined to vice either through want of knowledge of what is good, or through the delights of passion."'[168] Thus when Cassian and (the later) Augustine each write of free will, they do so with different concepts in mind.

Cassian's notion of carnality answers the question of how Original Sin was passed on. Similar to Augustine, Cassian believed in carnal generation (i.e., sexual procreation resulted in persons with identical human natures as their progenitors). In the absence of corroborative evidence, in this case, we are prevented from identifying just how strong of a metaphysical connection Cassian makes with the passing on of human nature. Yet what would this mean for the human nature that Jesus had? Was he susceptible to the carnal desires of the flesh? According to Cassian, the Son of God is the only human who is exempt from the *lex peccati*, because he was conceived by the Holy Spirit.[169] Thus, it

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[165] Cassian, *Collationes*, 23.12, *NPNF2* 11: 526.
[166] Cassian, *Collationes* 23.12, *NPNF2* 11:526.
[167] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 123.
[168] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 109.
[169] Cassian, *Collationes* 5.5, *NPNF2* 11:340.

would be inaccurate to say that Christ came "in the flesh" but accurate to say that Christ came "in the likeness of the flesh." 'Cassian agrees with Augustine and Ambrose that only Christ, who, conceived by a virgin without *utiusque sexus conmixtio*, came into the world in *similitudine carnis peccati*, was without the sin that Adam contracted when he trespassed.'[170]

Unlike Augustine's view, Cassian does not appear to recognize the inheritance of guilt in any substantial way, despite holding to a similar notion of the transmission of Original Sin. The closest Cassian comes to that is the claim that humanity 'is brought into condemnation,'[171] but Cassian makes no explanation if this is a direct inheritance or an indirect inheritance (i.e., guilty because each person sins). Toward the end of the *Collationes* Cassian remarks that 'the law of sin is really what the fall of its first father brought on mankind by that fault of his.'[172] Note here the affirmation of Adam's fault (and not that the act itself was a fault of his progeny) and that the consequence was not guilt per se but the law of sin (by which Cassian means the curse from Genesis 3:17 and 3:19). 'Cassian's writings show that he perceived the human race to be a *victum* [sic] of death and the devil and not a felon-deserving punishment.'[173] According to Augustine, on the other hand, humans were guilty as a result of their presence at the Fall (given Augustine's beliefs of metaphysical realism, though Chadwick notes that Augustine never settled his mind on the matter).[174] 'Cassian [on the other hand] held with the east that every soul was created individually by God and inserted in the physical body born from the parents.'[175] As we will

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[170] Marín, 'Original Sin in Provençal Ascetic Theology,' 292. Cf. Cassian, *Collationes* 22.12, *ACW* 57:775.

[171] Cassian, *Collationes* 5.6, *NPNF2* 11:341. This is observed by Marín, 292, but he does not elaborate on what Cassian could or could not mean as it pertains to the inheritance of Adam's very guilt.

[172] Cassian, *Collationes* 23.11, *NPNF2* 11:525.

[173] Azkoul, 'Peccatum Originale,' 48.

[174] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 124.

[175] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 124. Cf. *Collationes* 8.25, *NPNF2* 11:386, 'For as we said a little while ago spirit does not beget spirit just as soul cannot procreate soul, though we do not doubt that the compacting of flesh is formed from man's seed …'

show further on, there are other positions that Cassian held which align better with the Eastern tradition.

Continuing on, the 'original curse' made humans carnal and 'condemned us to thorns and thistles, and our father has sold us by that unhappy bargain so that we cannot do the good that we would ….'[176] The good that Cassian has in mind is the 'recollection of God Most High' which is a state of being. He does not mean that humans are unable to do any objectively good action. His use of 'cannot' is also qualified. '…[W]e are often even against our will troubled by natural desires, which we would rather know nothing about.'[177] The notion of being troubled implies that there is something good remaining in the will of each human, because 'we know that in our flesh there dwelleth no good thing viz., the perpetual and lasting peace of this meditation of which we have spoken …'[178]

That last remark that 'there dwellth no good thing' is not a blanket statement about the default or natural state of each human. Cassian qualifies what he means, 'viz., the perpetual and lasting peace of this meditation of which we have spoken' which we ought to take as a statement about the continual contemplation of God. He refers to some consequence(s) of sin, not inability or an eternal condemnation, but rather the continuous consequences of Adam's fall in the present life. We know Cassian could not be referring to an Augustinian sense of inability because he notes that the troubling by our natural desires occurs 'even against our will,' implying the goodness of the will. According to Sandra Fach, 'Though the desire for evil is strong, the desire for good still exists. This, then isn't an Augustinian picture of total depravity—but it certainly isn't close to Pelagianism.'[179] Neander concurs by observing that, 'Cassian departed altogether from the Pelagian system by recognizing the universal corruption of human nature, as a consequence of the first

[176] Cassian, *Collationes* 23.12, *NPNF2* 11:526.
[177] Cassian, *Collationes* 23.12, *NPNF2* 11:526.
[178] Cassian, *Collationes* 23.13, *NPNF2* 11:526-527.
[179] Fach, 'Semi-Pelagianism and Grace,' 65.

transgression ….'[180] This corruption results in the carnality of the flesh and the warring between the body and the soul.

For Cassian, the warring against the body of flesh is the result of carnality and the purpose for his ascetic writings. *Conlatio* 4, 'On the Lust of the Flesh and of the Spirit,' details the war inside of a person, a battle between their soul and their flesh. 'And since these two; viz. the desires of the flesh and of the spirit co-exist in one and the same man, there arises an internal warfare daily carried on within us ….'[181] So, the 5th century monk warns, one must not allow outside spirits to control one's thoughts, 'else there would not remain any free will in man, nor would efforts for our improvement be in our power.'[182] The freedom of the will is critical toward weighing between the two forces.

> Between these two desires then the free will of the soul stands in an intermediate position somewhat worthy of blame, and neither delights in the excesses of sin, nor acquiesces in the sorrows of virtue. … And this free will would never lead us to attain true perfection, but plunge us into a most miserable condition of lukewarmness…. [T]hese two desires are contradicting each other in a struggle of this kind, the soul's free will, which does not like either to give itself up entirely to carnal desires, nor to throw itself into the exertions which virtue calls for, is tempered as it were by a fair balance….[183]

That free will would never lead us to attain true perfection tells us two aspects of Cassian's anthropology. First, it is another indication that Cassian would reject the common definition of Semi-Pelagianism (i.e. initial steps). Free will is a trait that would not result in even the leading toward salvation, unless it were prompted by divine grace. Second, Cassian's statement that free will does not lead us to true perfection tells us that he believed in the inevitability of sin. Cassian did not believe free will afforded someone the means of living a sinless life. 'Whoever dares to say that he is without sin, therefore, claims for himself … an equality in the thing that is unique and proper to him [i.e. Christ] alone.'[184]

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[180] Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, 688
[181] Cassian, *Collationes* 4.11, *NPNF2* 11:334.
[182] Cassian, *Collationes* 1.17, *NPNF2* 11:303.
[183] Cassian, *Collationes* 4.12, *NPNF2* 11:334.
[184] Cassian, *Collationes*, 22.12.

Squires believes Cassian's use of "Whoever" 'most certainly was referring to Pelagius,' but this is not made explicitly clear.[185]

The impossibility of the sinless life might give the impression that the propensity to sin is a weak propensity. Not so for Cassian, who held to a firm propensity. Despite 'this very free will of ours, which is *more readily inclined to sin*, is turned by Him to a better purpose, and by His prompting and suggestion, bent towards the way of virtue.'[186] This strong inclination affects even our daily tasks.

> Which of us … even at the moment when he raises his soul in prayer to God on high, does not fall into a sort of stupor, and even against his will offend by that very thing from which he hoped for pardon of his sins? Who, I ask, is so alert and vigilant as never, while he is singing a Psalm to God, to allow his mind to wander from the meaning of Scripture?[187]

One might consider cases like this trivial, but to the ascetic seeking perfection it becomes a serious concern.

As dreadful as the fallen human nature is, there is an upside to the carnality of the flesh. Marín describes that in Cassian's thought, 'The flesh rebels against the spirit to warn Man of his total dependence on the grace of God and prevent his vanity.'[188] For example, in Augustine, concupiscence was a punishment of the Fall; but for Cassian sexual desire is a '"useful" aid in stirring the soul to advance in the spiritual life.'[189] The carnal desires are like a warning message to the soul to point and direct it toward God. So there is a dark side and a light side fighting for the human will. This certainly leads to the observation that post-lapsarian humanity retain some of the goodness of God's creative act, otherwise there

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[185] Squires, 'Reassessing Pelagianism,' 62. Further on in his assessment of *Collationes* 23.19 Squires claims (70), 'I would suggest that Cassian has in mind the same *quisquis* that we saw earlier in his Conf. 22: this is a reference to Pelagius.' One difficulty here for Squires's interpretation of the intended audience is that Cassian quotes 1 John 1:8, 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' It seems just as feasible that Cassian is making a general conditional statement about any person who claims to be without sin in that same manner, and not Pelagius, particularly.

[186] Cassian, *Institutis* 12.18, *NPNF2* 11:286, emphasis mine.

[187] Cassian, *Collationes* 23.5, *NPNF2* 11:523.

[188] Marín, 'Original Sin in Provençal Ascetic Theology,' 293.

[189] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 124; cf. Augustine, *De Nuptiis et Concupiscientia.*1.23.33, *NPNF1* 5:273; Cassian, *Collationes* 4.7, *NPNF2* 11:333.

would not be a struggle. Chadwick rightly notes, 'The carnality in man which is the result of the Fall, has not made man incapable of doing good: it has rather produced a tension in human nature whereby the sinful desires pull against the spiritual desires.'[190] That there remain some goodness in human nature from God's creative act is the focus of our next section.

Seeds of Goodness

There are some degrees of human nature which remain sufficiently functioning after the Fall, according to Cassian. While a doctrine of Original Sin is frequently described by theologians as the effects of the Fall that carry over to Adam's posterity, such descriptions fail to recognize the remaining good aspects of God's creative act of what Adam's fallen nature passes on to the future generations. 'For Cassian, the fall has not caused total depravity in humankind; the human will is not dead, as Augustine thinks; of course it is not healthy, but Cassian holds that, though it is sick, it is not incapable at times of willing the good, even if not of performing.'[191] We see Cassian's position through his explanation of the seeds of goodness and the evidence he provides from the witness of biblical characters.

Cassian believed that every human has 'by nature some seeds of goodness' which were 'implanted by the kindness of the Creator; but unless these are quickened by the assistance of God, they will not be able to attain to an increase of perfection ….'[192] Yet

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[190] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 123.

[191] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 292.

[192] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.12, *NPNF2* 11:429.

Collationes 13.7, *NPNF2* 11:425, contains a different metaphor: 'And when his goodness sees in us even the very smallest spark of good will shining forth, which He himself has struck as it were out of the hard flints of our hearts, He fans and fosters it and nurses it with His breath….'

Collationes 9.4, *NPNF2* 11:388, Cassian describes the 'natural lightness' of human nature using a third metaphor. He describes a feather weighed down by moisture to illustrate the weight of sin upon a human. If there were no moisture, the feather would be taken by the wind to float high into the sky. Likewise, 'also our soul, if it is not weighted with faults that touch it, and the cares of this world, or damaged by the moisture of injurious lusts, will be raised as it were by *the natural blessing* of its own purity and borne aloft to the heights by the light breath of spiritual meditation.'

even this quickening is not performed at the expense of human freedom, as Cassian shortly thereafter qualifies, 'But that freedom of the will is to some degree in a man's own power is very clearly taught ….' The language of the 'seeds of goodness' is not unique to Cassian. Another friend of John Chrysostom, Isidore of Pelusium uses the same terminology:

> By reason of the first sin, the nature of the first man became subject to the dominion of perishable things and to the excitements of sensual pleasure. As in this state he went on propagating his kind, the same condition was transmitted to his posterity, and the evil was still augmented among men through the negligence of each man's individual will. There still remains, however, the *seeds of goodness* in human nature. They who fostered this, distinguished themselves; they who suppressed it, were punished. Even for that which proceeds form our own will, we need the assistance of divine grace. But this is never wanting to any who are only willing to do what belongs to themselves. There may, doubtless, in particular cases, be such a thing as prevenient grace, although, according to the general rule, grace is not prevenient,--but there is no such thing as a constraining, irresistible grace.[193]

For Cassian (and Isidore), Chadwick explains, 'For there are still within man "natural" possibilities for good, *semina virtutum*. In so far as they have been created by God, these natural possibilities are due to him—nevertheless theses seeds of virtue are, *naturaliter*, part of human nature and lie within the sphere of man rather than the supernatural sphere of God.'[194] Yet, Chadwick makes a perplexing remark when he claims that under Cassian's view, 'and since the human race has this knowledge of the good, it can sometimes perform it *naturaliter*, of its own free will **unaided by grace** except in so far as God is regarded as granting his grace when he originally created mankind capable of doing good.'[195] How Chadwick can claim that the naturally good actions of humans are 'unaided by grace' and yet God 'granting his grace' seems only to occur through equivocation. What Chadwick likely means in the first instance of 'grace' might be something closer to an Augustinian view of grace. As argued and stated in Cassian explicitly, all good actions occur because of the grace of God.

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[193] Isidore of Pelusium, trans. in Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, 722, emphasis mine.

[194] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 130.

[195] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 129-130, bold emphasis mine.

Since we know that Cassian believed all good actions were the result of divine grace, one ought not be confounded by his contrasting remarks, 'For we know that there are many good things which we cannot deny that the blessed Apostle and all men as good as he either have by nature, or acquire by grace.'[196] By this we should take Cassian to mean that some of the good things humans have are through the grace of God in his creative act. We know this is what Cassian truly means because he grounds the goodness of human nature in the 'excellence of nature granted by the goodness of the Creator.'[197] Other 'good things' 'acquire[d] by grace' should be understood as things that are given through a superadded postlapsarian act of grace. In either way, God's grace is given, though Cassian chooses here to communicate the moments of those graces in different ways (one 'by nature' and the other superadded).

Biblical examples are many for Cassian, who describes how we can see the seeds of goodness in the life of characters in the Scripture. In *Conlatio* 13, chapter 12 he quotes from Genesis 3:22, 'Behold, Adam is become as one of us, knowing good and evil.' By this Cassian believes that 'Adam therefore after the fall conceived a knowledge of evil which he had not previously, but did not lose the knowledge of good which he had before.'[198] The Fall brought about drastic consequences, but it did not subtract from Adam's memory of ethical propositions. 'When Adam fell, his will also suffered a "collapse", in the sense that it became henceforth infirm and wayward. But he did not lose the knowledge of good with which he had been formerly endowed.'[199] The evidence of the knowledge of good is seen elsewhere.

Cassian believes that all humans have a natural knowledge of God's law, which explains how individuals in the book of Genesis (i.e., pre-Mosaic law) knew what the right

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[196] Cassian, *Collationes* 23.2, *NPNF2* 11:520.
[197] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.9, *NPNF2* 11427.
[198] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.12, *NPNF2* 11:428.
[199] McQueen, 'John Cassian on Grace and Free Will,' 15.

course of action was. Abel, Noah, Enoch, Abraham and others are all examples of individuals who knew the law in a natural manner.[200] Like with all things in this world, Cassian believed the natural knowledge of God's law was corrupted as a result of the Fall, but some of it remains. The Mosaic law is described as a helper and reminder for those who may depart from it, 'through sheer forgetfulness from the teaching in which they had been instructed by the light of nature: for that the complete knowledge of the law was implanted in man at his first creation, is clearly proved from' the moral actions of pre-Mosaic individuals.[201]

The seeds of goodness are also recognized not only in the followers of Yahweh, but in the behavior of non-believers. In *Collationes* 13.4, Germanus asks about how non-believers can perform morally good actions. Pristas explains that, 'Cassian affirms a qualified natural capacity for good. The pagans, by refraining from immoral behavior, are doing good inasmuch as they restrain their evil impulses.'[202] Further on in chapter 12 of the same conference, Cassian quotes Romans 2:14-16 that the Gentiles are a law unto themselves. This, for him, is evidence of the seeds of natural goodness. It is not necessarily the case that non-believers performing good acts could attain salvation. in reflecting upon Psalm 119, Cassian argues,

> Certainly [David] was in possession of understanding, which had been granted to him by nature, and also had at his fingers' ends a knowledge of God's commands which were persevered in writing in the law; and still he prayed the Lord that he might learn this more thoroughly as he knew that what came to him by nature would never be sufficient for him…[203]

As we see, the seeds of goodness are insufficient for arriving at the destination of the perfect contemplation of God.

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[200] Cassian, *Collationes* 8.23, *NPNF2* 11:385.
[201] Cassian, *Collationes* 8.23, *NPNF2* 11:385.
[202] Pristas, 'The Theological Anthropology of John Cassian,' 276.
[203] Cassian, *Collationes* 3.15, *NPNF2* 11:327.

That natural goodness somewhat remains is important for Cassian because 'when one wishes to show where faith comes from, one has to deal with the main problem posed by the Marseilles monks' doctrine, that of the *initium fidei*, which appears in John Cassian's *Collationes* in 426.'[204] Cassian and his company were concerned about the origin of faith. Does faith originate within the human person or does faith originate from God? Under the Augustinian notion of Inability, a human person is unable to do anything toward his or her own salvation apart from an act of superadded grace. 'In Augustine the will to good is dead: in Cassian it is not dead, but neither is it *sanus*. Rather he conceives the human will as sick, needing constant attention from the healing grace, but like a sick man still capable occasionally—if revived by medicine—of healthy acts.'[205] If some goodness remains from God's creative act, then humans could retain some ability to accept the gift of salvation.

One could see how 'The problem for Prosper and his followers lay with Cassian's claims for human potential even after the Fall.'[206] In reflecting upon this ideological battle, we can see the distinction between not being able to earn one's salvation and not being able to perform any good acts. On Cassian's model, humans are still unable to earn their own salvation. Human freedom of 'the will is not free, in the sense of perfect liberty, to choose right or wrong because of the carnality that resulted from the Fall…'[207] but it remains able to choose an objective good. Contrast this position against the Pelagian one, which held that the will was unaffected by the Fall. Instead, 'Cassian goes much further in teaching that the will can be ineffectual, it can be inadequate to the necessities preliminary to salvation, and it can even be corrupt and wicked.'[208] In *Collationes* 14 he wrote, 'For it is

[204] Delmulle, '"Les vers servent auux saints,"' 83.
[205] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 130.
[206] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 79.
[207] Fach, 'Semi-Pelagianism and Grace,' 64.
[208] Casiday, 'Cassian Against the Pelagians,' 11, cf. corresponding footnotes.

impossible for an impure soul (however earnestly it may devote itself to reading) to obtain spiritual knowledge.'[209] This is why the soul cannot receive spiritual knowledge unless 'it has first been purified from all the foul stains of sin….'[210] This hints at Cassian's model of Inability, our final segment of the critical aspects of his view of Original Sin.

Inability

Augustine's version of Inability could be described as the position that humans are *non posse non peccare* in a meticulous sense. Every action (or perhaps better yet, state of being) a human does is (ultimately) sinful, because human nature was entirely corrupted at the Fall. '[I]n the teaching of the Doctor of Grace, the effects of the Fall are far more radical, for man has by the sin of Adam lost *any power of doing good*; his will towards the good has perished utterly, with the consequence that without the grace of God there is nothing but depravity.'[211] 'Far from sharing Augustine's views on total annihilation of Man's capacity for good...,'[212] it could be said of Cassian that humans are *non posse non peccare* in an ultimate sense, *vis-a-vis* the inevitability of sin. This should not be misunderstood so as to think Cassian thought some humans had not sinned and would eventually do so, but that sin was so pervasive that even straying away in our thoughts during prayer was sinful. As we have explored earlier, Cassian's ascetic writings are full of passages on human infirmity, in reference both to the physical body of flesh and the metaphysical condition of human nature.

We know Cassian rejected (or would have rejected) the (late-)Augustinian model of Inability because in chapter 12 of *Collationes* 13, Cassian specifically argues against one

[209] Cassian, *Collationes* 14.14, *NPNF2* 11:442.

[210] Cassian, *Collationes* 14.14, *NPNF2* 11:442; be aware that Cassian means 'spiritual knowledge' in the sense of the destination of a process, not knowledge acquired at conversion (cf. *Collationes* 14.15 & 14.16, *NPNF2* 11:442-444).

[211] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 129, emphasis mine.

[212] Marín, 'Original Sin in Provençal Ascetic Theology,' 289.

version of Inability that is awfully similar to, if not identical with, the Augustinian one. He thinks 'we should not hold that God made man such that he can never will or be capable of what is good: or else He has not granted him a free will, if He has suffered him only to will or be capable of evil, but neither to will or be capable of what is good of himself.'[213] In saying this Cassian is speaking in a present perspective, that God's presently created order includes humans able to choose between good and evil. Cassian is not referring exclusivity to the pre-lapsarian state. He is fully cognizant of the distinction between human nature before the Fall and post-Fall human nature because he argues that post-lapsarian humans have knowledge of good and evil. The view of Inability that he is critical of is 'sufficiently absurd and altogether alien from the Catholic faith.' [214]

Cassian's version of Inability could be described as the position that humans are unable to attain salvation of their own accord. Like Augustine, Cassian's doctrine of Inability is grounded in his view of the Fall. Marín, astutely observes, '... Man's inability to attain the highest good to which human nature must aspire—the perennial contemplation of God—is also a consequence of original sin.'[215] Because the state of humanity is in such a way that humans are unable to earn their own salvation, they are utterly dependent upon divine grace. Cassian introduces *Collationes* 13 as a way of understanding that divine grace is needed for the attainment of chastity, because human effort is unable to do it alone. In his tale, it was Abbot Chaeremon who claimed 'that man even though he strive with all his might for a good result, yet cannot become master of what is good unless he has acquired it simply by the gift of Divine bounty and not by the efforts of his own toil.'[216] Salvation, including the attainment of chastity, is unattainable on one's own accord, 'For neither does

[213] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.12, *NPNF2* 11:428.
[214] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.12, *NPNF2* 11:428.
[215] Marín, 'Original Sin in Provençal Ascetic Theology,' 289.
[216] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.1, *NPNF2* 11:422-423.

anyone enjoy good health whenever he will, nor is he at his own will and pleasure set free from disease and sickness.'[217]

Grace is necessary for salvation because the human will is inadequate to merit salvation. 'Cassian showed great interest in how monks ought to emulate Christ, not least in abjuring their wills; he also showed great interest in how God graciously shores up the inadequate human will, and he frequently stated his case in Antipelagian terms.'[218] Cassian's most ferocious attack against Pelagianism occurs in his final work *De Incarnatione*. While more attention has been given to Cassian's *Institutis* and *Collationes*, little attention has been given to *De Incarnatione*.[219] Therein Cassian argues against Nestorius in favor of what would be recognized as the orthodox Christology of the Christian church.[220] Cassian makes extensive use of the Scripture, appeals to church tradition and church leaders, and presents intriguing arguments. One of the arguments he makes use of on multiple occasions is that the Nestorians were rehashing the Pelagian heresy. In Book 1 Cassian wrote that an error of the Nestorians,

> sprang from the error of Pelagius; viz., that in saying that Jesus Christ had lived as a mere man without any stain of sin, they actually went so far as to declare that men could also be without sin if they liked. For they imagined that it followed that if Jesus Christ being a mere man was without sin, all men also could without the help of God be whatever He as a mere man without participating in the Godhead, could be.[221]

Since the Nestorians believed that there was a distinct person (Jesus of Nazareth) with a distinct human nature, who was without sin, then (Cassian argues) any human could be without sin (which is Pelagian). For him, 'What is explicit in Nestorian christology was implicit to Pelagianism.'[222]

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[217] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.9, *NPNF2* 11:427.

[218] Casiday, 'Cassian Against the Pelagians,' 17.

[219] This work was requested by Leo who was archdeacon to Pope Celestine I (422-432). Given Leo's request it is highly probable that the work was written before the Council of Ephesus in 431 which condemned Nestorius for his heretical views.

[220] Nestorius was accused and later condemned for believing that there were two persons in Jesus Christ, one person with respect to each nature (divine and human).

[221] Cassian, *De Incarnatione* 1.3, *NPNF2* 11:552.

[222] Azkoul, 'Peccatum Originale,' 46.

Cassian argues that in the Incarnation, humanity receives the gift of grace from Jesus Christ. But this grace cannot come from a mere man, for 'fragile earthly things cannot possibly furnish a thing of lasting and immortal value; nor can anyone give to another that in which he himself is lacking nor supply a sufficiency of that….'[223] Elsewhere he argues that if the alleged mere man were to merit holiness, then it would give humans a false hope. That would be 'A most perverse and wicked assertion as it gives to men what does not belong to them, and takes away from God what is His.'[224]

Nestorianism ultimately lapses into Pelagianism because 'in asserting that a mere man was born of the Virgin, said that he was the teacher rather than the redeemer of mankind; for He did not bring to men redemption of life but only an example of how to live ….'[225] This was problematic for Cassian, who believed 'Christ not only sets a good example for us to emulate, He also provide a theological basis for claiming that divine grace is necessary at all levels for the Christian life.'[226]

It becomes clear that in *De Incarnatione* Cassian presents a view of the Fall that sin has entered into the world in a drastic way, which necessitates a savior for every person. In the *Collationes* he elucidates, 'However much then human weakness may strive, it cannot come up to the future reward, nor by its efforts so take off from Divine grace that it should not always remain a free gift.'[227] It is his doctrine of '…original sin [that] is the theological presupposition that explains the agonizing paradox that all ascetics are called to suffer: the *natural* inability of Man to attain the highest good to which a just God has called him, which is the perennial contemplation of the divine essence.'[228]

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[223] Cassian, *De Incarnatione* 2.5, *NPNF2* 11:560.
[224] Cassian, *De Incarnatione* 5.1, *NPNF2* 11:581.
[225] Cassian, *De Incarnatione* 6.14, *NPNF2* 11:598.
[226] Casiday, 'Cassian Against the Pelagians,' 17.
[227] Cassian, *Collationes* 13.13, *NPNF2* 11:430.
[228] Marín, 'Original Sin in Provençal Ascetic Theology,' 295.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have provided a description of who John Cassian was, what his writings were about, and how to understand his doctrine. We have engaged with contemporary scholars on Cassian's doctrine of grace, illustrating that Cassian is far from a Pelagian and different from an Augustinian. Then we argued for three critical aspects of Cassian's perspective on Original Sin: carnality, natural goodness, and inability. 'Cassian situates the will in the complex reality of a human nature primordially good but presently inhibited…. The will can still be attracted to virtue, though because of the "flesh" it cannot move very far toward it (*Conf.* 4.12.3) and must be rescued and assisted by grace (*Conf.* 13.9.5).'[229] Stewart's remark serves as a good conclusion summary for our interpretation of Cassian's doctrine of Original Sin. It bears each aspect we have argued for above: the carnality of human nature ('inhibited,' 'cannot move very far'), that some natural goodness remains ('primordially good,' 'can still be attracted to virtue'), and Cassian's version of inability ('must be rescued and assisted by grace').

Unlike Pelagius, Cassian believed that in Adam the human race did fall. Unlike Pelagius, Cassian did believe that the will of man is inhibited. Unlike Pelagius, Cassian did not believe that grace is given based upon merit. So we see how Cassian is rightfully differentiated from Pelagius. In the same manner, Cassian may be differentiated from Augustine. Unlike Augustine, we see nothing substantial about the inheritance of guilt. Unlike Augustine, Cassian did not believe the human will was utterly incapacitated for performing objectively good actions. Chadwick observes, '… in the teaching of the Doctor of Grace [i.e., Augustine], the effects of the Fall are far more radical, for man has by the sin of Adam lost any power of doing good; his will towards the good has perished utterly, with

[229] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 79.

the consequence that without the grace of God there is nothing but depravity.'[230] With Cassian we see a perspective that is unlike both Augustine and Pelagius, but similar to that of the eastern tradition. In chapter 4 we described distinctive features of the Eastern Greek tradition: the absence or in some cases a rejection of the inheritance of guilt and the rejection of the idea that humans are unable to do anything toward their own salvation apart from a superadded act of grace (i.e., inability). As we can see from our analysis of Cassian's doctrine of Original Sin, his thought is extremely compatible with the Eastern Greek tradition and at most is in fact from that theological tradition. Given Cassian's experience and context, it is very, very likely the case that he received his framework from his teachers and did not, as some believe, create a middle way or bridge between Augustine and Pelagius.

Next we turn to the second most popular representative of the Gallic monks, a man who is best known for his canon of orthodoxy: Vincent of Lérins.

[230] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 129.

Chapter 6

Vincent of Lérins and His View of Original Sin

Vincent of Lérins – Defender of Orthodoxy

The next monk we will consider is Vincent of Lérins. Mark Vessey considers, 'After Cassian, Vincent is that community's most able spokesman.'[1] Vincent of Lérins is perhaps the most famous of individuals to come out of the monastery at Lérins. 'The monastery of Lerins was illustrious from the fifth century onwards as the home of some of the most famous saints and scholars of the age.'[2] The earliest account of Vincent's life comes from Gennadius's *De viris inlustribus*, written at the end of the 5th century.

> Vincent, an ethnically Gallic priest at the monastery on the isle of Lérins, a man learned in the sacred writings and sufficiently instructed in the minutiae of ecclesiastical doctrines, composed an extremely robust argument in terms complete and clear enough for the avoidance of the guild of heretics, which (surpressing his own name) he called The Pilgrim's Book Against Heretics. When he lost the second and largest number of pages of this work which was stolen by someone, he composed anew a reproduction of the sense of it in a few words and published it in a single book. He died during the reign of Theodosius and Valentinianus.[3]

From Vincent's *Commonitorium* we learn that prior to his commitment to the monastic lifestyle, he sought worldly pursuits and possibly had military service. While Gennadius only mentions one work of Vincent's, scholars recognize at least three works to be credited to Vincent's hand.

The *Commonitorium* (shorthand for *Commonitorium peregrini adversus hereticos* or *Reminder of the Pilgrim Against the Heretics*) is a work dedicated toward defending church tradition against heresies of all kinds. His underlying reason for this purpose was 'because, owing to the depth of Holy Scripture, all do not accept it in one and the same

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[1] Mark Vessey, '*Opus Imperfectum*: Augustine and His Readers, 426-435 AD,' *Vigiliae Christianae*, vol. 52 (August 1998), 279.

[2] Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins*, xiii.

[3] Translation from Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 133.

sense, but one understands its words in one way, another in another; so that it seems to be capable of as many interpretations as there are interpreters.'[4] So how ought one to come to a knowledge of true doctrine? The Christian ought to abide by what the Church has 'believed everywhere, always, by all.'[5] This rule has become known as the "Vincentian Canon." This rule is 'a maxim first pronounced by V[incent], and which is still regarded by many as the touchstone by which a doctrine can be tried.'[6]

Vincent's masterpiece, written in 434,[7] has been well received throughout the centuries. 'His "Commonitorium" has ever been received with the highest praise and has ever ranked among the leading works on tradition.'[8] Vincent makes generous use of the Scriptures, has superb knowledge of various heresies and their advocates, explains the orthodox position in a high-level manner, and provides the rationale for why Scripture and Tradition are of higher value than the authority of a teacher. Moxon wrote, 'his work is a brilliant defense of the value of tradition, provided tradition is regarded not as an isolated factor but is linked closely with the authority of Holy Scripture.'[9] Echoing that sentiment, Casiday writes, 'Whatever distinctly personal features of Vincent's perspective, his arguments about interpreting Scripture, articulating doctrines, and evaluating developments are a major contribution to early medieval theology.'[10]

The *Commonitorium* was initially written as two books, the second of which was lost, even before Gennadius's account in 490. The final four chapters of the work in its present state are a summary of the two books: 'This being the case, it is now time that we should recapitulate, at the close of this second Commonitory, what was said in that and in

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[4] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 2, *NPNF2* 11:132.
[5] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 2, *NPNF2* 11:132.
[6] Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins*, xv.
[7] Internal evidence points to this date because Vincent mentions the Council of Ephesus (431) as occuring three years prior to his writing.
[8] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 164.
[9] Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins*, xv.
[10] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 134.

the preceding.'[11] Scholars have debated over the fate of the second book, ranging from its being stolen, intentionally scrapped by Vincent or his editors, or simply lost.

The *Objectiones Vincentianae* is a list of objections against Augustinianism. This list survives only in the critical response from Prosper of Aquitaine, who ascribes the work to Vincent. The objections are placed in the form of accusations as to what Vincent thought the Augustinians believed or, more accurately, ought to have believed as logical consequences of their positions. Because the list is precisely 16 points, we provide it in full:[12]

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ did not suffer for the salvation and redemption of all men.
2. God does not wish to save all men, even though all should wish to be saved.
3. God creates the greater part of mankind for eternal reprobation.
4. The greater part of mankind were created by God not to do His will but that of the devil.
5. God is the author of our sins: by making man's will evil, He fashions a nature which of its own inclinations cannot but sin.
6. God fashions in man a free will akin to that of the devils, which of its own impulse cannot will but evil.
7. It is the will of God that a great number of Christians have neither the desire nor the possibility of being saved.
8. God does not wish all Catholics to persevere in the faith but wants a great number of them to apostatize.
9. God wants a great number of the faithful to fall away from their resolve of living a saintly life.
10. Adulteries and seductions of consecrated virgins take place because God predestines those people to fall.
11. When fathers defile their own daughters, or mothers their own sons, when slaves murder their masters, all this happens because God has predestined it to happen.
12. By the predestination of God, sons of God become sons of the devil, the temples of the Holy Spirit temples of demons, and the members of Christ members of a harlot.
13. All those faithful and saints who are predestined for eternal death, when they return to their vomit seem indeed to do so through their own fault, but their fault itself is caused by divine predestination, which secretly withdraws from them their good dispositions.
14. The great number among the Christians who now are Catholic, faithful, just, holy, and who are predestined to fall and be eternally lost, will not obtain grace of perseverance, even if they beg God for it, because the divine predestination which preordained, prepared, predisposed them to fall into sin is an immutable decree.

[11] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 29, *NPNF2* 11:153.

[12] English translation taken from *Defense of St. Augustine* in *Ancient Christian Writers*, vol. 32, trans. and annotated by P. De Letter, 163-177.

15. All those of the faithful and saints who are predestined for eternal death are after their sin so guided by God that they neither can nor desire to be saved through penance.
16. The great number of the faithful and the saints who are predestined for eternal death, when they say in the Lord's Prayer *thy will be done*, do nothing else than pray for their own ruin, that is, they ask that they may sin and be lost eternally, because the will of God in their behalf is that they should perish in eternal death.

The *Objectiones* are largely focused on the doctrines of predestination and God's salvific will. The author's concerns, according to Prosper, are whether God desires all men to be saved, that God has created some humans specifically for damnation, that God is the author of sin (causing some to commit adultery and incest), and that predestination prevents some from being given the means for salvation, turns them into devils, and forces them to pray for their own ruin. Traditionally, it has been believed that there lay a number of common lines of thought between the *Objectiones* and the *Commonitorium*. 'Despite this evidence, there has emerged a strengthening consensus that the monk of Lérins may not be the author of the objections cited by Prosper's confutation.'[13] The seminal work to this strengthening consensus is William O'Connor's 1963 study, which we will evaluate later on.

The *Exerpta Vincentii Lirinensis* is a florilegium which features the Trinitarian and Christological thought of Augustine, with few original remarks by Vincent. This document had been lost to history until it was discovered and finally published in 1940 by José Madoz. He found the manuscript in the archives of the Crown of Aragon in Barcelona, Spain. Vincent foretold of his desire to write such a work in the *Commonitorium*, 'On another occasion, please God, we will deal with the subject and unfold it more fully.'[14] He apparently did get around to writing more on the Trinity and the incarnation and utilizing Augustine's works to do so in a copious manner, even including excerpts from the works Augustine wrote in opposition to the Gallic monks. On the surface, the *Excerpta* reveals

[13] Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, xviii.
[14] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 16, *NPNF2* 11:143.

not a Vincent who is anti-Augustinian, but a Vincent who is a great admirer of the Bishop of Hippo.

One of the intriguing features to interpreting Vincent's theology is the seemingly irreconcilable differences presented in his three extant works. There is a long-standing tradition that Vincent held to the anti-Augustinian position known as Semi-Pelagianism. While many scholars studying Vincent now reject the Semi-Pelagian moniker, few had doubted his anti-Augustinianism. And yet, the traditional anti-Augustinian interpretation has come under criticism as a result of the discovery of the *Excerpta* in 1940, the reason for which is that the *Excerpta* does not show a Vincent who is thoroughly anti-Augustinian but one that is strongly sympathetic to Augustine's Christology. Scholars have thus been left with a few strategies for interpreting Vincent which we described in §1.5.1.[15]

Before dealing with the re-descriptions of Vincent, we will firstly present the issues within the *Commonitorium* and secondly present a rebuttal against the notion that Vincent is not the author of the *Objectiones*. Then, we will rebut Casiday's objection to the strategy of compartmentalizing Vincent's varied beliefs. Finally after defending the traditional interpretation and framework of understanding Vincent, we will survey the available data to us on Vincent's doctrine of Original Sin.

The Commonitorium as a So-called Semi-Pelagian Work

The traditional view has been to interpret Vincent's *Commonitorium* as an attack upon Augustine's doctrines of predestination and grace. Jaroslav Pelikan remarks, 'the immediate purpose of his treatise seems to have been to attack the predestinarianism of Augustine.'[16] As far as Vincent's 'immediate purpose,' to say that he wanted to critique

[15] Cf. Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 137-139.
[16] Pelikan, *CT1*, 333.

Augustine might be to overstate the case. The *Commonitorium* is explicitly directed against all heresies, which means that the stated intention of Vincent is broader than Augustine's theology (but which very well might include Augustine's theology in its crosshairs). Moxon concurs:

> It seems much more reasonable and natural to have V. at his word and to believe that he wished to give a rule that should apply equally to all heresies. … The opposition of V. to doctrines clearly Augustinian is due to the fact that in his eyes they did not and could not conform to his canon.[17]

Scholars as early as Voss (1618) and Noris (1673), and up through Moxon (1915), Madoz (1932), Chadwick (1950), and Ogliari (2003) believed the work to be from a Semi-Pelagian mind. 'Vincent … [sought] to locate and to clarify the standard by which doctrines on grace and human agency might be measured.'[18] Peter Phan regards, 'Vincent was already an ardent adversary of Augustine; it is quite probable that the "*privatea opiniunculae*" mentioned in Chapters 26 and 28 of his famous *Commonitorium* refer to the teachings of Augustine.'[19] Yet as Guarino carefully notes, 'scholars have long based Vincent's alleged anti-Augustinianism, at least in significant part, upon certain passages found in the *Objectiones Vincentianae*.'[20] This is to say, when analyzing Vincent's works together, the *Objectiones* had influenced the interpretation of certain passages from the *Commonitorium*. Casiday concurs that the two have gone hand-in-hand,

> for centuries [scholars] published learned studies through which their insights, arguments, and suspicions have crystallized into a confident assumption that Vincent's *Objectiones* (with its characteristic rejection of predestination) and his *Commonitorium* (with its characteristic rejection of novelties) are twin polemics against Augustine's theology.[21]

However, if the *Objectiones* are inauthentic to Vincent, then we might not or even would not perceive a Semi-Pelagian taint in the *Commonitorium*. O'Connor thought, 'It is only … when one begins to make a close study of it, that is, we suggest, reads into it one's own

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[17] Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins*, xvi.
[18] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 197.
[19] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 293.
[20] Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, xxiii-xxiv.
[21] Casiday 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 134-135.

preconceived ideas acquired ultimately from the Objections, that one "discovers" several passages written against the doctrine of the Bishop of Hippo.'[22] Thus, he thinks that if one could prove Vincent did not write the *Objectiones*, then we might look at the *Commonitorium* with unbiased eyes. Cooper Marsdin thought for the *Objectiones*, 'Internal evidence can be produced both for and against such authorship. On the one hand the sentiments are distinctly Pelagian and on the other the comparison of this work and the drift of the seventieth and eighty-sixth sections of the *Commonitorium* would seem to show the two are by the same hand.'[23]

In the world of the post-1940 discovery of Vincent's *Excerpta*, interpreters such as O'Connor, Demeulenaere, Guarino, and others hold, 'an unbiased reading of the *Commonitorium* betrays no semi-Pelagian traces or secret darts against St. Augustine and his doctrine.'[24] So, in order to defend the traditional interpretation of Vincent and also to prevent the questionable *Objectiones* from influencing our reading of the *Commonitorium*, we will present a cumulative case argument utilizing three categories of evidence for believing with a *probable* certainty that Vincent was a so-called Semi-Pelagian and would have been anti-Augustinian: Geographical contextual evidence, statements made against both Pelagianism and (at least) some form of Augustinianism, and ambiguous statements that might be classified as anti-Augustinian.

Geographical Contextual Evidence

Cooper-Marsdin is right to have observed, 'It cannot be asserted that in any passage Vincent openly betrays his leaning to what has been doctrinally distinguished as Semipelagianism. It is far too much to assert that the fact that he was a monk of Lerins is

[22] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 142.
[23] Cooper-Marsdin, *The History of the Island of Lerins*, 80.
[24] O'Conner, 142. Cf. Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, xxvi, ftnt 60.

any evidence of his semipelagian point of view.'[25] It is quite right to reject that assertion, but it is not quite the argument we shall make. We are proposing a cumulative case for Vincent's so-called Semi-Pelagianism and his geographical context places Vincent at the right place in the right time.

> All authorities are agreed that the great questions of free-will, predestination and grace were nowhere more vehemently agitated than in the monastic schools of Lerins and St Victor and nowhere did the doctrines of St Augustine find more vigorous and determined opposition than in these abbeys.[26]

The preponderance of the evidence from Vincent's geographical context suggests that, at the outset of our case, because he was a product of the monastery at Lerins, he was *more likely than not* to have been a so-called Semi-Pelagian. This does not necessitate his being an anti-Augustinian, but the monastery had a strong reputation for producing Christian thinkers advocating for that position.[27]

Statements contra Pelagianism and some form of Augustinianism

The pointed statements against both Pelagianism and some form of Augustinianism provide our best evidence in this cumulative case. In chapter twenty-four of the *Commonitorium* Vincent makes two statements against each opposing position. First he writes, 'For who ever before that profane Pelagius attributed so much antecedent strength to Free-will, as to deny the necessity of God's grace to aid it towards good in every single act?'[28] This one rhetorical question tells us that Vincent believed Pelagius stressed free-will too much; Pelagius's error was not in affirming the freedom of the will, but in giving it too much weight at the expense of God's grace. Additionally, as we will later explore, Vincent notes that God's grace is aided in 'every single act,' a position which would put him at

[25] Cooper-Marsdin, *The History of the Island of Lerins*, 75.
[26] Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins*, xxiv-xxv.
[27] Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, xxii, 'the monastic communities of southern Gaul had marked semi-Pelagian tendencies.'
[28] Vincent, Commonitorium 24, *NPNF2* 11:150.

odds against Pelagius. Second, in the twenty-fourth chapter, Vincent writes about one Simon Magus who,

> dared to say that God, the Creator, is the author of evil, that is, of our wickednesses, impieties, flagitiousnesses, inasmuch as he asserts that He created with His own hands a human nature of such a description, that of its own motion, and by the impulse of its necessity-constrained will, it can do nothing else, can will nothing else, but sin, seeing that tossed to and fro, and set on fire by the furies of all sorts of vices, it is hurried away by unquenchable lust into the utmost extremes of baseness[.][29]

Vincent is likely referring here to a tradition (originating in the writings of Justin Martyr[30]) believed about the Simon Magus mentioned in the eighth chapter of the book of Acts. What is necessary to our argument is the theological content that Vincent finds to be heretical, chiefly that human nature 'can do nothing else, can will nothing else, but sin.' This heretical position (heretical in the mind of Vincent), known and affirmed today by some as the doctrine of Inability, might be described as some form of Augustinianism because the Bishop of Hippo could be construed to affirm Inability with his position of *non posse non peccare*,[31] a position we would also see some of Augustine's later followers embrace.[32] Inability is inevitably tied to the issues of grace and free will for which many historical theologians point to as the concerns that the Gallic monks had. 'Why would one adhere to the rigorous discipline of monasticism if it were essentially beside the point, *entirely unrelated to one's salvation*?'[33] This concern over the value of the monastic life would be relevant not only from the doctrines of grace and free will but also from the doctrine of Original Sin, for which if humans did inherit a nature unable to do anything toward their own salvation then the monastic life would be seen as pointless.

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[29] Vincent, Commonitorium 24, *NPNF2* 11:150.

[30] For brief explanation see Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought*, vol. 1, 131, especially ftnt 26.

[31] See §3.1.3.

[32] E.g., in his *Insitutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin wrote, 'the mind of man is so entirely alienated from the righteousness of God that he cannot conceive, desire, or design anything but what is wicked, distorted, foul, impure, and iniquitous; that his heart is so thoroughly envenomed by sin, that it can breathe out nothing but corruption and rottenness.' John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 2.5.19, 340.

[33] Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, xvii.

Two chapters later (26), Vincent criticizes a doctrine of grace that resembles Augustine's doctrine of grace.[34]

> For they dare to teach and promise, that in their church, that is, in the conventicle of their communion, there is a certain great and special and altogether personal grace of God, so that whosoever pertain to their number, without any labour, without any effort, without any industry, even though **they neither ask, nor seek, nor knock**, have such a dispensation from God, that, borne up by angel hands, that is, preserved by the protection of angels, it is impossible they should ever dash their feet against a stone, that is, that they should ever be offended.

This doctrine of grace is one that is 'altogether personal' and the pre-chosen ones who 'pertain to their number' are saved regardless of their situating themselves toward God. This passage is a 'strong parallel'[35] to a passage in Augustine's *De dono perseverantiae*:

> Let our adversaries consider how mistaken they are to think that our seeking, asking, knocking is from ourselves and is not given to us. … For these men will not understand that it is also a divine gift that we pray, that is, **that we seek and ask and knock**.[36]

Moxon believes that Vincent's passage comes the closest to openly criticizing Augustine.[37] Cooper-Marsdin argues, 'It is surely extreme Predestinarianism that is here meant, for never previously had this doctrine been taught in such shape as now by any responsible teacher ….'[38] Vincent's concern in this passage is, on the opposite side to the Pelagian heresy, that humans would have no role to play ('without any labour, without any effort') in salvation. This has led Bonner to observe, 'in a short, but vicious paragraph, [Vincent] expresses a condemnation of a predestinarian heresy which looks uncommonly like the teaching of Augustine as seen by a Semi-Pelagian.'[39]

Ambiguous Statements that might be against some form of Augustinianism

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[34] C. A. Heurtley, 'Appendix III,' *NPNF2* 11:159, 'commonly thought and with reason'; Cooper-Marsdin, *The History of the Island of Lerins*, 77, 'Is not this clearly a description of extreme Augustinianism of the men who exaggerated the teaching of their master …? … is clearly the extreme predestinarian doctrine of grace.'

[35] Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, xxiv.

[36] Augustine, *De Dono Perseverantiae* 64.23, *NPNF1* 5:551.

[37] Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins*, 109.

[38] Cooper-Marsdin, *The History of the Island of Lerins*, 78.

[39] Bonner, 'Pelagianism and Augustine,' 47.

Finally, there are ambiguous statements that might be classified in such a way so as to paint Vincent as a critic of (some form of) Augustine's doctrines of grace and free will. Perhaps the most obvious ambiguous statement is Vincent's rule of faith, 'we hold that faith which has been believed everywhere, always, by all.'[40] The essence of his work was to find a method for recognizing heresy, regardless of the person presenting it. So if Vincent had believed that Augustine's doctrine of grace was not believed everywhere, always, and by all, then at best it was a mistaken doctrine and at worst it was outright heresy. 'Vincent's work showed that the appeal to tradition could also be used against the Augustinian view.'[41] This is precisely what Ogliari thinks Vincent did in the 21st chapter, 'when he spoke ironically of those who are convinced that true faith, after centuries of concealment, has eventually been revealed to them alone.'[42] One of the leading scholars of paleo-orthodoxy, Christopher A. Hall, also finds this to be the case, 'Interestingly, Vincent of Lerins critiqued Augustine's writings against the Pelagians because they were not sufficiently supported by the "fathers." Vincent clearly believed the opinions of the fathers merit special consideration.'[43] To support his position, Hall immediately quotes from chapter 29 of Vincent's *Commonitorium*,

> If some new question should arise on which no such decision has been given, they should then have recourse to the opinions of the holy Fathers, of those at least, who, each in his own time and place, remaining in the unity of communion and of the faith, were accepted as approved masters; and whatsoever these may be found to have held, with one mind and with one consent, this ought to be accounted the true and Catholic doctrine of the Church without any doubt or scruple.[44]

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[40] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 2, *NPNF2* 11:132.

[41] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 141. It should be noted, however, that Weaver is open to O'Connor's untraditional interpretation that the *Commonitorium* was not an anti-Augustinian document.

[42] Ogliari, 419. Cf. Vincent, *Commonitorium* 21.52, *NPNF1* 5:147, 'For thou mayest hear some of these same doctors say, "Come, O silly wretches, who go by the name of Catholics, come and learn the true faith, which no one but ourselves is acquainted with, which same has lain hid these many ages, but has recently been revealed and made manifest.'

[43] Christopher A. Hall, *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 50

[44] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 29, *NPNF2* 11:154.

Vincent's method and description for following tradition and identifying heresy, devoid of further supporting statements, fail to provide sufficient reason for thinking that he was a Semi-Pelagian. These statements only help insofar as a cumulative case is concerned. Therefore, we are left to explore other statements which might be categorized as anti-Augustinian.

One such statement appears in chapter ten of the *Commonitorium*:

> The reason is clearer than day why Divine Providence sometimes permits certain doctors of the Churches to preach new doctrines – "That the Lord your God may try you," he says. And assuredly it is a great trial when one whom thou believest to be a prophet, a disciple of prophets, a doctor and defender of the truth, whom thou hast folded to thy breast with the utmost veneration and love, when such a one of a sudden secretly and furtively brings in noxious errors, which thou canst neither quickly detect, being held by the prestige of former authority, nor lightly think it right to condemn, being prevented by affection for thine old master.[45]

This description of a student to his beloved master, a master who was highly revered in the Christian church, seems befitting of the attitude that Prosper had of Augustine. Perhaps it is the case that Vincent had in mind Prosper and his staunch, seemingly undying devotion to Augustine.

Criticizing church leaders was something Vincent explicitly does when he makes the point that the persuasive witness of the Christian lifestyle (Origen[46]) or the vast intellect (Tertullian[47]) would not justify their errors or tribulations. For Vincent, the lofty, authoritative position one might hold in the church (as Augustine had) was not a warrant for error.

> But whatsoever a teacher holds, other than all, or contrary to all, be he holy and learned, be he a bishop, be he a Confessor, be he a martyr, let that be regarded as a private fancy of his own, and be separated from the authority of common, public, general persuasion, lest, after the sacrilegious custom of heretics and schismatics, rejecting the ancient truth of the universal Creed, we follow, at the utmost peril of our eternal salvation, the newly devised error of one man.[48]

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[45] Vincent, Commonitorium 10.28, *NPNF2* 11:138; cf. Cooper-Marsdin, *The History of the Island of Lerins*, 77-78.

[46] Vincent, Commonitorium 17, *NPNF2* 11:143-145.

[47] Vincent, Commonitorium 18.46, *NPNF2* 11:145.

[48] Vincent, *Commonitorium*, 28.72, *NPNF2* 11:152.

Phrases such as 'be he a bishop,' 'be he a Confessor,' and 'newly devised error of one man' might lead some to conclude that Augustine was in Vincent's line of sight because confuting error was to be done 'only in the case of those heresies which are new and recent … before they endeavor, while the poison spreads and diffuses itself, to corrupt the writings of the ancients.'[49] Responding quickly to new heresy was something that occurred under Pope Stephen against Cyprian on rebaptism. This is something that Vincent makes reference to and Moxon suggests that this is an intentional parallel from a previous time that Rome was against a North African leader.[50] The implication here is that Rome ought, again, to stand against the erroneous teachings of another North African leader.

Toward the end of the *Commonitorium* Vincent makes use of Celestine's letter to his advantage and he fails to mention the favorable statement Celestine made toward Augustine as a great teacher. Against those that think Vincent was not interested in the Augustinian controversy,[51] the mere fact that he had read Celestine's letter (which was purposed for mediating between the Augustinians and the anti-Augustinian advocates in Gaul) certainly means Vincent had an interest in the debate. 'The most heated moments in this controversy over grace and free will – with contributions by Prosper, Augustine, Cassian, and Celestine—occurred just before Vincent wrote his *Commonitorium* in 434. This has led some to conclude that, as a monk of Lérins, Vincent could not have failed to breathe the thick semi-Pelagian air surrounding the Gallic monasteries.'[52] This is to say, it is probable that Vincent felt the need to get involved.

While the interpretation of these ambiguous statements might be seen as conjectural, interpreted in conjunction with the explicit statements and Vincent's geographical context, lead us to believe with Moxon and Cooper-Marsdin, 'That

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[49] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 28.71, *NPNF2* 11:152.
[50] Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins*, 25.
[51] Élie Griffe, 'Pro Vincentio Lerinensi,' *Bulletin de litérature ecclésiastique* 62 (1961), 26.
[52] Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, xxiii.

Augustinanism is alluded to and by implication condemned several times in the course of the treatise cannot be denied …'[53] and ' … all of these references seem undeniably intended to pave the way for a separation of S. Augustine from the followers and scholars who appeal to his authority and sheltered themselves under his name.'[54]

Vincent's Covert Attack

Some think that it might have been dangerous to publicly challenge or attack the highly revered Augustine.[55] Cooper-Marsdin believed that Vincent's concerns were leveled at a specific form of Augustinianism which today goes by a different name: 'To him the novelty of this opinion which in our day we should call "Calvinism" is self-evident, and he considers it the wisest plan to combat the position by attacking novelites in general.'[56] Gerald Bonner observes Vincent 'significantly, omits the name of Augustine' from the list of orthodox defenders.[57] We ought to recognize that Vincent's list of defenders occurs in the thirtieth chapter wherein he writes about the Council of Ephesus, which Augustine was not at. Nevertheless, the fact that Augustine's name is nowhere to be found in the *Commonitorium*, even in the criticism of Pelagianism, is odd if Vincent were an Augustinian. Interestingly enough, one of the existing hypotheses for the absences of the second book of the *Commonitorium* is that 'this omission was a deliberate act due to the more pronounced polemical character of the second book, and that it was suppressed because of some statements made in it which were embarrassingly clear in their allusion to Augustine and his school.'[58] This is conjectural without evidence to support its hypothesis, but so are other hypothesis such as Gennadius's account which states that the second book

[53] Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins*, xvi.
[54] Cooper-Marsdin, *The History of the Island of Lerins*, 79.
[55] Cooper-Marsdin, *The History of the Island of Lerins*, 78.
[56] Cooper-Marsdin, *The History of the Island of Lerins*, 80.
[57] Bonner, 'Pelagianism and Augustine,' 47.
[58] Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins*, xx.

was stolen. These hypotheses provide warrant for the value of excursions to discover the lost second book.[59]

The interpretation of Vincent defended here is the traditional view of him. We believe that given Vincent's geographical context, explicit statements he made, and the ambiguous allusions, that the *Commonitorium* is an indirect attack against (some form of) Augustinian doctrine.

Nevertheless, there have been relatively recent attempts to re-describe Vincent not only to distance him from the brand of Semi-Pelagianism, but also as an Augustinian sympathizer. The catalyst, which has been the cause for questioning the traditional model, was the discovery of the *Excerpta* in 1940. The *Excerpta* makes it appear as though Vincent highly respected and admired Augustine, which would mean the *Commontorium* would not be an anti-Augustinian document and the *Objectiones* would be inauthentic.[60] In the next sections, we will evaluate a few such re-descriptions of Vincent and show how these new approaches fail to successfully make their case thereby leaving us to embrace the traditional view. Following those sections, we shall make the very first attempt to understand Vincent's anthropology and doctrine of Original Sin.

Who is the Author of the *Objectiones Vincentianae*?

The *Objectiones Vincentianae* is a text of sixteen objections to Augustinianism. This text is found only in the writings of Prosper and has been traditionally believed to

[59] Considering that the *Excerpta* had been lost for roughly 1,500 years, why cannot the second book of the *Commonitorium* be lying around in the archives of a monastery somewhere in modern day France?

[60] Note here that the argument we have presented thus far for Vincent's so-called Semi-Pelagianism takes no evidence from the *Objectiones*. Our assessment of the *Objectiones* shall be made later on.

have been written by Vincent of Lérins.[61] The main reason why scholars have been interested in this text is because if Vincent is not the author, then, perhaps the *Commonitorium* should no longer been seen as including Augustine's doctrine of anthropology and predestination in its crosshairs.

> The objections come, evidently, from a semipelagian hand and once admitted that Vincent of Lerins was their author, it would be very hard to make an unbiased study of the Commonitorium, as this fact would unconsciously influence our judgments particularly in those passages which can be variously interpreted. Historically it was from the Objections that the semipelagian stain first became attached to the name of Vincent of Lerins.[62]

Consequently, if Vincent is not the author of the *Objectiones* then he could be rescued from being associated with the camp called Semi-Pelagianism. For the present purposes, an exploration into this discussion is worthwhile[63] because if Vincent is the author, then not only would that mean the *Commonitorium* is likely a tacit objection against Augustine's doctrine of grace and predestination (and perhaps even the logically prior beliefs on Original Sin) but also we would have evidence of Vincent's understanding of the Fall from the *Objectiones* itself (evidence described in the next section). In this section I will argue that the arguments against Vincentian authorship is based upon spurious reasoning and that we ought to retain the traditional view that Vincent of Lérins is the author of the work, which survives only in Prosper of Aquitaine's writings.

There are many reasons why Vincent of Lérins is believed to be the author of the *Objectiones*, albeit the evidence is circumstantial at best. For starters, the name "Vincent" appears in the title (*Pro Augustino responsiones ad capitula objectionum Vincentianarum*). The objections are available to us from Prosper's writing, so we are in the correct time

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[61] Some advocating the traditional view are: Kidd, *A History of the Church*, 151; Koch, *Vincenz von Lérins und Gennadius,* 40-58; É. Amann, 'Semi-pélagiens,' *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, vol. 14, 1822-24; Mark Vessey, 'Vincent of Lérins,' in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. A. D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 870.

[62] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 141-142.

[63] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lerins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*: Responding to Augustine's Legacy in Fifth-Century Gaul,' 132, 'these debates often turn on what one makes of Vincent's involvement in the reception of and responses to Augustine's theology.'

period (circa first half of the fifth century) and even location (Gaul). The author was clearly an opponent to Augustine, at least on these issues, and it is widely accepted that the monastery at Lérins was 'a stronghold of Semi-Pelagian views.'[64] Given these three simple reasons alone, the most probable explanation has been that Vincent is the author of the objections. But as further evidence of authorship, and in the spirit of Vincent's dictum, it has also traditionally been believed that Vincent was the author. Some historians state it as a matter of fact without dispute: 'All along the [French] Riviera pamphlets appeared in protest [against Augustine]; … and *capitula* in two series, one of fifteen collected by Gallic scholars of Provence, and *another of sixteen selected by Vincent of Lerins*, 432.'[65] And yet, 'Despite the evidence, there has emerged a strengthening consensus that the monk of Lérins may not be the author of the objections cited by Prosper's confutation.'[66] Some, such as Guarino view this position as a growing consensus while others believe it to be an open and shut case. In 1996, Rebecca Harden Weaver denied the traditional view by stating that 'the author is not known' and on top of that, 'O'Connor has demonstrated that it was not Vincent of Lérins as has often been argued.'[67] Since the minority opinion has been (entirely) in support of O'Connor, whose 'exhaustive study [is] surely the most influential to date,'[68] we shall now turn to the main arguments from his study.

Those against the Vincentian authorship typically present two types of arguments as to why the Vincent of the *Commonitorium* could not be the author of the *Objectiones*: tone and content. We shall call these the Tone Argument and the Accuracy Argument. When one reads the sixteen objections as provided by Prosper, one cannot help but feel that the tone of these objections is much different than the tone of Vincent seen in the

[64] Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins*, 4, ftnt 1.
[65] Kidd, *A History of the Church*, 151, emphasis mine.
[66] Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, xviii.
[67] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 132.
[68] Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, xviii.

Commonitorium and the *Excerpta*. William O'Connor, the pioneer of this view, argued in comparing two quotations side-by-side, 'In each case, the passage from the Commonitorium is easy flowing and gracious while that of the Objections is matter of fact and abrupt.'[69] In agreement, Guarino writes,

> And is not the **elegant Latin style** of the Lérinian's authentic work missing from the **artless** *Objectiones*? …
> Is it likely that the author of the *Excerpta*, so **laudatory** of Augustine's Christological and Trinitarian work, is the same man who turns so strongly against Augustine on grace and predestination in the *Objectiones*?[70]

In their opinion the *Objectiones* is tactless and this works against the traditional view.

The second argument against Vincentian authorship is of accuracy. This argument proposes that because Vincent had many (though not all) of the writings of Augustine, he would have known where Augustine stood on these points of contention, and therefore would not have raised these misguided objections. Harden Weaver conveys sympathy to the Accuracy Argument when she wrote that the objections 'were an even greater caricature of Augustine's position' than the other pamphlet distributed in southern Gaul, the *Objectiones Gallorum*.[71] Guarino asks, 'Could this really be Vincent of Lérins, the master of historical rigor, who himself was intimately familiar with (and deeply appreciative of) Augustine's work … who carefully outlines the fateful missteps of heresies in the *Commonitorium*?'[72] O'Connor thinks not, largely based upon the *reductio ad absurdum* that Vincent's image would be tarnished. After all, Vincent was an intelligent man (so far as we can tell from the *Commonitorium*[73] and *Excerpta*) and 'the points of doctrine of Augustine which appear so clearly from an intelligent reading of his works that,

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[69] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 154.
[70] Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, xviii, emphases mine.
[71] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 132.
[72] Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, xviii.
[73] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 164, 'Vincent of Lerins was … a man of no ordinary ability, as is clear from an examination of his works. His "Commonitorium" has ever been received with the highest praise and has ever ranked among the leading works on tradition.'

no man, of ordinary ability, who had read these works could deny them.'[74] And since we would like to think that Vincent was an intelligent man of at least ordinary ability, Vincent never would have written the *Objectiones*. Let us now explore the first two specific examples from O'Connor in his defense of what we have called the Accuracy Argument.

The first of two objections from the *Objectiones* pertain to the universal salvific will of God.[75] O'Connor believes that 'the universal salvific will of God is sufficiently clear' from Augustine's earlier writings.[76] The second objection is that God might predetermine some to eternal damnation even though these persons would have desired to be saved.[77] O'Connor writes that this objection is 'clearly out of accord with the whole doctrine of Augustine, as outlined both in his early and later works.'[78] For Augustine, no person is turned away from God and damned against his own will. Since all humans reject God they all deserve damnation but God chooses to save a few and modifies their wills accordingly: 'Therefore the election obtained what it obtained gratuitously … He saved them for nothing. But to the rest who were blinded, as is there plainly declared, it was done in recompense.'[79] Ultimately the first two objections are, for O'Connor, answered simply; one can easily find within Augustine's corpus answers to these objections and as a matter of fact Vincent would have been the type of person to do precisely that. So, thinks O'Connor (et. al.), he could not be the author of the *Objectiones*.

Criticism

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[74] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 156.

[75] Prosper, 'Answers to the Vincentian Articles,' *ACW* 32.164. 'Objection: Our Lord Jesus Christ did not suffer for the salvation and redemption of all men.'

[76] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 157.

[77] Prosper, 'Answers to the Vincentian Articles,' *ACW* 32.165, 'Objection: God does not wish to save all men, even though all should wish to be saved.'

[78] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 158.

[79] Augustine, *On The Predestination of the Saints*, chapter 11, 'gratis ergo consecuta est, quod consecuta est electio … pro nihilo saluos fecit eos. caeteris autem qui excaecati sunt, sicut ibi non tacitum est, in retributione factum est.'

The anti-Vincentian case can be explained through the use of two deductive arguments.

> Premise 1: Either Vincent wrote the *Objectiones* or someone else did.
> Premise 2: Vincent did not write the *Objectiones*.
> Conclusion: Therefore, someone else did.

The first proposition is self-explanatory whereas the second proposition is the crucial claim. To support this claim scholars have utilized linguistic comparisons of tone and style between texts (what we call the Tone Argument) and tried to show that Vincent, being an intelligent man, would know what Augustine's doctrine was and would know not to present a strawman (what we call the Accuracy Argument).

The Tonal Argument is admittedly inconclusive by some of its advocates.[80] One of the difficulties with it is that it is widely understood that the Gallic monks accepted Augustine as an orthodox brother, never treating him as heretical in the same way as Pelagius. As such they were respectful to Augustine in numerous ways in their writing, especially on topics other than those in contention (grace and predestination). Yet, agreeing with Augustine and having a kind tone on some other points by no means guarantees the same tone in other writings against the doctrine of the Bishop of Hippo. Indeed, Hilary (the layman, not the Bishop of Arles) notes this doctrinal difference, 'But I clearly ought not to pass over in silence the fact that they [the Gallic monks] claim to be *admirers* of Your Holiness [Augustine] in all your words and actions with this *one exception* [predestination].'[81] Thus, a tonal (vis-à-vis linguistic style) comparison and assessment between Vincent's other works and the *Objectiones* goes unresolved. We cannot assess the authorship of one document against another on the basis that one sounds angry and the other dialectical.

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[80] Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 133, ftnt 22, 'does not conclusively settle the question.'

[81] Hilary, 'Letter 226' *WSA* 2.4.101, emphases mine.

Unfortunately for the Tone Argument, the evidence is more incriminating. The key thrust of the Tone Argument is that the *Objectiones* does not sound like something Vincent would write because the *Commonitorium* 'is easy flowing and gracious,'[82] and written in an 'elegant Latin style.'[83] First, the difficulty in such a comparison is that we are dealing with two different texts. The *Commonitorium* is a primary source, whereas the *Objectiones* are known to us only as a secondary source (in the writings of Prosper). Therefore, we must not only show some healthy skepticism at Prosper's ability to accurately reflect his opponent, but also recognize that we lack the primary document which might have illustrated Vincent's style of writing.

Second, the tone of Vincent's writing might not be as gracious as O'Connor and others suspect. The *Commonitorium*, after all, is a criticism leveled against those heretical 'rabid dogs.'[84] They 'invite others to drink the poison of heresy' and 'spread an evil report of what ought to be buried in silence.'[85] Ambrose, Vincent wrote, washed out abominable novel impiety and 'recalled it from novel misbelief to the ancient faith, from the madness of novelty to the soundness of antiquity, from the blindness of novelty to pristine light.'[86] Finally, and for good measure, Vincent referred to the Pelagians as 'frogs, fleas, and flies'[87] and Nestorius, 'whose disease is of an opposite kind.'[88] A thorough reading of the *Commonitorium* will prove that while Vincent is a skilled essayist he does not mince his words when it comes to those with whom he disagrees. Suffice it to say, the so-called tactless nature of the *Objectiones* does not adversely affect the case for Vincentian authorship.

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[82] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 154.
[83] Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, xviii.
[84] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 13.36, *NPNF2* 11:140.
[85] Vincent, *Commonitorium*, 7.19, *NPNF2* 11:136.
[86] Vincent, *Commonitorium*, 5.13, *NPNF2* 11:134.
[87] Vincent, *Commonitorium*, 9.26, *NPNF2* 11:137.
[88] Vincent, *Commonitorium*, 12.35, *NPNF2* 11:140.

The Accuracy Argument, on the other hand, presents a stronger case in support of the second premise above. The Accuracy Argument could be formulated as follows:

> Premise 1: If Vincent wrote the *Objectiones*, then he would have been dishonest in his assessment of Augustine.
> Premise 2: Vincent would not have been dishonest in his assessment of Augustine.
> Conclusion: Therefore, Vincent did not write the *Objectiones*.

This modus tollens argument is logically valid but its premises need to be true. For the sake of the argument and for retaining a good faith in Vincent, we ought to grant that the second premise is true. Given what we know from the *Commonitorium* and the *Excerpta*, we have good reason to think that Vincent would not be dishonest in his assessment of Augustine. Thus, the soundness of the conclusion becomes entirely contingent upon the truth of the first premise. That is, is it true that if Vincent had written the objections, then he was dishonest in his criticism toward the Doctor of Grace? The following five points will bring doubt upon this conditional proposition: (1) The critics of Vincentian authorship are heavily Augustinian themselves, (2) there is a lack of reconciling difficult Augustinian passages, (3) it requires positing the existence of a second Vincent and therefore makes it more contrived, (4) Vincent may have been objecting to a strand/form of Augustinianism and not Augustine himself, (5) Prosper is possibly an unreliable source for what Vincent said or wrote. The first two points operate under an intriguing hypothesis that Vincent was being *honest* in his objections, whereas the last two points present a case for thinking that historical theologians have been mistaken for believing that there is one and only one strand of Augustinianism and that Prosper was a reliable source for all things anti-Augustinianism in fifth century Gaul.

First, the scholarship against Vincentian authorship is heavily Augustinian-biased.

Augustine Casiday writes, 'For an example of a theologically driven interpretation that displays methodological limitations, we can turn … to O'Connor's landmark study.'[89] Specifically with regard to the second Vincentian objection, O'Connor writes,

- 'What a terrible blasphemy against the goodness, mercy and justice of God! That such should be attributed to Augustine the great defender of the mercy and justice of God!'[90]
- 'Nothing but malice could have inspired any author to accuse him of such.'[91]
- 'Is it possible that Augustine would involve God in a contradiction by asserting Him as causing the desire of salvation in a creature… and yet having the will not to give the same person salvation … ?'[92]

What O'Connor fails to recognize is not that Augustine would 'involve God in a contradiction' or that the author of the *Objectiones* has malice but rather, that maybe Augustine's own understanding contains or entails an unrealized contradiction, an inconsistency, or an unbiblical assessment. But, Gerald Bonner describes Augustine's theology on grace, free will, and predestination as 'a dogmatism which alarmed the Semi-Pelagian theologians of Marseilles, because it seemed to take from the individual any element of free choice and to leave him a puppet in the hands of his Creator, and their view is surely correct.'[93] Yet the attitude against anti-Augustinianism is reminiscent of the young Prosper's attitude:

> [A] powerful emphasis on Augustine as the framer and defender of orthodoxy entails automatic hostility towards any perceived slight against Augustine – and this is precisely what we find with Prosper. As the controversy fires up, Prosper collapses any argument against predestination into an argument against Augustine, which he takes in turn as an argument for Pelagius.[94]

O'Connor argues that Vincent thinks highly of Augustine in the *Excerpta* and 'could not fail therefore to grasp the real import of his doctrine on grace and predestination.'[95] As such, if Vincent is the author of the *Objectiones*, then he 'consciously misinterpreted the doctrine of the great Doctor and was guilty of an unpardonable slander

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[89] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 151.
[90] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 167.
[91] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 169.
[92] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 158.
[93] Bonner, 'Augustine and Pelagianism,' 30.
[94] Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian,' 275.
[95] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 166.

and of the height of malice.'[96] But these two options, that either Vincent was not the author or if he were then he consciously misinterpreted Augustine, are not the only two options. There are other possible explanations, even more probable ones, that better explain the seemingly questionable objections and yet retain Vincentian authorship.

The main thrust of the Accuracy Argument is that the author has misunderstood or misinterpreted Augustine. But why ought we to think that? As it has been shown those arguing against Vincentian authorship do so from a preconceived idea as to what constituted Augustinianism. Or rather, these authors believe that Augustine was consistent within and throughout his writings. But could it not be the case that Vincent read something from Augustine and was so vehemently against the idea that he wrote a document with objections to certain doctrines? Whatever Augustine actually believed is beside the point for the present moment, but an illustration will prove useful. O'Connor thinks that if Augustine had taught that God did create the majority of humans to damn them to hell (the second Vincentian objection), that he would have 'merited cries of horror and indignation.'[97] And yet what we have in a passage from *Enchiridion* brushes awfully close to O'Connor's concern:

> As the Supreme Good, he made good use of evil deeds, for the damnation of those whom he had justly predestined to punishment and for the salvation of those whom he had mercifully predestined to grace.
>
> For, as far as they were concerned, they did what God did not will that they do, but as far as God's omnipotence is concerned, they were quite unable to achieve their purpose. *In their very act of going against his will, his will was thereby accomplished.* This is the meaning of the statement, "The works of the Lord are great, well-considered in all his acts of will"--that in a strange and ineffable fashion even that which is done against his will is not done without his will. For it would not be done *without his allowing it--and surely his permission is not unwilling but willing*--nor would he who is good allow the evil to be done, unless in his omnipotence he could bring good even out of evil.[98]

[96] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 166.
[97] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 167-168.
[98] Augustine, *Enchiridion* 26, 'The Triumph of God's Sovereign Good Will,' *LCC* 7.399.

While Augustine believed that people are responsible for damning themselves to hell, he also believed that they were predestined to do so in accordance with the divine will of God. If Vincent had read this passage and thought it to be either lacking in sufficient nuance or simply outright inaccurate, then the second objection could be in response to this text which seems to suggest that Augustine did not believe that God wished all humans to be saved (the second objection).

Furthermore, when O'Connor writes, 'If we suppose that the author knew that such was not *the real doctrine* of the Saint we can only conclude that he made this objection in order to discredit the person of the Holy Doctor,'[99] he limits the scope of theological investigation by eliminating the possibility for one to disagree with Augustine. Theological disagreement becomes personal insults. Casiday concurs with this assessment: 'So although O'Connor understood that different readers were coming to different conclusions about Augustine, he nevertheless lacks the recognition that such people in all likelihood embraced different, or competing, or even irreducibly hostile, interpretations of Augustine's theology.'[100] By way of example, recall the second objection. The Augustinian/O'Connor response to this objection was that because 'all who are damned, are lost because they freely choose to abandon their Creator.'[101] There never is a case in which someone wants to be saved but is not predestined to be saved. The Gallic monks would not disagree that those who are damned/lost are so because they freely choose to reject God, but they do not find that position compatible with other Augustinian tenets vis-à-vis all humans lack the desire for the objective good apart from superadded grace. Thus, the Augustinian bias from scholars such as O'Connor prevent them from seeing alternative

[99] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 168, emphasis mine.
[100] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 151.
[101] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 159.

theological points of view, hindering their ability to know whether Vincent would have been dishonest had he written the *Objectiones*.

Second, and related to the first, is that the Accuracy Argument provides no mention of the difficult passages from Augustine, such as the one provided above. More specifically, O'Connor provided no reconciliation to the difficult passages in Augustine; instead he ignores them, only mentioning favorable passages. A more thorough investigation into Augustine's writings would, as it has been shown above through the one example from *Enchiridion*, bring to light a number of passages that might have caused concerns for the Gallic monk and which, still to this day, are perhaps not sufficiently reconciled to Augustine's earlier theology.[102] O'Connor understood this when he wrote, and we repeat from earlier, 'The texts of Saint Augustine in his latter works, which treat explicitly of this subject have led to some controversy as to the real mind of the Holy Doctor.'[103] And his unreasonable response to that is: 'We do not intend to enter into this controversy, as it would not serve our purpose to do so …'[104] because some people today and in the past disputed the issue. Instead, we ought to consider Augustine's earlier writings, says O'Connor, which clearly state that Christ died to redeem all humans and is 'never contradicted later on.'[105] This insouciant assumption is unwarranted because, as it pertains to the *Objectiones*, we are precisely concerned with *those* works and *that* controversy. O'Connor seems to be missing the crucial point of the debate, or perhaps was simply unwilling to deal with the more difficult issues at hand. Here, O'Connor attempts to defend Augustine more so than prove that Vincent is not the author of the *Objectiones*. He also evades the main point: the Gallic monks believed there were, at the very least, logical

[102] To this day Arminians and Calvinists debate over these very issues. To boot, the *Objectiones Vincentianae* sound precisely like something an Arminian scholar such as Roger Olson might say.
[103] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 157.
[104] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 157.
[105] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 157.

consequences of Augustine's doctrine written in his later writings, which, if it did not accurately reflect Augustine's own thought, then at the very least found itself in the writings of the disciples of Augustine (this concept to be explored in the fourth point below).

Third, another reason why the traditional view is more probable is because it is less contrived. The traditional view, unlike the anti-Vincentian authorship view, does not have to posit the existence of another Vincent from Gaul, who happens to be anti-Augustinian, of whose existence we have no evidence. To this point some might suggest that Prosper admits these objections come from 'some people'[106] while the fact remains that the title suggests these objections came from the pen of one man. Mark Vessey has recognized the historical stretch one makes when positing more authors in his consideration between the author of the *Commonitorium* and the *Excerpta*: 'On the principle of not multiplying Vincents beyond necessity, this one [author] should be identified with a monk of Lerins who at the same period produced an anti-heretical treatise known as the Commonitorium, and a set of excerpts from Augustine's trinitarian and christological writings.'[107] In this same manner, we contend that adding another Vincent into the historical fold as the author of the *Objectiones* is to multiply 'Vincents beyond necessity.'

While Harden Weaver seemed confident in 1996 that Vincent was not the author, twenty years later she admits that she has, 'more questions I have encountered about both the beginning and the end of the [Semi-Pelagian] controversy, as well as the identification of its various stages and the relationships among them.'[108] We would like to suggest that the authorship of the *Objectiones* ought to be considered amongst those issues needing further attention. This brings us to the final two points, which not only argues against the

[106] Harden Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 133.
[107] Vessey, '*Opus Imperfectum*: Augustine and His Readers, 426-435 AD,' 278.
[108] Weaver, 'Introduction,' *Grace for Grace*, xvii.

conclusion of the Tonal and Content Arguments but also attempts to reconcile the evidence from those arguments with the traditional view.

Fourth, it is possible that Vincent was responding not to Augustine but to Prosper's interpretation of Augustine (or some other sense of Augustinianism in Gaul). One key feature to this point is that the author of the *Objectiones* never mentioned Augustine by name. So from what we have through Prosper, we are not certain that the author was objecting directly to Augustine. Of course, this sets aside the debate as to what Augustine actually believed and instead places it as to the interpretation of Augustine's writings. The sense one gets from studying this time period is that there were multiple strands of Augustinianism.[109] Even Prosper himself was decreasingly less Augustinian over time, as he learned that Augustine's own view was not as central to that of the catholic church.[110] Alexander Hwang remarks that the lack of attention to Augustine in the *Objectiones* may be precisely because the work was written during Prosper's evolution away from staunch Augustinianism.[111] The trouble with O'Connor's study is that he 'seems to presume that Augustine's heritage was monolithic, such that any inheritors of Augustine's work would be substantially in agreement with one another and critiquing any heir is therefore tantamount to undermining Augustine himself.'[112] This was the same mentality the young Prosper maintained. What we might have here in fifth-century Gaul is an instance of an objector debating the interpretation of Augustine and not Augustine's actual view. Hence, if Vincent were objecting to Prosper's interpretation of Augustine and not to Augustine, then the Accuracy Argument against Vincentian authorship is deflated.

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[109] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 151.

[110] Francis Gumerlock, 'The "Romanization" of Prosper of Aquitaine's Doctrine of Grace' presented at the Annual Meeting of the North American Patristics Society, Chicago, IL May 2001.

[111] Hwang, *Prosper of Aquitaine*, 207-208, 213.

[112] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 151.

Fifth, there is evidence to suggest that Prosper was not the most reliable messenger in relaying theological content. While some scholars believe the objections are exaggerations of Augustine's view, we might consider that Vincent was perhaps not the one who exaggerated the claims, but possibly Prosper. 'The exaggerated objections are consistent with the critiques thus far expressed by the opponents of Augustine, but *exaggeration to some degree by Prosper* cannot be ruled out, as this was a common strategy employed by both sides.'[113] This exaggeration on Prosper's part makes sense because for him, the Gallic monks were Pelagian sympathizers.[114] Indeed, if they were not in support of Augustine, then they were not catholic.[115] So in order for the Gallic monks' theology to fit within Prosper's framework, he may have had to exaggerate their views in order that they appear Pelagian (or he simply mis-categorized their view).

Consider the scathing, yet justified work by Augustine Casiday who argues that precisely because we can compare Prosper and Cassian's work against each other,[116] we can see that Prosper was a polemicist and an opportunist, operating under a 'programmable distortion.'[117] Casiday convincingly provides four reasons to think that Prosper's criticism of Cassian is dubious.[118] First, Prosper operates under a false dichotomy that one must be an Augustinian or a Pelagian (this is the aforementioned distortion). Second, Prosper 'shows himself willing to suppress or distort clauses' from Cassian, especially *Collationes* 13.3.5 and 13.9.5.[119] The clauses from Cassian, when taken out of context, make Cassian

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[113] Hwang, *Prosper of Aquitaine*, 208, emphasis mine.

[114] Hwang, *Prosper of Aquitaine*, 212, 'in this work they are referred to simply as Pelagian.'

[115] Hwang, *Prosper of Aquitaine*, 209 and Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian,' 271.

[116] Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian,' 271, 'in the case of Cassian we are able to assess Prosper's claims with reference to the original document – something that is impossible in his polemics against Vincent of Lérins and his anonymous Genoese and Gallic opponents.'

[117] Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian,' 271.

[118] Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian,' 277-282.

[119] Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian,' 278-279; Prosper, *Contra Collatorem* 4.2, in quoting Cassian from *Conferences* 13.3: 'The beginning not only of good works but also of good thoughts comes from God, who starts in us what is good and carries it out and brings it to its completion.' and from 13.9, 'But that it may be clearer through the excellence of nature which is granted by the goodness of the Creator, sometimes the first beginnings of a good will arise….'

appear to be advocating for Pelagianism when in fact that could not be farther from the truth. To confirm this sub-conclusion consider Casiday's final two points. Third, Prosper charges Cassian with believing that the Fall left some humans unimpaired. Fourth, Prosper fails to consider in any way Cassian's explicit opposition to Pelagianism found within his *Collationes* and *De Incarnatione*. Thus,

> It can only be regarded as a failure of his principles that Prosper was content to offer decontextualised gobbets of Cassian while denouncing Augustine's opponents for taking his words out of context. And yet it is clear that Prosper's treatise against Cassian is replete with extracts and offers no attempt at appreciating the context from which they are taken (one almost wants to write, 'from which they are ripped').[120]

While Casiday's conclusion is described as negative[121] by Hwang, his 'recent treatment on Prosper is a welcome sign, perhaps of things to come.'[122] If Casiday is correct then it seems reasonable to *suspect* that something similar might have occurred between Prosper and Vincent. Casiday would appear sympathetic to this theory because 'if it can be demonstrated that the *Contra collatorem* is unreliable due to programmatic distortion, we will have a strong case against accepting Prosper's other claims in the absence of corroboration.'[123] So if Prosper was an opportunist willing to decontextualize clauses out of context to make his opponents appear as Pelagian, then we might think that has happened in the *Objectiones*. Unfortunately, however, since we do not have the original *Objectiones*, we are unable to analyze which statements and to what extent Prosper has exaggerated.

Interestingly enough this final point could prove as a bridge to reconcile the concerns of O'Connor's camp with the traditional view. That is, since those scholars

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Prosper remarks, 'You were right [at 13.3] in declaring that our salvation originates in grace, but now [at 13.9] you assert that it comes from the gifts of nature and from free will.' Here Prosper failed to consider precisely how Cassian qualified the foundation of the gifts of nature and free will, chiefly, that they come from 'the goodness of the Creator.'

[120] Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian,' 281-282.

[121] Whether the term 'negative' is strictly descriptive because it is against Prosper's interpretative techniques or if it carries a critical connotation (in the sense that we should be skeptical toward that assessment) by Hwang remains to be seen.

[122] Hwang, *Prosper of Aquitaine*, 43.

[123] Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian,' 271.

believe the *Objectiones* are tactless and inaccurate, if Prosper did inaccurately relay Vincent's objections (both in tone and possibly content), then Vincent would still be the author of the original text (whatever that text might have said). This hypothesis makes use of the best evidences from both sides. It affirms the traditional view, including the circumstantial evidence, while it sympathizes with O'Connor's concerns. As a result, it provides greater explanatory scope of the internal and external evidence than the two conflicting views and should be considered as a plausible hypothesis.

Furthermore, this hypothesis is compatible with Casiday's recently published concerns in his chapter on Vincent in *Grace for Grace*.[124] Therein he presents three strategies for how scholars have tried to reconcile the anti-Augustinian content of the *Objectiones* with the pro-Augustinian content of the *Excerpta*. The first strategy is to deny the Vincentian authorship of the *Objectiones*. The second strategy is to question the authenticity of the *Excerpta* or to critique the anti-Augustinian bias seen in some academic work against the *Commonitorium*. The third strategy affirms Vincentian authorship of all three works while distinguishing between which doctrines of Augustine Vincent favored or rejected.[125] Casiday opts for a fourth option by positing that Vincent was willing to endorse and even utilize some of the same language as Augustine on grace and predestination (from what we know from the *Excerpta*). This viewpoint rejects the third strategy by positing a consistency across the Vincentian corpus, rejects the second strategy because it accepts the *Excerpta*, and rejects the first strategy for affirming the traditional view of the authorship of the *Objectiones*. How does Casiday reconcile the seemingly anti-Augustinian message of the *Objectiones*? He believes that the *Objectiones* are an attack against Prosper's flavour of Augustinianism, and not against Augustine himself. While this is a possible model for

[124] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 137-138.

[125] *Objectiones* was against Augustine's doctrine of grace and predestination, whereas the *Excerpta* accepted Augustine's Christology and Trinitarian theology.

understanding Vincent and his positions, in the next section we will argue against Casiday's interpretation of the *Excerpta*. Additionally, we will see that some of the objections Vincent makes in the *Objectiones* are accurate descriptions of Augustine's position (not simply Prosper's). Thus, while we can deduce that Prosper was a polemicist, that does not mean we have confident grounds for complete skepticism of his statements.

To conclude, O'Connor's work has been seen by some contemporaries (e.g. Guarino, Harden Weaver) as convincing, yet we have shown how his argument against Vincentian authorship is wanting. Harden Weaver previously rejected Vincentian authorship of the *Objectiones*, in her earlier work, but notes two specific criteria of the author. The author was likely a South Gallic sympathizer (tantamount to stating the obvious) and the author 'may well have been' a member at the monastery at Lérins.[126] Vincent probably fits that criteria and given the traditional, yet circumstantial, evidence we should think that Vincent of Lérins is probably the author of the *Objectiones*. As mentioned in the start of this section, the probability of Vincentian authorship of the *Objectiones* entails both the tacit anti-Augustinian purpose to the *Commonitorium* and the evidence that the *Objectiones* itself provides for Vincent's view of original sin. Before laying out the evidence of his position, it is critical to our cause to tackle one more hurdle to our future case: The *Excerpta* as a pro-Augustinian document.

Is Vincent an Augustinian on Grace: A Cautious Word on Casiday's View

As explained in the first chapter, how one interprets just one of Vincent's works may very well inform how they interpret his other writings, despite the difficulties that may arise. '[T]hese debates often turn on what one makes of Vincent's involvement in the

[126] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 133.

receptions of and responses to Augustine's theology.'[127] Therefore, in order to defend the interpretation of Vincent as an opponent of Augustine on the doctrine of grace, with a crucial underlying difference regarding the doctrine of Original Sin, we shall now respond to one strong attempt to present Vincent as Augustinian on the doctrine of grace.

Augustine Casiday attempts to show that Vincent and Augustine were of like-minds on the doctrine of grace. He does this by presenting Vincent's account of grace as seen in the long-lost *Excerpta*.[128] While Vincent's Christology is a worthwhile topic in its own right, Casiday's chief objective is to 'offer a revised account of Vincent's position in the debates about grace.'[129] His contribution to the literature on Vincent is generally helpful because Casiday seeks to find common ground between Augustine and the Gallic monks (when they are so often contrasted). This revised account attempts to illustrate that Vincent was not a fierce opponent of the Augustinian doctrine of grace. In comparing Vincent's Christology to Cassian's and Augustine's, Casiday believes we can 'appreciate in Vincent's account certain elements of Antipelagian polemic that have not previously received scholarly attention—elements which are deeply resonant with Augustine's and Cassian's Christological accounts of grace.'[130]

The relationship between Vincent and Augustine in light of the *Excerpta* has also been addressed by William O'Connor, who we previously argued had an obvious Augustinian bias. O'Connor's observations come on the interpretation of the first paragraph of the *Excerpta*:

> Just now let us hear St. Augustine of blessed memory — nay rather the ancient and catholic faith of Christ and the church — speaking. We should take note of his wholly salutary meaning in this first heading. For since there are two foundations on which the catholic faith rests, the divine or canonical authority and that of the catholic fathers — that is,

[127] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 132.
[128] Discovered by Madoz in 1940, the *Excerpta* is a florilegium of Augustine's remarks on Christology.
[129] Casiday,'Grace and the Humanity of Christ According to St Vincent of Lérins,' 298.
[130] Casiday, 'Grace and Humanity of Christ According to St Vincent of Lerins,' 298.

> church tradition — he took care to commend them both equally right away in the beginning of his works, which he wrote on the unity and equality of the Holy Trinity.[131]

From this, O'Connor believes that Vincent is guaranteed to have the orthodox position 'not merely for the doctrine of Augustine on the Trinity and Incarnation but for his [Augustine's] doctrine in general.'[1] Not content with a mere general claim, O'Connor makes a bolder claim, that according to Vincent, 'It might therefore be summed up by saying that the Bishop of Hippo, *in all his doctrine*, is free from heresy….'[132] However, this can hardly be proven from the first paragraph of the *Excerpta* alone. No strong case would succeed for Vincent's complete, unqualified endorsement of Augustine from that passage. Despite his strong claim, O'Connor's uncertainty about the matter lay bare in his following paragraph, 'Even if in this passage from the Excerpta Vincent is referring only to Augustine's doctrine on the Trinity and Incarnation our argument still holds.'[133] This more modest claim is contingent upon Vincent's failure to show Augustine's infidelity to the church fathers in the doctrines of grace and predestination. In his questionable reasoning, O'Connor thinks Vincent did not do this because Augustine denied any doctrinal infidelity in *De Praedestination Sanctorum* and *De Dono Perseverantiae*. While this may qualify as an exercise in question begging (after all, why would a bishop of the church either intentionally admit or innocently believe he is teaching something contrary to what the church had taught?), the purpose of Vincent's *Excerpta* was not to assess Augustine's doctrine of grace or predestination, as it pertains to *ordo salutis*. Mark Vessey correctly identifies its scope:

> Given what is known about the Gallic habit of reading Augustine's later anti-Pelagian works against the concerted testimony of earlier Catholic authors, it is notable that

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[131] Vincent, *Excerpta* I, 'Nunc iam ipsum beatae memoriae sanctum Augustinum, immo per eum Christi potius et ecclesiae antiquam et uniuversalem fidem audiamus loquentum. Cuius sanissimum sensum in ipso statim primo debemus aduertere. Nam cum duo sint quibus catholicae fidei fundamenta nitantur, diuini scilicet canonis auctoritas et catholicorum partum, id est et ecclesiastica traditio, utrumque continuo in eius operis exordio, quod de sanctae Trinitatis unitate <et> aequalitate conscripsit, pariter commendare curauit.'

[132] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 249.

[133] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 249.

> Vincent's one other extant production (apart from the anti-Augustinian *Objections* quoted by Prosper) consists of a set of excerpts from the African's writings on the Trinity and Incarnation, offered as an authoritative statement of Catholic doctrine….[134]

What is striking to Vessey about this is that it appears to fail to survey the consensus of the fathers, which stands in contrast to Vincent's earlier arguments from the *Commonitorium*. However, Vincent himself was watchful of this concern, observing that Augustine's view *explicitly with regard to the Trinity and the Incarnation* was a well-informed position that accurately presented the view of the church.[135] Considering that O'Connor's reasoning was eager, perhaps it is yet still the case that Vincent went further in his agreement with Augustine (as Casiday argues) than just on the Trinity or the Incarnation.

In this section I will argue that Casiday's work in this area is certainly valuable, to the extent that it shows common ground between Vincent and Augustine with regard to *historia salutis*, and yet misguided as it fails to show agreement between Vincent and Augustine on *ordo salutis*. *Historia salutis* refers to the events in space-time wherein God works in the course of human affairs to bring about the salvation of his people, from the creation of the universe and fall of humanity, to the line of the patriarchs through which the nation of Israel would come about, to the divided kingdom and exile & return, culminating in the life and death of Jesus Christ and the work of His church. *Ordo salutis* refers to the specific, logical (sometimes temporal) steps of God's work of salvation in the life of a particular human being. While Casiday believes that studying Vincent's response to Augustine's anti-Pelagian works ought to start with the *Excerpta*,[136] he fails to consider this distinction in his statements about the agreements between Vincent and Augustine.

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[134] Vessey, '*Opus Imperfectum*: Augustine and His Readers, 426-435 A.D.,' 281.

[135] Vincent, *Excerpta* 1, quoting from Augustine's *De Trinitate* 1.4.7, *NPNF1* 3.20, 'Ait namque: Omnes quos legere potui qui ante me scripserunt de Trinitate quae Deus est, divinorum librorum … catholici tractatores hoc intenderunt secundum scripturas docere ….' O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 249, 'Augustine, according to the passages cited, admitted this principle, as even Vincent in the Exerpta – at least in regard to the Trinity and the Incarnation – admits.'

[136] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 150.

In his assessment of Vincent's Christology as found in the *Excerpta*, Casiday argues that Vincent and Augustine saw eye-to-eye on the doctrine of grace and Christology. The *Excerpta* is by and large a collection of Augustine's writings on Christology that Vincent has synthesized for his audience. Yet there is one particular passage where Vincent provides his own unique commentary, worth providing in full:

> Therefore, such a medicine came from heaven to overcome and remove the life-threatening tumor. God, who is humble, descended in mercy to man who was swollen with pride, depositing a unique and extraordinary grace with that man whom he received with such love on account of his associates. And it is not the case that the very Word of God was conjoined due to the antecedent merits of his will, so that he became one Son of God and again one Son of man by the conjoining. To be sure, it is fitting that he be one. And yet, if this could come to be, not through a unique gift from God, but through the free will that is common to all men, there would be two or three or more.[137]

Casiday notes four terms which illustrate the special relationship between Christ's divinity and his humanity: *gratiam singularem praecipuamque, neque … praecedentibus suae uoluntatis meritis fecit, per singularem Dei donum,* and *non … per commune hominum liberum arbitrium*.[138] The relationship between the two was a 'special gift' to humanity. It was neither based upon any works that humanity did, nor could it have been (lest there be more divine Sons).

This statement is immediately followed by a passage from Augustine's *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* (30.15), wherein Augustine writes that the human nature of Christ could not have possibly done anything to deserve its special relationship with the divine. A side-by-side comparison of the two texts will be of valuable consideration in order to evaluate Casiday's argument.

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[137] English translation adapted from Casiday 'Grace and the Humanity of Christ According to St. Vincent of Lérins,' 302-303; *Excerpta*, 8, lines 67-76, 'Ad conuincendum igitur atque auferendum tumorem mortalium talis medicina caelitus uenit, ad elatum hominem per superbiam Deus humilis descendit per misericordiam, gratiam singularem praecipuamque commendans in illo homine, quem tanta praeparticipibus suis caritate suscepit. Neque enim et ipse ita Verbo Dei coniunctus ut ea coniunctione unus Filius Dei et idem ipse unus filius hominis fieret, praecedentibus suae uoluntatis meritis fecit. Vnum quippe illum esse oportebat. Essent autem et duo et tres et plures, si hoc fieri non posset per singulare Dei donum, sed per commune hominum liberum arbitrium.'

[138] Casiday, 'Grace and the Humanity of Christ According to St Vincent of Lérins,' 303.

Vincent's Excerpta 8.77-95	Augustine's *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* (30.15)
Est ergo praeclarissimum lumen gratiae singularis, **neque prorsus ullis praeterea concessae hominibus.**	Est etiam praeclarissimum lumen praedestinationis et gratiae,
Ipse Saluator, ipse mediator Dei et hominum Christus Iesus: qui ut hoc esset, quibus tandem suis uel operum uel fidei praecedentibus meritis natura humana quae <in> illo est comparauit?	ipse Salvator, ipse Mediator Dei et hominum homo Christus Iesus: qui ut hoc esset, quibus tandem suis vel operum vel fidei praecedentibus meritis natura humana quae in illo est comparavit?
Respondeant, quaeso, **qui Christum hominem primum communiter natum, deinde uirtutum merito in Deum profecisse dicentes, ceteris homnibus uolunt exaequare**: unde hoc heruit ut a Verbo Patri coaeterno in unitate personae adsumptus Filius Dei unigenitus esset?	Respondeatur quaeso: ille homo, ut a Verbo Patri coaeterno in unitatem personae assumptus, Filius Dei unigenitus esset, unde hoc meruit?
Quod eius bonum qualecumque pracessit? Quid egit ante, quid credidit, quid petiuit ut ad hanc ineffabilem excellentiam perueniret?	Quod eius bonum qualecumque praecessit? Quid egit ante, quid credidit, quid petivit, ut ad hanc ineffabilem excellentiam perveniret?
Nonne faciente ac suscipiente Verbo, ipse homo ex quo esse coepit, Filius Dei unicus esse coepit? Nonne <Filium> Dei unicum femina illa gratia plena concepit? Nonne de Spiritu Sancto et Maria uirgine Dei Filius unicus natus est, non carnis cupidine sed singulari Dei munere?	Nonne faciente ac suscipiente Verbo, ipse homo, ex quo esse coepit, Filius Dei unicus esse coepit? Nonne Filium Dei unicum femina illa gratia plena concepit? Nonne de Spiritu Sancto et virgine Maria Dei Filius unicus natus est, non carnis cupidine, sed singulari Dei munere?
	Numquid metuendum fuit, ne accedente aetate homo ille libero peccaret arbitrio? Aut ideo in illo non libera voluntas erat, ac non tanto magis erat, quanto magis peccato servire non poterat?
Nempe ista omnia singulariter admiranda et alia si qua eiusmodi uerissime dici possunt, singulariter in illo accepit humana, id est nostra natura, nullis suis praecedentibus meritis.	Nempe ista omnia singulariter admiranda, et alia si qua eius propria verissime dici possunt, singulariter in illo accepit humana, hoc est, nostra natura, nullis suis praecedentibus meritis.
	Respondeat hic homo Deo, si audet, et dicat: Cur non et ego? Et si audierit: *O homo, tu quis es qui respondeas Deo?*, nec sic cohibeat, sed augeat impudentiam, et dicat: Quomodo audio: *Tu quis es, o homo?* Cum sim quod audio, id est homo, quod est et ille de quo ago, cur non sim quod et ille? At enim gratia ille talis ac tantus est. Cur diversa est gratia, ubi natura communis est? Certe *non est acceptio personarum apud Deum*. Quis, non dico christianus, sed insanus haec dicat?[139]

[139] 'Moreover, the most illustrious Light of predestination and grace is the Savior Himself, the Mediator Himself between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. And pray, by what preceding merits of its own whether of works or of faith, did the human nature which is in Him procure for itself that it should be this? Let this have an answer, I beg. That man, whence did He deserve this, to be assumed by the Word co-eternal with the Father into unity of person, and be the only-begotten Son of God? Was it because any kind goodness in Him preceded? What did he do before? What did He believe? What did He ask, that He should

It is here that Vincent quotes Augustine and uses his argument that the second person of the Trinity is given a special, unique grace, even in the following lines not listed above stating that Christ was predestined.[140] It can be certain that Vincent made Augustine's argument his own, however, the question that naturally follows is, 'to what extent?'[141] Krzysztof Tyburowksi's thorough comparison between the *Excerpta* and the works of Augustine comes to the following conclusion, in agreement with Casiday's view:

> It is true that Vincent highlights [lit. underlines] some things using his own words, and adds some things to change the argument, [and] clearly displays the motive [for writing] and the scope of the *Excerpta* with a prologue and recapitulation. But in fact, except for certain non-technical terms, there is no difference at all between the *Excerpta* and the works of Augustine, even if sometimes Vincent adds or omits secondary things.[142]

If Tyburowksi is willing to state that Vincent has made modifications, even 'to change the argument' how can it also be that that 'there is not any difference' between the *Excerpta* and the works of Augustine? Surely there must be some meaningful difference if Vincent is modifying Augustine's arguments. Unfortunately, in this particular case, Tyburowksi's comparisons passes over the passage that captivates our attention, *Excerpta* 8, lines 77-108 with the conclusion that the two texts are 'equal.'[143] But are the texts really equal? Even if they share the same words, that does not necessitate their having the same meaning.

As previously mentioned, one's interpretation of the other Vincentian works may affect the interpretation one takes here with the *Excerpta*. Since the traditional view has

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attain to this unspeakable excellence? Was it not by the act and the assumption of the Word that that man from the time He began to be, began to be the only Son of God?'

[140] *Excerpta* 8.96, citing Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 15.31.

[141] Casiday, 'Grace and Humanity of Christ According to St Vincent of Lerins,' 304.

[142] Kryzysztof Tyburowski, 'La Concordanza Degli *Excerpta* Di Vincenzo Di Lérins Con Le Opere Di Agnostino D'ippona,' *Vox Patrum*, vol. 30 (2010), 665, 'E' vero che Vincenzo sottolinea qualcosa con la sua parola, e aggiunge qualcosa per cambiare l'argomento, spiega chiaramente il motivo e lo scopo degli *Excerpta* con prologo e ricapitolazione. Ma infatti, tranne qualche termine non technico, non c'è nessuna differenza fra gli *Excerpta* e le opere di Agostino, anche se Vincenzo aggiunge o omette ogni tanto delle cose secondarie.'

[143] Tyburowksi, 'La Concordanza Degli *Excerpta* Di Vincenzo Di Lérins Con Le Opere Di Agnostino D'ippona,' 663.

held that Vincent was anti-Augustinian, Madoz interprets the *Excerpta* as being Vincent's endorsement of Augustine's Christology but not Augustine's teaching on grace and predestination.[144] His reasons are two-fold: First, he appeals to Prosper's letter to Augustine that some in Gaul were opposing his doctrine of grace. Second, he analyzes two choice modifications by Vincent regarding predestination:

Excerpta	*De praedestinatione sanctorum*
'praeclarissimum lumen gratiae singularis'	'praeclarissimum lumen praedestinationis et gratiae'
'praestita est ista'	'praedestinata est ista naturae humanae'

In these two instances Vincent omits the term "predestination" in support of alternative adjectives ("extraordinary" and "outstanding"). While Casiday believes Madoz's case was 'on reasonably secure footing,' he remains unconvinced.[145] The first omission could have been in error because of Vincent's thematic use of *singularis* that appears fifteen times in *Excerpta* 8, with nine of those being from Augustine and six of them used uniquely to Vincent. The second omission went without direct reply from Casiday.[146] One astute observation was made: 'A few lines earlier … Vincent quotes Augustine's claim that "*praedestinatus* est Iesus."'[147] O'Connor believes that Vincent's utilization of Augustine throughout the eighth chapter, but especially the one-time use of *praedestinatus*, constitutes (again) as a full-scale endorsement of Augustine: 'That Vincent of Lerins approved of all the doctrine of Saint Augustine' … 'is even more clearly indicated [by this chapter].'[148]

Vincent's use of the term predestination led Casiday to conclude that Madoz's analysis must be mistaken because Vincent would not have included that if he were being careful to avoid Augustinian language. Elsewhere he concludes more strongly that

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[144] Jose Madoz, *Excerpta Vincentii Lirinesis según el códice de Ripoll* (Madrid, 1940).

[145] Casiday, 'Grace and Humanity of Christ According to St Vincent of Lerins,' 305.

[146] Casiday, 'Grace and Humanity of Christ According to St Vincent of Lerins,' 306, 'being unable to consult the MSS, I cannot offer a compelling counter-explanation for why Vincent should have put down *praestita* for *praedestinata*.'

[147] Casiday, 'Grace and Humanity of Christ According to St Vincent of Lerins,' 306-307, emphasis mine.

[148] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 249-250.

'Vincent's use of the term *praedestinatus* in this context makes it impossible to conclude with Madoz that Vincent was opposed to Augustine's terminology of grace.'[149] So, Casiday writes, 'Vincent's explicit inclusion of predestination in this passage adds further Augustinian colouration to his frequent assertions that in Christ we encounter' a special grace that is a special gift of God's.[150] Vincent's one-time use of *praedestinatus* in *Excerpta* 8 has even led R. Demeulenaere, the editor of a critical edition of the *Excerpta*, to redact *praestita* of Madoz's discovered manuscript to instead conform to Augustine's wording.[151] The conclusion regarding the relationship between Vincent and Augustine on grace via Christology may be surprising to those advocating the traditional view:

> If Vincent's words can be shown to have Antipelagian significance, then it will be permissible to interpret the *Excerpta* as Vincent's attempt *to promote Augustine's Antipelagian polemic about grace* through promoting his Christology. In other words, if the Christology that Vincent relates in the *Excerpta* can be taken as *affirming Augustine's teaching on grace* against the Pelagians, then we will be justified in supporting that Vincent was not as duplicitous in his reception of Augustine's writings as Prosper may have wanted us to believe.[152]

The notion here, without further distinction or nuance, is that Vincent and Augustine held to the same beliefs on the doctrine of grace, and through the lens of Christology from the *Excerpta* we are able to see that. The upside to this view is that Vincent is divested of being accused of "semi-pelagianism" and is more Augustinian than many have previously believed. This might be a welcomed approach for some scholars.[153] Dunstan O'Keeffe, for instance, thinks that 'much of the thought of the monastic writers of fifth-century southern

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[149] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 148.

[150] Casiday, 'Grace and Humanity of Christ According to St Vincent of Lerins,' 307.

[151] R. Demeulenaere, *Foebadi Aginnensis: Liber Contra Arrianos*, CCSL 64 (Turnhout: Brepols 1985), 225, line 104.

[152] Casiday, 'Grace and Humanity of Christ According to St Vincent of Lerins,' 307, emphasis mine.

[153] McQueen, 'John Cassian on Grace and Free Will,' 15-16, Cassian 'does not differ in any important respect from what Augustine had been teaching *about regula et humina virtutum* as early as his treatise *On Free Will*.'

Gaul conforms much more closely to the Augustinian position than has often been supposed.'[154]

In deductive argument form, Casiday's view is this:

> **Premise 1**: '[I]f the Christology that Vincent relates in the *Excerpta* can be taken as *affirming Augustine's teaching on grace* against the Pelagians, then we will be justified in supporting that Vincent was not as duplicitous in his reception of Augustine's writings as Prosper may have wanted us to believe.'[155]
> **Premise 2**: The 'Christology that Vincent relates in the *Excerpta* can be taken as *affirming Augustine's teaching on grace* against the Pelagians.'
> **Conclusion**: Therefore, we are 'justified in supporting that Vincent was not as duplicitous in his reception of Augustine's writings as Prosper may have wanted us to believe.'

There are at least three perceived difficulties with this interpretation of *Excerpta* 8 which will lead us to rebut the second premise of the above argument. First, it abandons the traditional view of *Commonitorium* 26.8-9 as being an indirect criticism of Augustine. This might be a welcomed strategy were it not the case that Augustine's theology may still align with Vincent's concerns in *Comm.* 26.8-9. Even still, if one were to agree with Vincent's warning, regardless of his intended opponent, then one might ultimately still find Augustine's theology suspect. So, we posit this possible counterfactual proposition as being true: if Augustine's theology were to fit Vincent's description in *Comm.* 26.8-9, then Vincent would be anti-Augustinian with regard to some of Augustine's views on grace. While proving Augustine's theology to fit the concerns of *Comm.* 26.8-9 is not the main focus of this project, we have provided some choice passages that bring cause for concern in § 6.1.1. Furthermore, Vincent himself observes occasion for rebuking leaders of the church.[156] At the very least on this point, it might be more confidently stated that we should be cautious as to whether Vincent affirmed Augustine's doctrine of grace against the Pelagians.

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[154] O'Keeffe, 'The Via Media of Monastic Theology,' 157.

[155] Casiday, 'Grace and Humanity of Christ According to St Vincent of Lerins,' 307, emphasis mine.

[156] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 19, *NPNF2* 11:146, '… if at any time a Doctor in the Church have erred from the faith, Divine Providence permits it in order to make trial of us, whether or not we love God with all our heart and with all our mind.'

Second, while Casiday convincingly has shown how Prosper was an unreliable exegete of Cassian, his hypothesis that Prosper did the same of Vincent with regard to the *Objectiones* is ultimately conjectural. It is ultimately conjectural because unlike Prosper's criticism against Cassian, we do not have the text in question. That is, the only existing text of the *Objectiones* is from Prosper's own pen. But even if it were correct (since Casiday's hypothesis has good support), we are not sure to what extent Prosper would have unreliably exegeted Vincent's objections. While Prosper takes Cassian's remarks out of context, how out of context might Vincent's objections be? Moreover, it also remains to be seen that the *Objectiones* are only a critique of Prosper's flavour of Augustinianism and not critical toward the primary source, Augustine himself. Casiday's view is that there were multiple interpretations of Augustine and not one monolithic consensus. But what if Prosper's interpretation of Augustine had been accurate? Such a case would essentially nullify the idea that Vincent was not anti-Augustinian because to be anti-Prosper would entail being anti-Augustinian.

Lastly, and most importantly as it pertains to the *Excerpts*, there is one crucial distinction that prevents us from being persuaded by Casiday's theory: what does 'affirming Augustine's teaching on grace' mean? Can we be sure that Augustine and Vincent are using "predestination" to mean the same thing, in the same contexts? Put another way, do Augustine and Vincent agree that Christ's humanity being predestined (*historia salutis*) entails that God has predestined each particular Christian for eternal salvation (*ordo salutis*)?

If 'Augustine's teaching on grace' *only* means Augustine's view that humanity (as a whole) has done nothing to merit God's gift of salvation, then our concern is quelled because there are no implications for their respective views on Original Sin. However, if Augustine's teaching on grace includes everything that Augustine believes about the

function of grace, including issues within ordo salutis (e.g. that humans, individually, are unable to do anything toward their own salvation), then it is neither apparent that Augustine and Vincent agree nor has Casiday's argument succeeded. This is to all to say, Vincent may be in agreement with Augustine's *historia salutis*, grace-based arguments against the Pelagians, but that does not necessarily constitute an endorsement of all of Augustine's beliefs on the function grace, chiefly its function within *ordo salutis*.

For Augustine, Christ is the best example of God's grace toward humanity and *serves as the epitome of God's predestination toward other humans*.[157] Casiday accurately writes, 'Augustine posits that one and the same process – predestination – accounts both for the incarnation of God the Word as Jesus Christ and for the salvation of Christians.'[158] Consider how Augustine argues from Christ (the exemplar) to each Christian (the particular):

> by what preceding merits of its own, whether of works or of faith, did the human nature which is in Him procure for itself that it should be this?[159]
>
> whence did He deserve this, to be assumed by the Word co-eternal[160]
>
> It is by that grace that every man from the beginning of his faith becomes a Christian, by which grace that one man from His beginning became Christ.[161]
>
> Just as, then, that one was predestined to be our head, so we many have been predestined to be his members.[162]
>
> For that generation was not recompensed to Christ, but given; that He should be born, namely of the Spirit and the Virgin, separate from all entanglement of sin. Thus also our being born again of water and the Spirit is not recompensed to us for any merit, but freely given ….[163]
>
> God indeed calls many predestined children of His, to make them members of His only predestinated Son, … [164]

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[157] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 30.15, *NPNF1* 5:512.
[158] Casiday. 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 146.
[159] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 30.15, *NPNF1* 5:512.
[160] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 30.15, *NPNF1* 5:512.
[161] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 31, *NPNF1* 5:512-513.
[162] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 31, *NPNF1* 5:513.
[163] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 31, *NPNF1* 5:513.
[164] Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum* 32.16, *NPNF1* 5:513.

This Christological argument via example is specifically with regard to issues within *ordo salutis*. The trouble for Augustine is that he conflates the two categories of *historia* and *ordo salutis*. Regarding Vincent's quotation of Augustine in *Excerpta* 8, O'Connor also notices this, 'The chapter of the De Praedestinatione Sanctorum from which the *original* passage is taken makes a comparison between the predestination of Christ <<secundum humanitatem>> and the predestination of the Saints.'[165] However, Vincent makes no such comparisons. This is crucially important. Vincent simply does not go as far as stating that God's predestination of Christ's humanity in *historia salutis* constitutes as evidence of God's predestination of the Saints in *ordo salutis*.

Casiday believes, 'Vincent's ability to affirm that "Jesus was predestined" undermines Madoz's claim that Vincent sharply distinguished Augustine the doctor of predestination from Augustine the doctor of the Incarnation.'[166] However, the understanding of Vincent's claims in *Excerpta* 8 distinguished above (Christ's predestination (*historia salutis*) contradistinguished against the predestination of each particular human being (*ordo salutis*)) agrees with Casiday that Vincent affirmed Jesus's being predestined. Our distinction, however, illustrates that Casiday's objection against the traditional interpretation of the *Excerpta* (as merely affirming Augustine view of the Trinity and Incarnation) remains unproven.

Furthermore, the *historia-ordo* distinction can be supported within the document itself and contextually from the motivations for their writings. From within the text, we read that the grace Christ received was unique such that 'To no Saint was this privilege ever given.'[167] If the grace Christ received was wholly unique, then how can it be the same type of grace which predestined the Saints? O'Connor observes from *Excerpta* 8, 'Christ is,

[165] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 250, emphasis mine.
[166] Casiday, 'Grace and the Humanity of Christ According to St Vincent of Lérins,' 307.
[167] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 250.

therefore, an example of a very special grace not given to any other. Thus He is in a singular manner assumed, He is in a singular manner predestined.'[168] Again, if the grace Christ received was *sui generis*, then on what basis could Augustine draw the connection that he does in *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*, but yet Vincent does not make that same connection in the *Excerpta*? The reason we believe Vincent does not make that same connection is because he does not accept Augustine's doctrine of predestination or grace (as it pertains to *ordo salutis*). We also see this contextually, from their respective intentions for writing their documents.

Augustine's motive for writing *De praedestinatione sanctorum* is precisely on the grounds of disagreement with the Gallic monks.[169] The issues at stake were the doctrine of predestination and the origin of faith (which fall within *ordo salutis*), and they were written concerning the Massilians. Yet Vincent's motive for compiling the *Excerpta* did not fall within the realm of *ordo salutis*, but rather against the heresy of Nestorianism[170] which is more closely related to *historia salutis*. And in order to combat Nestorianism, Vincent utilized chapters of Augustine specifically pertaining to 'the faith of the blessed Trinity and the rules of the Incarnation.'[171] So it ought not be surprising that Vincent and Augustine might have had different meanings of grace in mind because they had different purposes for their respective works. This understanding is supported by Abigal Gometz's research on the first chapter of the Excerpta: 'If we compare Vincent's *Excerpta* with Augustine's

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[168] O'Connor, 'Saint Vincent of Lerins and Saint Augustine,' 250.

[169] He writes, 'Further, if they walk in them, and beseech Him who giveth understanding, if in anything concerning predestination they are otherwise minded, He will reveal even this unto them. Yet let us also spend upon them the influence of our love, and the ministry of our discourse, according to His gift, whom we have asked that in these letters we might say what should be suitable and profitable to them.' *De praedestinatione sanctorum* (2), in Schaff.

[170] This is made explicitly clear in the Prologue: 'Qui Nestorius, profanae noutatis adsertor, unum Deum et Saluatorem nostrum Iesum Christum, scelerata et impie dissensione, in dues christos diuidere conatus est.'

[171] Vincent, *Excerpta*, prologue, 9-13, fuller passage: 'Collegimus itaque … capitual de sanctae recordationis Augustini episcopi libris ad batae Trinitatis dem et Incarnationis regularas pertinentia, eaque quantum eri potuit, in unum veluti corpusculum coaptare curavimus.'

original works, we often see him changing words or phrases to suit his purpose.'[172]

Consider the following comparison:

Vincent's *Excerpts* 1, 36-42	Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana* I, v (5)
Res igitur, cui uni tantummodo seruiendum es seruitute quae religio uocator, quae sola colei sola adoranda est, cui soli templum, soli sacrificium debetur, praeterquam quicquam c aut adorari negas est, Deus unus est, id est Pa et Filius et Spiritus Sanctus eademque Trinita una quaedam summa res communisque omnib fruentibus ea, sit amen res et non rerum omnii causa, sit amen et causa.	*Res igitur, quibus fruendum est, pater et filius spiritus sanctus eademque trinitas, una quaed summa res communisque omnibus fruentibus sit amen res, et non rerum omnium causa; si tamen et causa.*[173]

It is evident that Vincent, contrary to our 21st century sensibilities, took liberties in his citations of Augustine's writings on the Trinity and Christology. In many places he cites Augustine word for word and yet in others he expounds, redacts, or alters. As we have seen in the above argument, Vincent's purposes are regarding *historia salutis*, whereas Augustine relates *historia salutis* arguments with *ordo salutis* ones. So far as we can see from his unquestionable authored works (the *Commonitorium* and the *Excerpta*), Vincent never relates those two.

In 2005, Casiday was skeptical of Madoz's strategy of compartmentalizing the difficulties, yet himself admitted that *Excerpta* 8, lines 77-108 'do not permit us to reconstruct Vincent's beliefs about human will with the same degree of specificity' as Cassian's or even Augustine's and to do so would 'be imprudent to impute to Vincent specific beliefs on the strength of the parallel.'[174] He is partially correct on that point, and fully correct for finding it reasonable to see Vincent critiquing the heresies of Pelagianism and Nestorianism, but his remarks about the congruency between Vincent and Augustine on the doctrine of grace are ambiguous and needing clarification. We see no reason to think

[172] Abigail Kathleen Gometz, 'Eugippius of Lucullanum: A Biography,' (doctoral diss, University of Leeds, 2008), 142.

[173] 'The things, therefore, that are to be enjoyed are the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, in fact the Trinity, one supreme thing, and one which is shared in common by all who enjoy it; if, that is to say, it is a thing, and not the cause of all things; if indeed it is a cause.'

[174] Casiday, 'Grace and the Humanity of Christ According to St Vincent of Lérins,' 310.

that Vincent utilized Augustine's writings to promote Augustine's full doctrine of grace and it 'does nothing to weaken the inference that the *Commonitorium* was in some sense a product of Massilian efforts to limit the receivable part of [Augustine's] oeuvre.'[175] In fact, by offering what he thought were the good aspects of Augustine's corpus, Vincent had a 'shrewd way of excluding their other contents from consideration.'[176]

While it is true that Vincent and Augustine had common ground on God's general grace to humanity through gifting his Son (*historia salutis*), it would be inaccurate to say that they were in agreement on God's efficacious grace to each particular instance of a human (*ordo salutis*). This distinction (history of salvation versus the order of salvation), ought not to be conflated with each other. What Casiday shows us is that Vincent and Augustine saw eye to eye on the errors of Christological heresies (Nestorianism, Arianism, Apollinarianism, etc.). And he also shows us that the two monks, even the one charged with so-called Semi-Pelagianism, agreed upon the errors of Pelagianism, which could be qualified as Christological in so far as it rejects the sufficiency of the atoning work of Christ on the cross. However, their common agreement on grace against the Pelagians does not entail common ground on *ordo salutis*; rejecting Pelagianism because it affirms the *sufficiency* of humans' ability to save themselves is distinct from whether humans must make a *necessary* action in the process of each one's salvation. As such, Madoz's position that compartmentalizes Vincent's respective support and rejection of Augustinianism appears to remain the best interpretation of understanding Vincent's works, considered collectively. It does not produce 'huge difficulties in accounting for the response to Augustine's Christology that we find in Vincent's *Excerpta*' but instead best accounts for how Vincent can be both anti-Augustinian with respect to the *Objectiones* and pro-

[175] Vessey, '*Opus Imperfectum*: Augustine and His Readers, 426-435 A.D.,' 282.
[176] Vessey, '*Opus Imperfectum*: Augustine and His Readers, 426-435 A.D.,' 282-283.

Augustinian with respect to the *Excerpta*.[177] Casiday conditionally claims, 'if the Christology that Vincent relates in the *Excerpta* can be taken as *affirming Augustine's teaching on grace* against the Pelagians, then we will be justified in supporting that Vincent was not as duplicitous in his reception of Augustine's writings as Prosper may have wanted us to believe.'[178] This is accurate, if and only if it is adequately distinguished that Vincent and Augustine agreed on the function of grace within Christology (*historia salutis*), but not necessarily effacacious grace within *ordo salutis*. Because this agreement is found only within Christology, our hypothesis regarding the Gallic monks' position on Original Sin as an eastern position, and contrary to Augustine's doctrine, remains intact. We now turn to Vincent's doctrine of Original Sin.

Vincent's View of Original Sin

Nowhere in his writings does Vincent systematically lay out his doctrine of Original Sin, but he does make a number of statements which clue us into his beliefs. N. P. Williams, whose intention was to evaluate the Augustinian doctrine of Original Sin against the Christian tradition of the first four centuries, implements Vincent's own criteria: 'Can it be said that the ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin were held universally within the Christian Church—that they were believed *ubique, semper, et ab omnibus*—during this period?'[179] Our two chapters devoted to Augustine, the Latin/Western tradition, and the Greek/Eastern tradition might give one the impression that a narrow interpretation of the Vincentian canon would mean Vincent was anti-Augustinian or perhaps that he would even

[177] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 140.

[178] Casiday, 'Grace and the Humanity of Christ According to St Vincent of Lérins,' 307, emphasis mine.

[179] Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 310-311.

reject a doctrine of Original Sin.[180] However, we argued above that even a broad interpretation of the canon would, in conjunction with other statements, lead us to believe Vincent was anti-Augustinian.

Some of the statements Vincent made indicate that he and Augustine did not agree on Original Sin, and this is especially true of the *Objectiones Vincentianae*. However, Augustine Casiday's new perspective on Prosper has brought forth a two-fold concern: First, how certain are we that Prosper has correctly interpreted Augustine? He writes, 'although numerous studies have explored the coherence of "Pelagianism" as designating a group and many have concluded that, with appropriate nuance, the term is meaningful, there have been relatively few comparable attempts to explore the coherence of "Augustinianism" as designating another group.'[181] While this may seem like a novel approach to reading Augustine, the observation that many conflicting theological homes wish to have Augustine as either their patron saint (Calvinism) or a father to be recognized (Catholic) is indicative of the differing historical interpretations of the bishop of Hippo. Perhaps it is the case that Augustine was misunderstood not only in our day but even in his own; yet the question remains, 'Who is misunderstanding him?' Is it Prosper or Vincent? If they both understand him correctly, perhaps Augustine is then to blame for being inconsistent or ambiguous. While this topic is surely of great interest to our present study, space prohibits us from an exhaustive evaluation of the early reception of Augustine.

Second, how certain are we that Prosper has correctly interpreted Gallic authors? As it was discussed in the previous section, it can be demonstrably shown that Prosper misinterpreted Cassian. The great benefit to possessing both Prosper and Cassian's works is that we can compare how Prosper interpreted Cassian. Casiday reflects, 'if it can be

[180] Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 56, 'if one interprets Vincent's canon narrowly, then a Christian can admit neither the doctrine of original sin nor the doctrine of purgatory since neither teaching is well supported in the earliest fathers.'

[181] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 140.

demonstrated that the *Contra collatorem* is unreliable due to programmatic distortion, we will have a strong case against accepting Prosper's other claims in the absence of corroboration.'[182] This would, it seem, apply to the *Objectiones*. However, sometimes Prosper directly quotes Cassian accurately and sometimes he does not. Does Prosper do that with Vincent and his alleged objections? We do not have a secondary source or copies of the original through which we can evaluate Prosper's interpretation. Perhaps the best way forward is to proceed with caution, keeping in mind that Prosper is not an infallible source but someone who provides some sense (albeit a skewed one) of what his opponents believed. So let us review what we have concluded.

Thus far we have argued that 1) Vincent's *Commonitorium* is more likely than not to be a document with anti-Augustinian sentiment, 2) the *Objectiones Vincentianae* have neither been successfully shown to be written by someone other than Vincent nor shown to be sufficiently unreliable, and 3) Vincent was not an Augustinian as it pertains to the doctrine of grace on *ordo salutis*. For all intents and purposes a probabilistic, cumulative case would lead us to embrace the historically traditional view of Vincent as an anti-Augustinian. With an interpretative framework as that in mind, we will now attempt to understand the available data on the doctrine of Original Sin in the three writings of Vincent of Lérins.

In the *Commonitorium*, Vincent makes mention of man's natural ability and the guilt of Adam. In chapter 11 he mentioned men of 'natural ability' and 'great natural ability.' Here he very likely means men of great oratorical skills, and this is not a statement about free will. Such a statement comes later on in chapter 24, when Vincent rhetorically asks, 'For who ever before that profane Pelagius attributed so much antecedent strength to

[182] Casiday, 'Rehabilitating John Cassian,' 271.

Free-will, as to deny the necessity of God's grace to aid it towards good in every single act?'[183]

He accuses Pelagius of believing in too much 'antecedent strength to Free-will.' We understand this to mean that Vincent believed the Fall did affect human freedom and that to place too much emphasis on that faculty would be wrong. The reason why it would be wrong is because it would 'deny the necessity of God's grace.' But here Vincent is not making a claim about acts performed only by regenerated Christians. He is making a claim that God's grace aids human free will 'in every single act.' This idea is consistent with Chrysostom and Cassian's model (explored in §5.3) that human free will and divine grace are concurrent, not mutually exclusive.

Directly following that rhetorical question is another one: 'Who ever before his monstrous disciple Caelestius denied that the whole human race is involved in the guilt of Adam's sin?'[184] This is not an explicit statement that every human being inherits the guilt of Adam, but that every human being is 'involved' in the guilt of Adam's sin. We have illustrated in chapter four that there were many Eastern Church fathers who rejected the inheritance of Adam's actual guilt. But the overwhelming position of the church fathers was that all humans inherited the consequences of Adam's sin. This is likely all that Vincent means when he wrote of 'the whole human race is involved in the guilt of Adam's sin' because the Pelagians drew a hard line in defending that Adam's sin did not directly affect Adam's posterity.

In chapter 24, Vincent makes a statement against Simon Magus who

> dared to say that God, the Creator, is the author of evil, that is, of our wickednesses, impieties, flagitiousnesses, inasmuch as he asserts that He created with His own hands a

[183] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 24, *NPNF2* 11:149; Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins*, 98-99. 'Quis enim umquam ante profanum illum Pelagium tantam uirtutem liberi praseumpsit arbitrii ut ad hoc in bonis rebus per actus singulos adiuuandum necessariam dei gratiam non putaret?'

[184] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 24, *NPNF2* 11:150; Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins*, 99, 'Quis ante prodigiousum discipulum eius Caelestium reatu *praeuaricationis Adae* omne humanum genus denegauit adstrictum?'.

> human nature of such a description, that of its own motion, and by the impulse of its necessity-constrained will, it can do nothing else, can will nothing else, but sin, seeing that tossed to and fro, and set on fire by the furies of all sorts of vices, it is hurried away by unquenchable lust into the utmost extremes of baseness.[185]

Vincent objects to the position that God is the author of evil, and one of the supporting reasons Vincent provides for why that belief ought to be rejected is because of its entailment that human nature is driven 'by the impulse of its necessity-constrained will.' This will 'can do nothing else, can will nothing else, but sin.' For Vincent, the inherited human nature that can will only to sin is a concern. He considers this position amongst others to 'scorn the decisions of antiquity, and, through oppositions of science falsely so called, make shipwreck of the faith.'[186] It is evident that for Vincent, the will which 'can will nothing else, but sin' is not an accurate description of the will of each human being. In one word, it is an *anathemate*.[187]

In the *Objectiones*, there are a few objections which provide insight to Vincent's view of Original Sin. In these cases, the objections are quite brief and require extrapolation. Prosper's answers to the respective objections can sometimes provide clues to a broader context of these objections. We humbly recognize that despite the clues available to us (for which we will attempt to provide coherent observations), certainty is tenuous on their correspondence to historical truth.

Objectiones 4 states, 'The greater part of mankind were created by God not to do His will but that of the devil.'[188] Here Prosper responds that it is the Pelagians 'who deny that Adam's sin passes over to all men, think they can raise this objection against Catholics.' For Prosper, this objection could not come from a catholic voice, but from a heretical voice. The response (for Prosper) to Objection 4 is not to say that God predestined

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[185] Vincent, *Commonitorium*, 24.62, *NPNF2* 11:150.
[186] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 24.63, *NPNF2* 11:150.
[187] Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins*, 102.
[188] Prosper, 'Answers to the Vincentian Articles,' *ACW* 32.166

some to eternal life and others to eternal punishment, but rather to reaffirm the doctrine of the Fall. 'That slavery is not a disposition of God but an effect of His justice …. No one is freed from this punishment except through the Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, whose gratuitous grace is both withheld from many because of their evil merits and preceded in no one by good merits.'[189] That God would withhold his grace and keep some humans in a state of slavery is ideologically similar to the concern Vincent had in his *Commonitorium* about the necessity-constrained will such that we believe Vincentian Objection #4 corroborates what we know of Vincent's position on Original Sin. His concern is that God ultimately leaves the majority of humans to do the work of the devil and that those humans are unable to do anything to correct that apart from salvific super-added grace. Prosper's answer, then, confirms Vincent's worry.

What *Objectiones* 4 provides only as an implicit look at Vincent's doctrine of Original Sin, *Objectiones* 5 and 6 provide a clearer picture: 'God is the author of our sins: by making man's will evil, He fashions a nature which *of its own inclination cannot but sin*.'[190] Of particular relevance is the final clause. Ignoring who is responsible for the natural state of the will of humans, Vincent objects to the view of human nature 'which of its own inclination cannot but sin.' Compare the Latin:

> *Commonitorium*: *et necessariae cuiusdam uolunatis impulsu nihil aliud possit, nihil aliud uelit nisi peccare*
>
> *Objectiones*: *quae naturali motu nihil possit nisi peccare*

This similarity was also observed by Moxon. 'There is a striking resemblance between this passage [*Comm.* 24] and the fifth of the "Objectiones Vincentianae"' and this resemblance was evidence for Koch that the *Objectiones* were authentic to Vincent.[191]

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[189] Prosper, 'Answers to the Vincentian Articles,' *ACW* 32:167.
[190] Prosper, 'Answers to the Vincentian Articles,' *ACW* 32:166, emphasis mine.
[191] Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins*, 101, ftnt 2.

Prosper believes that Objection 5 'emanates from the same school which affirms that human nature is free from Adam's sin and remained unharmed.'[192] This is an accusation he also made in the previous Objection because, to him, one is either an Augustinian or one is a Pelagian; there is no other ground. Prosper responds to the objection that God is the author of sin by stating that God is the creator of all that is good in the world, including that 'whatever belongs to nature is entirely His gift and whatever is against nature does not come from Him in any way.'[193] But because of the Fall, human nature is now so corrupted 'It is not by its natural bent but because of its enslaved condition that it is subjected to the devil, until it *dies to sin and lives to God*, a change-over which it cannot make without the help of grace.'[194] This change-over necessarily requires an act of super-added grace. Therefore, while Prosper rejects the first part of the objection, he does not contest the second: humans have a nature 'which of its own inclination cannot but sin.'

Objectiones 6 is similar to 5 in its scope: 'God fashions in man a free will akin to that of the devils, which of its own impulse cannot will but evil.'[195] Prosper, again, does not contest the state of the human will. His main response is to posit that the difference between devils and humans is that there is a means of forgiveness for humans 'if God has mercy on them.'[196] Here again we see the same concern from the *Commonitorium* against the necessity-constrained will.

Objectiones 7 is relevant to Vincent's doctrine of Original Sin because of its concern about the ability of humans to accept the gift of salvation. 'It is the will of God that a great number of Christians have neither the desire nor the possibility of being saved.'[197] There seem to be two possible ways to interpret Vincent's use of 'Christian.' He either

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[192] Prosper, 'Answers to the Vincentian Articles,' *ACW* 32:167.
[193] Prosper, 'Answers to the Vincentian Articles,' *ACW* 32:168.
[194] Prosper, 'Answers to the Vincentian Articles,' *ACW* 32:168.
[195] Prosper, 'Answers to the Vincentian Articles,' *ACW* 32:168.
[196] Prosper, 'Answers to the Vincentian Articles,' *ACW* 32:169.
[197] Prosper, 'Answers to the Vincentian Articles,' *ACW* 32:169.

means people who self-identify as Christian or he means people who actually, genuinely follow Jesus Christ. In either case, such individuals, if they are not given super-added grace (because they are not part of the elect), then they are unable to be saved. The worry for the objector is that people within the Church do not have salvation as a viable option available to them. The gift of salvation is not and will never be available to them. The objector certainly shows concern for the doctrine of Inability.

In the last chapter we observed how it was that Prosper was a poor exegete of Cassian's writing. As previously noted, Augustine Casiday has argued that since we can demonstrate Proper was a poor exegete, we should be suspicious of his conveying Vincent's position. How suspicious we should be remains to be seen. One option is to simply cast doubt upon all of the objections as coming from the mind of Vincent. Given the cumulative case argument we gave for reading the *Commonitorium* as including indirect criticism against Augustinianism and the similiarities between the *Commonitorium* and the *Objectiones*, we believe that option to be unlikely. Guarino recognizes this position: 'Some writers argue that there exists a deep congruency between certain passages in the *Commonitorium* and the fifth and sixth of the *Objectiones Vincentianae*.'[198] We think this to be the best option. Admittedly, another option exists for cautiously interpreting Prosper's work, but without evidence to the contrary we cannot differentiate which portions (if any) are inaccurate. Sandra Fach remarks that 'Whether one can ascertain from [the *Objectiones*] Vincent's view of the human condition is debatable,'[199] but nevertheless, 'The implication is that original sin has not affected the will so as to make it incapable of desiring good.'[200]

[198] Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine*, xvii, ftnt 15.
[199] Fach 'Semi-Pelagianism and Grace,' 59.
[200] Fach, 'Semi-Pelagianism and Grace,' 60.

We recognize that the *Objectiones Vincentianae* provide relatively scarce evidence for Vincent's doctrine of Original Sin. Nevertheless, the evidence that does exist provides part of the picture of Vincent's doctrine of Original Sin. It is implied in *Objectiones* 4 and 7, and seen more clearly in 5 and 6 that Vincent objects to the doctrine of inability in the Augustinian sense. He believes that postlapsarian humans have not inherited a nature which is constrained to do only the will of the devil, nor of its own inclination only to sin, nor of its own impulse only to do evil.

Lastly, in the *Excerpta* very little material is unique to Vincent. But one paragraph in particular stands out from Vincent's own mind:

> Therefore, such a medicine came from heaven to overcome and remove the life-threatening tumor. God who is humble descended in mercy to man who was swollen with pride, depositing a unique and extraordinary grace with that man whom he received with such love on account of his associates. And it is not the case that the very Word of God was conjoined due to the antecedent merits of his will so that he became one Son of God and against one Son of man by the conjoint get. To be sure, it is fitting that he be one. And yet, if this could come to be, not through a unique gift from God, but through the free will that is common to all men, there would be two or three or more.[201]

Here we are provided a contagion model of Original Sin. It is medicine that is required to remove the tumor that is life-threatening. A sick person receives this remedy not 'due to the antecedent merits of his will' but because of the grace of God. For Vincent, salvation is a gift which is accepted, not earned.

> In fact, Vincent explicitly endorses the Augustinian argument that the 'assumed man' cannot possibly *merit* being assumed 'by the antecedent merits of his will.' There is no possibility that such a relationship could be earned, because it can only come to be 'as a special gift from God' and never 'by ordinary human free will.'[202]

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[201] *Excerpta*, 8, lines 67-76, 'Ad conuincendum igitur atque auferendum tumorem mortalium talis medicina caelitus uenit, ad elatum hominem per superbiam Deus humilis descendit per misericordiam, gratiam singularem praecipuamque commendans in illo homine, quem tanta praeparticipibus suis caritate suscepit. Neque enim et ipse ita Verbo Dei coniunctus ut ea coniunctione unus Filius Dei et idem ipse unus filius hominis fieret, praecedentibus suae uoluntatis meritis fecit. Vnum quippe illum esse oportebat. Essent autem et duo et tres et plures, si hoc fieri non posset per singulare Dei donum, sed per commune hominum liberum arbitrium.'

[202] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 149.

Vincent believes that if free will could merit salvation, then there might be multiple saviors. While this is a denial of the sufficiency of free will to merit salvation (Pelagianism), it happens to imply that there is in fact 'free will that is common to all men.' And here Vincent does not mean free to will only what is evil. We know because both the *Objectiones* and the *Commonitorium* object to that notion of free will.

In analyzing the available evidence to us, we see that Vincent held to a milder view of the Fall compared to Augustine, much like the Eastern tradition.

Chapter 7

Faustus Of Riez and His View of Original Sin

We now come to the last historical figure of our study on the Gallic monks: Faustus of Riez.[1] Between the three Gallic monks we are analyzing, Faustus has received the least amount of attention from scholars. This is perhaps due to the lack of a formal English translation of any of his works (apart from a couple of letters). A mere two books are available to English readers to learn about Faustus.[2] The scholarship available on him is relatively paltry, yet he plays *the* critical role for the so-called Semi-Pelagian movement during the second half of the 5th century. In fact, his legacy becomes the catalyst which spurs on the movement leading up to the Second Council of Orange (A.D. 529), which allegedly condemned Semi-Pelagianism.

In chapters 5 and 6 we described how John Cassian and Vincent of Lérins probably made slighted attacks at some form of Augustinianism (whether those views be represented by Augustine directly or one of his followers). By the second half of the fifth century, the debate over predestinarianism becomes more heated … and public. 'The controversy against Augustinianism flared up again some forty years later with the condemnation of the predestinarian theses taught by the priest Lucidus who held that Christ did not die for all and that some are predestined to eternal life and others to eternal death.'[3] Faustus oversaw this condemnation and as a result publishes one of the best defenses of Gallic theology in the 5th century: *De Gratia*. If the concerns of Cassian and Vincent were more subtle, then by the time of Faustus, 'They were no longer in doubt: he [i.e., Augustine] was opposed to the Christianity in which they believed. The dissatisfaction with Augustinianism which

[1] Not to be confused with Faustus the Manichean, whom Augustine had written against.
[2] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez;* Smith, *De Gratia*.
[3] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 293.

they had previously put down to their own ignorance, they now unhesitatingly attributed to Augustine's errors.'[4] In this chapter we will provide a brief history of Faustus, including a description of his writings. Then we will detail his engagement with a priest named Lucidus, which includes original translations of two of his letters. Next we will describe his pursuit against predestinarianism. This will lead us to analyze his view of the doctrine of Original Sin. Finally, we will consider how his popularity and legacy spurred on the Second Council of Orange (A.D. 529) which allegedly condemned Semi-Pelagianism.

Life and Writings

Faustus was a Briton by birth, but we know not when he came to Roman Gaul. Weigel suggests that his family was of Roman aristocracy because he hardly betrays a Briton name or heritage.[5] Furthermore, we know that his mother lived in Riez during the time of his bishopric and lest his mother make such a journey in the winter years of her life, it seems likely that the family had moved from Britain much earlier. Faustus entered the monastery at Lérins while he was young, likely in his twenties.[6] He would become its abbot in 433 which meant that he must have been there a few years prior; he was the third abbot of Lérins. 'That Faustus made excellent use of his study time can be seen from his latter works. He knew the Scriptures perfectly and all his writings abound with Scriptural references and citations.'[7] Yet he also had an extensive knowledge of the church fathers, councils, and tradition. He borrowed from Cassian, quoted Augustine & Ambrose, and utilized Jerome.[8] He criticized Pelagianism, Arianism, and Nestorianism. All of this 'means

[4] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 44.
[5] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez*, 13.
[6] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 12 & 22. Weigel's explanation places the birth of Faustus in the first decade of the fifth century, specifically before the departure of the last Roman legions from England.
[7] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 32. Weigel notes that in Engelbrecht's critical edition there are 538 Bible verses cited.
[8] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 33-34.

that Faustus found at Lérins an atmosphere in which such study was possible.'[9] The island that produced Vincent's *Commonitorium* 'was an ideal place in which to acquire theological science.'[10]

In his letter to Graecus (dated somewhere between 435-450), Faustus exhibits a theologian abreast of contemporary issues (describing the two natures of Christ, as if in anticipation of the Council of Chalcedon in 451). He references Ephesus (431) and the view of Nestorius. Therein he tells a concerned Graecus that Augustine 'was quite orthodox in the matter of Christology, though the same might not be said for him in other points.'[11] He would later become the bishop of Riez around 457 for over 30 years.[12] He was close in age to Vincent but was quite younger than Cassian, though there is some logically possible circumstance that they all knew each other, personally. At the Council of Arles in 473 and Council of Lyons in 475, Faustus was responsible for reproaching Lucidus who held to a (supposedly) extreme version of Augustinianism. 'He condemned, in a letter to the same man, both the view of Pelagius that man can be saved by his own efforts without grace, and was born without sin; and the views of the extreme Augustinian school that the vessel of wrath cannot become a vessel of honour, and that Christ did not die for all men, or willeth not that all should be saved.'[13]

After these two councils, Faustus penned *De Gratia* in order to defend the results of those councils. Smith claims that the work presents a 'centrist doctrine of grace in southern Gaul in the latter fifth century'[14] and that through it Faustus 'has come to be seen by many as having given the Semipelagian position its clearest exposition.'[15] It attacks both

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[9] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 34.
[10] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 34.
[11] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 62.
[12] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 75. Weigel observes a range between 449-462 given Faustus is mentioned as Abbot at the Third Council of Arles (449) and that Pope Hilary mentions Faustus of Riez in a letter in 462.
[13] Hitchcock, *St. Patrick and his Gallic Friends*, 85.
[14] Smith, *De Gratia*, 59.
[15] Smith, *De Gratia*, 228.

Pelagianism and predestinarianism, the latter which represents the view of Lucidus but which also has implications for the influence behind Lucidus (likely Augustine of Hippo). Faustus explicitly states that some suspected Augustine of heterodoxy, though he confirms Augustine's orthodoxy on Christological matters (see our section on Vincent's identical distinction in §6.2).[16] 'Against Pelagius he acknowledged the deleterious effects of the fall, but against Augustine he refused to construe those consequences as so thoroughgoing that they made dubious the reality of human agency.'[17] Gennadius wrote of Faustus, who 'published also an excellent work, *On the grace of God, through which we are saved*, in which he teaches that the grace of God always invites, precedes and helps our will, and whatever gain that freedom of will may attain for its pious effect, is not its own desert, but the gift of grace.'[18] We will explore two of the critical themes of this work later on in this chapter, and as a good reminder: 'A useful first step may be to prescind from a priori categories such as Augustinian, Pelagian, and semipelagian, and simply attempt to understand the *De gratia* as nearly as possible on its own terms.'[19] Keeping Smith's advice in mind would do well to give Faustus a fair hearing on his own terms, whether we agree with his assessment of the biblical data or not.

In addition to *De Gratia*, the other major work of his is *De Spiritu Sancto*. *De Spiritu Sancto* is a polemical work written against the Arians and Macedonians. Faustus argues, utilizing numerous passages from the Scriptures, that the Holy Spirit is God. He depends heavily upon Ambrose, for his source material. Unlike *De Gratia*, we do not

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[16] *Ep. Ad Graecum*, Ep 7, CSEL 21:201, lines 12-18, 'In scriptis sancti pontifices Augustini etiamsi quid apud doctissimos uiros putatur esse suspectum, ex his, quae damnanda iudicasti, nihil noueris reprehensum, sed fidei sensum maxime de duabus substantiis uel naturis dei et hominis domini ac redemptoris nostril scito apud catholicam ecclesiam non solum partum anctoritate susceptum, sed etiam apostolicis oraculis consecratum.'

[17] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 175.

[18] Gennadius, *De Virus Inlustribus* 86, *NPNF2* 3.99-400.

[19] Smith, *De Gratia*, 19. Djuth's interprets Faustus among 'Pelagius' sympathizers' (39) and even asserts that Faustus held to the same view of free will as Pelagius. She considers, 'That the *De gratia dei* is in some measure a Pelagian treatise…' (40). We will later show that this assessment is an inaccurate reading of *De Gratia*.

'know how the book was received in Gaul or elsewhere.'[20] Faustus has twelve surviving *Epistulae*, thirty-one *Sermones*, and a controversial pamphlet, *De Statu Animae*, which argued God was the only spiritual being. He received criticism for his pamphlet, but can be understood to be using "spiritual" in an uncommon way which only describes God.

As far as his influences, Faustus utilizes some of Augustine's arguments against the Pelagians. He even describes the transmission of human nature in the same way as Augustine. Yet on a couple issues, which we shall attend to later on, he also departs significantly from the Bishop of Hippo. Another influence, as Stewart[21] and Tibiletti[22] believe, is Cassian. But Smith is not so convinced: 'Despite the obvious affinities between the thought and the exegesis of Cassian and Faustus, the case for any direct dependence in the *De gratia* is not conclusively proved.'[23] Smith has no problem in saying that Faustus made use of Cassian's work, but that is distinct from showing a causal relationship from Cassian's thought into Faustus'. For our purposes, it is sufficient that both Cassian and Faustus share a common framework (i.e. we have no need to show any direct causal connection).

Faustus has been believed to be a strong proponent of so-called Semi-Pelagianism. In part, this is because of his claim that, 'we may walk the royal way, neither turning easily to the left nor rudely pushing to the right.'[24] Cooper-Marsdin explains, 'To his mind Augustine and Pelagius were both too exclusive, the one allowed too much to human liberty, and the other too little.'[25] Falling off the middle path was the error that Lucidus committed.

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[20] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 84.
[21] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 24.
[22] C. Tibiletti, 'Libero arbitrio e grazia in Fausto di Riez,' *Augustinianum*, vol. 19 (1979), 267.
[23] Smith, *De Gratia*, 145.
[24] Faustus, *Epistula* 1, *Epistula Fausti Ad Lucidum Presbyterum*, CSEL 21:161, lines 11-13, 'ut neque proni in sinistram neque inportuni in deteram regia magis gradiamur uia.'
[25] Cooper-Marsdin, *The History of the Island of Lerins*, 195.

The Lowering of Lucidus

The events that led up the penning of *De Gratia* occurred between A.D. 471 and 475, when we first see Faustus writing a letter to Lucidus warning him from embracing a predestinarian position.[26] This letter,[27] because it presents a background for the context of *De Gratia*, we provide in full:

> Epistle of Faustus to the presbyter Lucidus
> Faustus to the presbyter Lucidus, most devoted, most revered with a special affection by me, and most esteemed brother.
> It is great charity to wish to heal, by God's grace and help, the error of a too-incautious brother rather than, as the bishops think, to suspend him from the unity [of the church]. What am I able to say in a letter with your assent, as you bid me, when in your presence I was not able to bring you to the way of truth through long, gentle, and humble conversation? Therefore we should determine to speak only about God's grace and human obedience, so that we may walk the royal way, neither turning easily to the left nor rudely pushing to the right.
> I was amazed at the veneration you expressed in [saying] that no one in holy orders has ever written or preached against the holy catholic faith, when many have believed that multiple and profane errors were inserted even into the memoirs of writers who gloried in the name of Christian. Therefore I shall briefly say, as much as I am able when absent, what you ought to believe [in accord with] the catholic church; that is, so that you, by the operation of divine grace, may always join yourself to the baptized servants, and may detest him who asserts predestination to the exclusion of human effort, along with [detesting] the teaching of Pelagius.
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> - Let that man be anathema, therefore, who, among other impieties left behind by Pelagius, contends, with damned presumption, that man is born without sin and that he can be saved by effort alone; and he who believes that he can be freed without the grace of God.
> - Furthermore, let him be anathema who asserts that a man who is solemnly baptized with the confession of the faithful and proclaims the catholic faith, and who afterward falls away because of diverse delights and temptations of the world, has perished in Adam and original sin.
> - Furthermore, let him be anathema who says that a man is thrust down to death by the foreknowledge of God.
> - Furthermore, let him be anathema who says that he who perishes did not accept [the faith] in such a way that he could be saved (that is, referring to a baptized person or someone of the pagan age who either was able or else unwilling to believe).
> - Furthermore, let him be anathema who says that a vessel of wrath cannot rise so as to be a vessel of honour.
> - Furthermore, let him be anathema who says that Christ did not die for all, nor wishes all men to be saved.

[26] See Mathisen, 'Faustus, Intellectual Controversy, and the End of Roman Gaul' 244-268.
[27] Faustus, *Epistula* 1, CSEL 21:161-165.

> But when you come to us in Christ's name, or when you are summoned by the holy priests, then, if the Lord shall have commanded it, we shall show the appropriate testimonies with their references, in which the things that are catholic are made clear, and those that are contrary to catholicism are demolished.
> We, however, by the illumination of Christ, truly and confidently assert also that he who perishes for [his] guilt could have been saved by grace if he had not denied [adding] the obedience of a servant's effort to the grace [given] to him; and that he who by grace arrived at the goal of a good end through humble service, could have fallen away through idleness, and perished for [his] guilt.
> But we, walking down the middle with Christ as our leader, assert that after grace, without which we are nothing, [comes] the effort of obliging service. But we wholly exclude arrogance and presumption from effort, so that we, exerting ourselves with all our strength, lest grace be made void in us, declare that whatever we receive from the Lord's hand is a gift, not a reward; knowing that the fruit of our effort itself is a matter of duty, not merit, as the Evangelist says: 'We are unworthy servants; what we ought to have done we did.'
> These are sayings that are restricted for the sake of epistolary brevity; let your assent respond by a quick return word, whether of acceptance or rejection. As for the rest, he who does not follow this measure of truth, grace going in front and the initiative rising up,[28] shall be worthy of being cast out of the sacred doorways.
> I, nevertheless, retaining along the way, with a full embrace of sincere kindness, your personal goodness to me, desire that you remain within the bosom of the Mother Church, once you have repudiated this error. He who is thought to be ignorant when he rejects [a truth] quickly, will be reputed [to commit] blasphemy if he continues to defend [his error] stubbornly. We cast the gravest infamy on a authority if we say that he denied to him who is perishing the possibility of seizing hold of salvation (at least to him who is able to take hold of freedom of the will), when we can hardly deny that [the same authority] would condemn a false pleader of the law when examining him before his judgment seat. For I do not see how someone who is not guilty of receiving something can be accused of losing it. And so, being full of sin toward God, we begin by more carelessly giving assistance to his grace, and end by appearing to fight against his justice.
> I am keeping a copy of this letter in the monastery of the holy fathers and will show it if needed. If your brotherhood should think it right to receive the letter, either send a signed reply right away or else respond in a later letter saying it has been wholly rejected. If you refuse to send a signed letter (as I said), the silence itself will clearly prove that you are still persisting in error, and therefore will make it necessary for me to expose you in person before the public assembly. And therefore write back in accordance with the direct style of my letter, whether you acknowledge or reject these things by remote circumlocutions.
> [Names of the bishops and presbyter who read over the letter. A note that Faustus re-read and signed the copy.][29]

As we see, Faustus requires Lucidus to assent to the validity of those anathemas before the issue would be taken up at the conference of Arles in 473. According to Faustus, he or someone at the council will have drawn up a list of evidences ('we shall show [you] the

[28] We've tried to translate the phrase *gratia praecedente et conatu adsurgente* as a reduplicated expression of grace, rather than a dual expression of grace plus works, because elsewhere work or 'effort' is *labor,* and elsewhere also Faustus uses the verb *conor* to express the initiative of grace.

[29] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 94-96, describes the mystery, and two theories, behind an extant variant of this letter which does not have the names of the bishops, but for our purposes we need not explore. For a defense of the validity of the manuscript with the names, and Faustus's relationship to those respective individuals, see Mathisen, 'Faustus, Intellectual Controversy, and the End of Roman Gaul.' 246-253.

appropriate testimonies with their references') to be used against Lucidus. Lucidus does not assent,[30] nor would he if he were an Augustinian. 'These canons were unequivocal in their opposition to Augustinian predestination.'[31] The authorities met the following year at the Synod of Lyon (475) to continue their investigation into Lucidus. As a result of the councils, Faustus takes to his pen and composes *De Gratia*. 'In truth, after the council of Arles was signed, new errors were caught and the synod of Lyons determined that a few matters be added to this work.'[32] It is from his letter and findings of those councils that 'it is possible to show that in the *De gratia* Faustus has adapted the polemical material taken from the dispute with Lucidus into the form of a coherent treatise which rests upon two broad lines of argument.'[33]

Lucidus, seeking to remain in the presbytery, submits a formal recantation letter assenting to the propositions. Given the rigid, formal structure of the letter, some have theorized that Faustus, himself, composed the letter on behalf of Lucidus for him to sign.[34] This letter,[35] like Faustus's, we also provide in full:

> A copy of a letter of Presbyter Lucidus.
> Lucidus the presbyter to the most blessed lords and most reverend fathers in Christ Euphronius, Leontius […] and Licinius.
> Your [pl.] reproof is public health [salvation] and your opinion is medicine. I too take from them the best remedy, so that I might apologize for alleging past errors and also cleanse myself by a salvific profession.
> Therefore, in accordance with the Council's recent statute of preaching, I condemn together with you that concept:
>
> - He who says that the effort of human obedience ought not to be joined to divine grace.
> - He who says that, after the fall of the first man, the will's [freedom of] choice is completely extinguished.
> - He who says that Christ our Lord and Saviour did not take up death for the salvation of all.
> - He who says that God's foreknowledge forcefully compels a man to death, or if you will, that those who perish perish by God's will.

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[30] We know because the council takes up the issue and formally condemns his position.

[31] Mathisen, 'Faustus, Intellectual Controversy, and the End of Roman Gaul,' 260.

[32] Faustus, prologue, *De Gratia*, CSEL 21:4, lines 27-29, 'in quo quidem opusculo post Arelatensis concilii subscriptionem nouis erroribus deprehensis adici aliqua synodus Lugdunensis exegit.'

[33] Smith, *De Gratia*, 62.

[34] Smith, *De Gratia*, 58.

[35] Faustus, *Epistula* 2, *Exemplar Epistulae Lucidi Presbyteri*, CSEL 21:165-168.

- He who says that whoever commits an offense after being legitimately baptized dies in Adam.
- He who says that some are appointed to death and others are predestined to life.
- He who says that, from Adam to Christ, none of the Gentiles were saved in the coming of Christ by God's first grace, that is, the law of nature; for this reason: because they all lost free will in their first parent.
- He who says that the patriarchs and prophets, or any of the greatest saints, spent time in Paradise even before the time of redemption.
- He who says there is no fire and hell.

I condemn all these things as ungodly and full of sacrilege.
But rather I assert the grace of God in such a way that I always join together the striving of man and the undertaking [beginning-making, attempting] of divine grace, and do not extinguish the freedom of the human will, but call it weakened and ill; and [I say that] he who is saved is in peril, and he who was lost could have been saved. [I say that] Christ, even our God and Saviour, according to the riches of his goodness, bore the payment of death for all, because he wants no one to perish, he who is the Saviour of all, especially of the faithful, rich toward all who call upon him.
And because one ought to satisfy one's conscience in such great matters, I bring to mind that I formerly said that Christ had come [to the world] only for those whom he foreknew would believe, following [in this] the thoughts in the Sunday readings, in which he says: 'Just as the Son of Man did not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life in redemption for many'; and this one: 'this is the chalice of my blood of the new testament, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins'; and this one of the Apostle: 'Just as it is established for men to die once, thus also Christ was offered once to take away the sins of many'.
But now by the authority of the sacred testimonies which can be found abundantly distributed in the Holy Scriptures, and by the clearly seen reasoning of the teaching of the ancients, I freely confess that Christ also came [into the world] for those who are lost, because they perish against his will. For it is not right that the immense riches of goodness and the divine beneficence should be limited only to those who seem to be saved. For if we say that Christ brought remedies only to those who are redeemed, we will appear to absolve the unredeemed, whom we know should be punished for rejecting redemption.
I also assert, by the logic and order of the ages [worlds, universe], that some were saved in the law of grace, some in the law of Moses, some in the law of nature, which God wrote on all hearts, in the hope of Christ's coming; yet none, from the beginning of the world, [were saved] from the original debt [obligation] except by the intercession of [the] sacred blood.
I also profess that the eternal fire and the flames of hell were prepared for capital crimes that were committed, because the divine judgment deservedly follows human sins that are carried out to the end; those who do not believe these things with their whole heart justly incur that judgment.
Pray for me, holy lords and apostolic fathers.
Lucidus the presbyter signed this letter by his own hand; and I assert the things established in it, and condemn the things condemned in it.

There are five new anathemas listed in the retraction letter, holding in common four from Faustus's (first) letter. Others from the (first) letter are rephrased, consolidated, or dropped. These anathemas become the impetus behind *De Gratia*.

Casiday observes that *De Gratia* is 'tenaciously anti-predestinationist' in its mission.[36] But Weigel thinks to ask the question: Where are those predestinarians?[37] He lists ample Gallic critics of predestinarianism (*sans* Cassian and Vincent) in the 5th century, indicating a consensus in that region.

> Does this array of witnesses warrant the conclusion that there was a Predestinationist heresy in the days of Faustus? There are many reasons that makes us doubt the validity of the testimony. First of all, there is no Predestinationist work extant or even named by the adversaries of Predestinationism. Secondly, with the exception of the obscure figure of Lucidus, we have no name of any Gaul who was a Predestinationist. As for the man whom Ennodius reviles, one can only note that he looks suspiciously like Augustine himself, and at all events he was an African. Thirdly, Prosper indicates that the Semipelagian opponents of Augustine considered the Augustinian doctrines on grace to be a denial of free will and an assertion of fatalistic Predestinationism. Likewise, pseudo-Prosper and *Praedestinatus* [an anonymous work from Rome[38]] declare explicitly that Predestinationism is a form of Augustinianism. Lastly Prosper, the champion of Augustinianism, never adverts to the existence of a Predestinationist group.[39]

So what best explains the available data? He believes that there were Predestinationist advocates in 5th century Gaul, who believed they were Augustinian. 'The Augustinians were all but lost in the preponderating Semipelagian atmosphere.'[40] That is, the individuals who were Augustinian were few and far between, and therefore had to fend for themselves with no support system. What seems more likely the case is that, as we have defended in the previous two chapters, the so-called Semi-Pelagians were recognizing logical entailments of Augustinianism whether that be followers of Augustine or Augustine himself. We ought not to close ourselves off to the possibility that the Gallic monks were critiquing Augustine covertly given the data presented in Chapters 2 and 3.

Faustus Against Pelagianism and Predestinarianism

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[36] Casiday, 'Cassian Against the Pelagians,' 20.
[37] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 96-101.
[38] See David Roderick Lambert, 'Augustine and the *Praedestinatus*: Heresy, Ideology and Reception,' *Millennium - Jahrbuch*, vol. 5 (2008), 147-162.
[39] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 98.
[40] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 100.

The issues surrounding Lucidus bring together the thrust of *De Gratia*. The work is broken up into two books. The first has eighteen chapters and the second has twelve. There are some gaps in the work from both internal and external evidence.[41] 'Of the thirty *capitula* of the *De gratia*, eighteen may be said to have been drawn from the two epistles.'[42] In this section we will neither undergo a study of the structure of *De Gratia*[43] nor describe *De Gratia* through general selections of various arguments of Faustus's.[44] Rather, we will describe some of the most critical points which distinguish Faustus from his opponents.

The first two chapters are targeted against Pelagianism, but the rest of the work is spearheaded against predestinarianism. Faustus wastes no ink in calling for the denial of Pelagianism and his reason for doing so is because Pelagius believed, 'human labor is able to have power without grace.'[45] 'In the first place, we believe that the blasphemies of Pelagius must be condemned, because, among the other abominations of his teachings, he attempted to assert with damnable elation that human labor can be sufficient without grace.'[46] He also critiques Pelagius for his faulty view of Original Sin. 'In the first two chapters of *De gratia*, Faustus draws from Augustine's doctrine of original sin and concupiscence in order to distance the southern Gallic tradition from Pelagius.'[47] We expand upon this in the next section. The rest of the book is devoted toward combating predestinarianism.

Despite using Augustine's arguments against Pelagianism, Faustus and Augustine held to different views on predestination. For Augustine, the hardening of the human heart

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[41] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 103.
[42] Smith, *De Gratia*, 65.
[43] See Smith, *De Gratia*, 61-105.
[44] See Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 165-180.
[45] Faustus, *De Gratia*, 1.1, CSEL 21:6, 'laborem hominis valere posse sine gratia elation damnabili adfirmare conatus est.'
[46] Faustus, *De Gratia*, 1.1, CSEL 21:6, trans. Mathisen, 'Faustus, Intellectual Controversy, and the End of Roman Gaul,' 262-263.
[47] Pereira, 'Augustine, Pelagius, and the Southern Gallic Tradition,' 190.

is grounded in the divine will, whereas for Faustus it is grounded in human action.[48] Faustus does not believe that God wills into existence evil, but permits it. The clearest exposition of this distinction comes from book 2, chapter 2, 'what God wills is one thing; what God permits is another. Therefore God wills the good, and permits the evil, and foreknows both. He aids righteous pursuits by his goodness; he allows unrighteous pursuits for the sake of freedom of choice. That he gives grace is his affair; that he foreknows an offense is yours.'[49] What he means is that divine foreknowledge is 'yours' in that God "sees" what a person will do.[50] Divine foreknowledge is not an attribute which compels humans to act a certain way. Divine predestination neither is compelling, for it is God's justice based upon his foreknowledge. We see this in his interpretation of Romans 9:13 ('As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."').[51] Faustus replies (directly) to the predestinarian 'What wonder is it, if he foresees the actions of those whose end he foretells.'[52]

Faustus held other theological concerns against predestinarianism. One of those concerns was the limited access some humans would have to salvation. In response to this, Faustus believed that salvation is available for all, not just a selective pre-chosen few. 'Righteousness in man is not, therefore, a personal, but a general and public gift of God.'[53] Analogizing it to a public foundation, 'given in common for all to draw from, so that one who neglects to do so stands justly accused before the giver.'[54] Another concern he has is that predestinarianism fails to defend a certain type of freedom which he believes is

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[48] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 219, 'Faustus had taught that hardening is the individual's response to divine action.' Cf. Faustus, *De Gratia* 2.1.

[49] Faustus, *De Gratia*, 2.2, CSEL 21:61, lines 23-26, trans. Pelikan, 321.

[50] In contemporary Protestant theological discussions, this position would be closely identified with, if not identical to, the Arminian model of Simple Foreknowledge.

[51] Faustus, *De Gratia*, 2.6, CSEL 21:71-75.

[52] Faustus, *De Gratia*, 2.6, CSEL 21:74, lines 10-11, 'quid mirum si, quorum actus praeuidit, eorum exitus praesignauit…'

[53] Faustus, De Gratia, 1.9, CSEL 21:30, lines 9-13, trans. Smith, *De Gratia*, 166.

[54] Faustus, De Gratia, 1.9, CSEL 21:30, lines 9-13, trans. Smith, *De Gratia*, 166.

evidence of the scope of God's grace. 'Augustine insists that the mark of a fallen nature is the complete absence of the innate capability in created human nature to turn the will towards salvific good.'[55] Faustus, on the other hand, does not believe it to be a complete absence, but a damaged one. The rejection of a certain type of freedom leads the predestinarian to reject the very ground of human existence: 'But these creational gifts are not simply superfluous qualities; they serve to constitute, even in their gratuity, authentic human existence…'[56] For Faustus, to speak of humans as if they could lack essential, God-given human qualities would be to reduce humanity to the level of brutes.[57] It would be to speak of humans as if they were not human. 'They err, therefore, who regard justice and the other virtues as the substance of the soul, without which it could subsist anyway by the vital power in its nature.'[58] Smith states, 'Whereas Augustine makes a clear demarcation between nature and grace, Faustus knows no nature bereft of grace….'[59] Those who err in that way speak counter-factually and deny the scope of the *prima gratia*.

The *prima gratia* refers to Faustus's belief that there remain some divine gifts even after the Fall of Adam. 'Since that is, you will hardly doubt that the freedom of his own will, albeit attenuated, belongs to man, if you give attention to the first grace by which he was honored by God.'[60] Some things of the natural order are gifts of divine grace. For Faustus, humanity has received free will from God and is able to do good, despite the individual's having original sin which merely weakens human nature (contra destroying the God-given gifts).[61] Djuth interprets Faustus as an offshoot of Pelagius, as if he believed the

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[55] Djuth, 'Faustus of Riez,' 42.

[56] Smith, *De Gratia*, 97.

[57] Pereira, 'Augustine, Pelagius, and the Southern Gallic Tradition,' 191. Cf. Faustus, *De Gratia* 1.7, CSEL 21:23.

[58] Fasutus, *De Gratia*, 2.9, CSEL 21:79, lines 20-22, trans. Smith, *De Gratia*, 175.

[59] Smith, *De Gratia*, 216.

[60] Faustus, *De Gratia*, 2.5, CSEL 21:78, lines 26-28, 'Quae cum ita sint, inesse homini licet adtenuatam uoluntatis propriae libertatem minime dubitabis, si primam gratiam, quo a deo est honoratus, inspexeris.'

[61] Pereira, 'Augustine, Pelagius, and the Southern Gallic Tradition,' 190. Cf. Tibiletti, 'Libero arbitrio e grazia in Fausto di Riez,' 263-64.

will is 'an indifferent power of operation equally disposed to turn in a good or evil direction.'[62] Yet it is clear that Faustus believes the Fall has brought about severe consequences which influence the will (and therefore could not possibly have believed that the will is 'indifferent'). Nevertheless, in Book 1, chapter 12 he uses a concept similar to Cassian, 'bonae semina voluntatis,'[63] or the 'seeds of a good will.' He believes this is a biblically grounded concept, regardless of its perhaps Stoic origin.[64] Faustus's emphasis on the freedom of the will is not to be understood as a good devoid of God's grace.

In the first book of *De Gratia* Faustus argued for the necessity of the human will against the predestinarians and in the second book he further developed his argument to describe his model. '…Faustus tends in book two to ground his anthropology in the divine benevolence, keeping intact, of course, the exegetical focus. That is, he attempts to show that an appeal to human exertion in response to God is finally an appeal to divine grace.'[65] Faustus writes that God always receives the credit 'Since he is the Creator, who is the same as the Restorer, one and the same is celebrated when we praise either work.'[66] Thus, whether grace-created natural free will or superadded grace is the necessary force which brings about some effect, God is to be praised. Grace is the initial and ultimate source for all that is good, including the 'irreducible core of what it means to be human … grace consisting of the free will and immortality associated with the image of God.'[67] Therefore,

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[62] Djuth, 'Faustus of Riez,' 40. Confirmation that this applies to Faustus is found on the following page (41): ' … Faustus contends that the antidote to predestinarianism is the acceptance of the Pelagian conception of human freedom.'

[63] Faustus, De Gratia, 1.12, CSEL 21:40.

[64] C. Tibiletti, 'Libero arbitrio e grazia in Fausto di Riez,' 276, notes the close connection to the Stoic concept of *logoi spermatikoi*.

[65] Smith, *De Gratia*, 88.

[66] Faustus, *De Gratia* 2.10, CSEL 21:83, lines 20-22, 'cum uero ipse sit conditor, qui reparator, unus idemque in utriusque operis laude benedicitur, unus idemque in utriusque operis praeconio celebrator.' Cf. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 1.1, 'There is thus no inconsistency between creation and salvation for the One Father has employed the same Agent for both works, effecting the salvation of the world through the same Word Who made it in the beginning.'

[67] Smith, *De Gratia*, 176.

like John Cassian, 'Clearly everything is from grace, but the creator and redeemer offers it to all and pours it out for the salvation of all.'[68]

In book 1, chapter 5 Faustus provides a biblical text which reflects his sense for balance: 1 Corinthians 15:10, 'But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.' Notice here the initial factor is 'by the grace of God,' which goes toward a person. That grace was not wasted ('not in vain') but was proven useful through Paul's own labor ('I worked harder than any of them'). Yet, ultimately, Paul gives credit to divine grace ('not I, but the grace of God that is with me'). Hitchcock claims, 'In his views on free-will and grace he stands midway between Augustine's views of the total depravity and disability of human nature and Pelagius' views of the complete soundness of human nature.'[69] Faustus expresses these imbalances as absurdities.

> Here, therefore, both errors contradict themselves. … One stresses only grace and the other only labor, disparate by kind of beliefs, but similar in impiety through their equally divergent approach, they hiss with the spirit of a single serpent, of whom one, that is the supporter of grace alone, with a distinguished façade hides his venom under the guise of piety, whereas the other, that is the assertor of labor, openly displays his conspicuous arrogance in his shameless elation.[70]

The solution is to follow the middle path which neither denies the activity of divine grace nor the contribution that free will makes in the economy of salvation.

Where Faustus would depart from Augustine is that for the Bishop of Hippo, the work of God in the salvation process is seemingly only performed as special grace located

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[68] Faustus, De Gratia, 1.3, CSEL 21:15, lines 12-13, 'totum plane gratia est, sed omnibus eam offert atque inherit ad salute omnium conditor ac redemptor'

[69] Hitchcock, *St. Patrick and his Gallic Friends*, 86.

[70] Faustus, *De Gratia* 1.1, CSEL 21:7, trans. Mathisen, 'Caesarius of Arles, Prevenient Grace, and the Second Council of Orange,' in *Grace for Grace: The Debates After Augustine and Pelagius*, ed. by Alexander Y. Hwang, Brian J. Matz, and Augustine Casiday (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 208.

in the divine will.[71] Not so for the Bishop of Riez. In book 2, chapter 8 Faustus says that faith can be a gift of divine grace in God's creative act in nature.[72]

> Faith is a gift, yet not in the sense in which Augustine had understood it to be a gift but as Cassian had previously characterized it. For Faustus the capacity for faith is a gift of creation, presumably a natural capacity, which was weakened by not vitiated by the fall; thus it was not necessary that Abel receive the gift a second time, as the Augustinians would have attested, in order for him to act in such a way as to please God.[73]

The natural goods of God's creative act remain a factor in the economy of salvation. Man's free will, while damaged by the Fall, still necessitates divine grace to be restored. '…Faustus states that the road that leads to salvation is in the synergy between the *prima gratia dei* and *gratia specialis*, or *gratia Christi*. With the *prima gratia dei*, in other words, the *bonum naturae* and the *imago dei*, positive elements and fundamentals of creation, the man enters in the *vestibula salutis* and with the *gratia specialis*, he is admitted and introduced into the sanctuaries of life.'[74] Given the descriptions of the necessity of divine grace and the grounding of divine grace for free will, man is not the one who takes the initiative toward salvation *devoid of grace*, as the Semi-Pelagians have been commonly defined.

We may safely suspect that *De Gratia* was completed by 476, when Faustus went into exile due to regional political instability. By 485 he was able to return to Riez, where he likely spent his final years in peace before dying. The enduring legacy of *De Gratia* is an authoritative defense of Gallic theology. Neither Cassian nor Vincent had the backing of

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[71] Pereira, 'Augustine, Pelagius, and the Southern Gallic Tradition,' 192, 'One significant difference between Faustus and Augustine may be discerned in where they privilege the location of divine grace, where for the former it remains in creation and the creature and whereas for the latter divine grace remains in the divine will.'

[72] Faustus, *De Gratia* 2.10, CSEL 21:83, 'qui naturam in bonis suis negat debere praedicari, nescit profecto ipsum naturae auctorem esse, qui gratiae est.'

[73] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 173.

[74] Maria Luisa Annecchino, '*Stipendium peccati mors* (Rm 6, 23). Il significato della libertà nella Lettera ai Romani secondo l'interpretazione di Fausto di Riez' *Auctores Nostri* (4.2006), 197, '… Fauso afferma che la via che conduce l'uomo alla salvezza è nella sinergia fra la *prima gratia dei* e la *gratia specialis* o *gratia Christi*. Con la *prima gratia dei*, ovvero il *bonum naturae* e l'*imago dei* elementi positivi e costitutivi della creasione, l'uomo entra nei *vestibula salutis* e mediante la *gratia specialis* è introdotto *ad ipsa vitae penetralia*.

any church synod, much less two of them. 'Indeed, since the *De gratia* represents the consensus of the bishops of southern Gaul, one may say that the values cherished at Lérins coincided with those of the wider Gallic church.'[75] One of those values was charity, since Cassian and Vincent wrote against predestinarianism but never named their opponent(s) on that issue. In a similar manner, 'Faustus's balanced and timely appropriation of Augustine is consistent with the overall approach exhibited among the monk-bishops of southern Gaul.'[76] Faustus does mention Augustine by name twice,[77] but he does so in a manner which does not traduce the Bishop of Hippo with predestinarianism.

Smith's conclusion-summary of Faustus's view of human nature and grace is quite definitive. It precisely identifies the core of Faustus's view while recognizing its implications.

> To summarize, Faustus's doctrine of the gratuitously given image and likeness of God, which is to say his fundamental theological anthropology, takes its beginning from the notion that the entire complex of capacities and orientations that separate the human being from the broader creation may in a sense be designated as grace. He has no interest in a purely natural anthropology. This primal grace finds expression at different interrelated levels. Most fundamentally, the granting of the image of God encompasses the immortality of the soul and is closely connected with the capacities of intellect, reason, and free choice of the will. Such things cannot be removed, for they constitute human life. The will, with an innate or seminal potential for good, can also turn toward evil but cannot lose its essential freedom. Human righteousness, or at least access thereto, is granted to all, and so all have equal opportunity for salvation.[78]

Because Faustus grounds these necessary-for-human-life natural goods in the *prima gratia*, he distinguishes himself from Pelagianism. 'One can no longer regard Faustus as a Pelagian, that is, as one who denies the need of divine grace for human salvation. The alternative, which has held virtually unanimous sway since the seventeenth century, has been to identify him as Semipelagian, a term whose inadequacy is universally recognized even as it is used.'[79] By using the common definition of Semi-Pelagian as one who believes

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[75] Smith, *De Gratia*, 68.
[76] Pereira, 'Augustine, Pelagius, and the Southern Gallic Tradition,' 189.
[77] Faustus, *De Gratia* 1.5 and 2.9.
[78] Smith, *De Gratia*, 179.
[79] Smith, *De Gratia*, 18.

that humans could take the first steps toward salvation apart from divine grace, we can see the Faustus rejects that position. 'But we, walking down the middle with Christ as our leader, assert that *after grace, without which we are nothing*, [comes] the effort of obliging service.'[80] He believes in the necessity of divine grave for every action. In addition to the necessity of divine grace, Annechino explains that one can recognize Faustus was not a Pelagian with regard to his remarks on Original Sin: 'The damage derived from Pelagius's affirmations, according to Faustus, is denying the impact of Original Sin on human nature, the importance for which the Redeemer came is reduced.'[81] Now we shall turn to look more closely at Faustus's remarks on Original Sin.

Faustus's View of Original Sin

The early chapters of *De Gratia* provide helpful data on Faustus's view of Original Sin. Faustus views the Fall of Adam as introducing death to his posterity. He states, in quoting Romans 5:12, his position that death would not have entered the world had Adam not sinned.

> Pelagius still continues: Adam was made mortal, he would have died anyway, if he had committed the sin or not. But because the apostle said: for this reason, he said, just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, you understand, if the sin had not entered before, death would not have followed, and the given immortality would have continued …[82]

For Faustus, 'The divine prohibition introduced a new idea, the idea of death that was yet unknown….'[83] Unlike Pelagius, he believed that if Adam had never sinned he would not

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[80] Faustus, *Epistula* 1, CSEL 21:163, lines 6-8, 'nos ergo per medium Christo duce gradients *post gratiam, sine qua nihil sumus*, laborem officiosae seruitutis aderimus,' emphasis mine.

[81] Annecchino, '*Stipendium peccati mors* (Rm 6, 23),' 204, 'Il danno derivato dalle affermazioni di Pelagio, secondo Fausto, è che, escludendo l'incidenza del protopeccato sulla natura umana, si vanifica la causa per laquale è venuto il Redentore.'

[82] Faustus, *De Gratia*, 1.1 CSEL 21:9, lines 4-9, 'Prosequitur adhuc Pelagius Adam mortalem factum, qui, siue peccasset siue non peccasset, esset moriturus. Sed cum dicat apostolus: proptera, inquit, sicut per unum hominum in hunc mundum peccatum intrauit et per peccatum mors, intellegis, quia, si peccatum non praecessisset, mors secuta non esset et donata inmortalitas perdurasset, …'

[83] Annecchino, '*Stipendium peccati mors* (Rm 6, 23),' 201, 'La proibizione divina, poi, introducendo una idea nuova, l'idea della morte, di cui non si era ancora parlato ….'

have died. 'For Faustus, it is the phrase, *morte moriemini* [from Genesis 2:17, 'will die because of death'] underlines the connection between the offense and the conviction and recognizes the privilege given because of grace….'[84] Faustus sees the first sin as 'treason against majesty' by 'the clever serpent.'[85] The serpent had tricked the man into giving in to the desire for divinity. 'It was a moral insurrection, and not a simple disobedience, to an order, as the Pelagians said.'[86]

This moral insurrection led to drastic consequences for all of humanity. Faustus says that 'from the strike of one serpent's bite the whole human race has fallen ill.'[87] Smith categorizes two of these consequences: bodily death and 'tarnishing of those primal divine gifts to humanity which Faustus has called the *prima gratia*.'[88] Bodily death is the punishment for sin[89] which is an issue he takes against Pelagians. In line with other Eastern thinkers, Faustus compares the weakened human will to that of an injured or intoxicated person.[90] This leads Pereira to deduce, 'Faustus's emphasis on the necessity for outside intervention in the cases of illness and intoxication insinuates that divine grace is requisite for the spiritual restoration of humanity.'[91] It is evident that Faustus stands in contrast to the Pelagian position.

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[84] Annecchino, '*Stipendium peccati mors* (Rm 6, 23),' 201-2012, 'Per Fausto, se con la frase *morte moriemini* si è voluto sottolineare il legame tra l'offese e la condanna, con essa si vuole anche riconoscere il privilegio che era stato concesso dalla grazia ….'

[85] Faustus, *De Gratia*, 1.1, CSEL 21:9, lines 28-29, 'crimen majestatis' and lines 30-31, 'callidus serpens.'

[86] Annecchino, '*Stipendium peccati mors* (Rm 6, 23),' 203, 'Si è trattato di una rivolta morale e non di una semplice disobbedienza a un ordine, come sostenevano i Pelagiani.'

[87] Faustus, *De Gratia*, 1.9, CSEL 21:27, lines 28-29, 'universitas generis humani uno serpentis morsu percussa languebat.'

[88] Smith, *De Gratia*, 188.

[89] Faustus, *De Gratia*, 1.1, CSEL 21:10, lines 28-29, 'homo enim opus dei, peccatum opus, diabolic, mors poena peccati.'

[90] Faustus, *De Gratia* 1.8, CSEL 21:24, 'Adtenuata libertas eius ita gratiae adminicular plus requirit, sicut homo longo infirmitate confectus adiutorriis ac solaciis gressu titubante magis indigent. Igitur sicut post inveteratum luxuriate consuetudinem reparation continentiae multo labore constabit et sicut longo temulentiae usu captivate sobrietas cum violentia rigidae crucis vix recipitur….'

[91] Pereira, 'Augustine, Pelagius, and the Southern Gallic Tradition,' 192.

In one of the rulings written to Lucidus was the condemnation of the belief that 'Let that man be anathema, therefore, who, among other impieties left behind by Pelagius, contends, with damned presumption, that man is born without sin and that he can be saved by effort alone; and he who believes that he can be freed without the grace of God.'[92] While the phrase 'born without sin' is vague in communicating whether Faustus believed in the inheritance of the consequences of sin (whatever those might be) or sin itself (as if it were some substance), we gather that he believed the Fall had drastic consequences which affected humanity. In *Exemplar Epistulae Lucidi Presbyteri*, if in fact it was written by Faustus, he wrote, 'But rather I assert the grace of God in such a way that I always join together the striving of man and the undertaking [beginning-making, attempting] of divine grace, and do not extinguish the freedom of the human will, but call it attenuated and ill.'[93] We can see the author combats the position that freedom of the will is severely, if not completely, damaged. Instead, the human will is 'attenuated and ill.' Being born with sin meant that humans inherited a fallen nature which, not only is capable, but even fulfills the capabilities of natural goods that have been corrupted from their original state. Smith writes, 'Adamic sin stains and impedes, but does not obliterate, the operation of the fundamental compatibilities of the human will.'[94] Pereira agrees: 'Both bishops agreed that the original state of humanity was damaged by sin, but Faustus contended this Adamic fall never leads to the eradication of free will (*liberum arbitrium*).'[95] The doctrine of inability is one of the differences between Faustus and Augustine.

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[92] Faustus, Epistula I, CSEL 21:162, 'Anathema ergo illi, qui inter reliquas Pelagii inpietates hominem sine peccato nasci et per solum laborem posse saluari damnanda praesumptione contenderit et qui eum sine gratia dei liberari posse crediderit.'

[93] Faustus, *Epistulae* 2, CSEL 21:166, lines 16-19, 'Ita autem adsero gratiam dei, ut adnisum hominis et conatum gratiae semper adiungam et libertatem uoluntatis humanae non extinctam, sed adtenuatam et infirmatam…'

[94] Smith, *De Gratia*, 190.

[95] Pereira, 'Augustine, Pelagius, and the Southern Gallic Tradition,' 191.

The previous section shed light on Faustus's view of human free will. He was an ardent opponent against the predestinarian who believes that the 'free choice of the will is prone only toward evil in man, and not at all toward good.'[96] This is similar to the position Vincent critiqued,[97] and the concept of being 'prone *only* toward evil in man' (emphasis mine) describes the view of Augustine. Unlike the one who affirms Inability, Faustus holds that while the will is damage, it is not totally destroyed. 'So after the sin of the first parents, what followed was not the impossibility, but only the difficulty, of doing actions pleasing to God.'[98] If it were impossible of doing actions to please God, then that would deny the scope of God's creative grace. 'Further, no one's sin is so contrary to nature as to blot out the last vestiges of nature. For it is because of this that even the ungodly think about eternal matter, and make praiseworthy laws even in the present world, and properly restrain and properly condemn many matters of human conduct.'[99] What follows from this is that 'At the base of Faustus's argument, there is the optimistic consideration that after the first man's abuse of power illness followed and so did difficulty, not inability to perform good action, since inside man there are the seeds of good will. This positive quality given in the moment of creation gives everybody the salvation chance.'[100] Perhaps Faustus's best expression that true freedom of the will survives after the Fall comes from *Epistula* 2. He condemned the position 'that, from Adam to Christ, none of the Gentiles were saved in the coming of Christ by God's first grace, that is, the law of nature; for this reason: **because they all lost free will** in their first parent.'[101] Inability, then, is not the lack of doing any

[96] Faustus *De Gratia*, 1.10, CSEL 21:32, lines 11-12, trans. Smith, *De Gratia*, 80.
[97] Vincent, *Commonitorium*, 24.62, *NPNF2* 11:150.
[98] Smith, *De Gratia*, 190.
[99] Faustus, *De Gratia* 2.9, CSEL 21:81, lines 24-28, trans. Smith, *De Gratia*, 178.
[100] Annechhino, 199, 'Alla base delle argumntazioni di Fausto c'è l'ottimistica convinzione che dopo la prevaricazione del primo uomo è subentrata l'infermità e quindi la difficoltà ma non l'impossibilità di operare il bene, dal momento che nell'uomo permangono i *bonae semina voluntatis*. Questa dotazione positiva ricevuta alla creazione offer a tutti la possibilità della salvezza.'
[101] Faustus, *Epistula* 2, CSEL 21:166, lines 7-10, 'qui dicit ab Adam usque ad Christum nullos ex gentibus per primam dei gratiam, id est per legem naturae in aduentum Christi fuisse saluatos eo, quod liberum arbitrium ex omnibus in primo parenta perdiderint.'

objective good but simply the lack of power to earn one own's salvation (like Cassian's position on the matter). The human is unable to save himself or herself alone, but that does not mean the human is unable to participate in the salvation process.

Faustus's view of transmission is intriguing because of its strong similarity to Augustine's position on concupiscence. 'In response to Pelagius, Faustus employed Augustine's doctrine of original sin in order to explain how parents pass on inherent traits to their children according to their first nature rather than in reference to grace and the second nature.'[102] One of Pelagius's objections to Original Sin was that if Original Sin was washed away through baptism, then Christian parents would not have children with Original Sin. Faustus replies to this objection by drawing a distinction between the regeneration of the will (that which is cleansed) and the generation of the body (that which is not). 'Faustus's acceptance here of Augustine's position on the transmission of original sin through concupiscence bolsters his anti-Pelagian credentials.'[103] In fact, he turns the tables and says that Pelagius's denial of Original Sin empties the work of the healing grace of the redeemer.[104] In this way Pelagius denies the need for infant baptism because there is no sin to be washed away.[105]

The inheritance of guilt could be difficult to pin down where Faustus stands because the data is a bit mixed. In some places he speaks of baptism of infants washing away original sin but in others he speaks of their innocence. While writing in the context of divine foreknowledge Faustus claims, 'Whenever, not compulsion, but sin is the cause for

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[102] Pereira, 'Augustine, Pelagius, and the Southern Gallic Tradition,' 188. Smith, *De Gratia*, 137, 'Faustus's dependence on Augustine's doctrines of original sin and concupiscence is certain.' We would take issue with using the broader term "original sin" because of the various tenets therein, but Smith does a fine job demarcating some of those tenets at other points.

[103] Smith, *De Gratia*, 71, cf. ftnt 16.

[104] Faustus, *De Gratia* 1.1, CSEL 21:11, 2-4, 'quod cum dicit, duplici impietate blasphemat, dum et mortem ad auctoris inuidiam reuocat et negando originale uniculum gratiam reparatoris eucuate.'

[105] Faustus, *De Gratia* 1.1, CSEL 21:11, lines 5-6, 'itaque ut posset asserere paruulos baptism non egere, generale peccatum negauit.'

complaint, then not the creator but the sinner is guilty.'[106] Extrapolating that principle to the context of transmission, we could plausibly conclude that Faustus would reject the inheritance of Adam's very guilt because it would be transmitted though compulsion.

If infants were innocent on his view, then it would not pose a problem for his exposition upon Herod's slaughter of the innocent. In *Sermo* V, Faustus claims that infants who are killed for the sake of Christ are like the 'flowers of the martyrs that in the middle of the cold of the betrayal, they came out as first precious stones of the church that the first persecution [i.e., Herod's Massacre of the Innocents] ruined.'[107] From this we can infer that for Faustus, baptism was not necessary for infants to be saved. Furthermore, their deaths are not something to be mourned, but celebrated. 'In fact, it is appropriate for the children killed for Christ to impend the ceremonies of the honor not of pain, to be honored with the sacraments not with tears, since the king for them was the cause of punishment, the same was the hate, it was also the cause of the reward.'[108] What makes two passages from his sermon fascinating is that, while these infants were killed for the sake of Christ, we have no knowledge of these infants being baptized. Therefore, if there is a subset of infants who are not baptized, yet killed for Christ's sake, and yet given eternal life, then they are not punished for the guilt of Adam. This would be consistent with his claim in the first book of *De Gratia*, he claims, 'So to one to whom a will is given so that he can conquer evil, should he perchance yield to his enemy, he has lacked the desire to struggle and will not fail to obtain the result.'[109] For Faustus, the failure to overcome temptation will result in guilt. 'Sin incurs guilt only because it is chosen in this way, in deliberate rejection of the

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[106] Faustus, *De Gratia*, 2.2, CSEL 21:62, lines 2-4, 'ubi non conpulsio, sed consensio peccandi deprehenditur in querella, non auctor, sed praevaricator in culpa est.'

[107] Faustus, *Sermo* V, CSEL 21:239, lines 26-28, 'qui iure dicuntur martyrum flores, quos in medio frigore infidelitatis exortos primas erumpentes ecclesiae gemmas quaedam persecutionis pruina decoxit.'

[108] Faustus, *Sermo* V, CSEL 21:239-240, line 28 & 1-4, 'et ideo dignum est interfectis pro Christo infantibus honoris inpendere caeremonias non doloris, sacramentis uota dare non lacrimis, quia ipse illis causa fuit poenae, qui exstitit et coronae, ipse odii causa, qui et praemii.'

[109] Faustus, *De Gratia*, 1.12, CSEL 21:41, lines 20-23, trans. Smith, *De Gratia*, 185-186.

capacity for perceiving and obeying the truth.'[110] Guilt is in the hands of the sinner because of their own sin, not someone else's.

> Faustus thus sees Adamic sin as passing its consequences—infirmity of the will, physical death, the propensity to fall into the habitual force of sinful desire—to the whole race through the vehicle of concupiscence in procreation. But the vitiated nature handed on in this way does not seem to constitute automatically a *massa damnationis*; no one is pressed into sin, and thence into perdition, by a fatal necessity of human nature.[111]

Given the data, it would be safe to conclude that, quite probably, Faustus would reject the notion of inheriting the very guilt of Adam.

As it stands, we see that Faustus was in alignment with Cassian, Vincent, and the broader Greek theological tradition on the nature of postlapsarian humans. He believed that the Fall affected humanity so as to make it impossible for one to earn their own salvation. Divine grace is necessary not even just for salvation but for the ground of existence. Because of the Fall, humans are mortal, they have a propensity to sin, and they are infirm in the economy of salvation. Faustus neither believes that the Fall renders humans unable to do anything toward their own salvation, nor does he believe, despite having an Augustinian view of transmission, that they inherit the very guilt of Adam. This understanding of his view on Original Sin, free will, and divine grace will have ramifications for how we interpret the affairs leading up to and the canons of the Second Council of Orange (SCO).

The Road to SCO

As far as his reputation was concerned, Faustus's spiritual twin would have been Theodore of Mopsuestia. As you may recall from Chapter 4, Theodore is the only Eastern church father who wrote explicitly against the defenders of Original Sin. In this regard, they are both alike: He was highly revered during his lifetime and it was only after his death that he was suspected of being a Pelagian. 'Faustus's teaching on divine grace first

[110] Smith, *De Gratia*, 186.
[111] Smith, *De Gratia*, 196.

became more widely suspect as the result of some rather strange machinations early in the sixth century.'[112]

Around 517 an African bishop by the name of Possessor was in Constantinople. He was there, and not in Africa, perhaps because of the persecution occurring by the Vandals. Possessor decided to engage in a local theological debate against the Scythian Monks, who were supporters of the Theopaschite movement, an attempt to clarify and narrow the Christological Chalcedonian formula. The Scythian Monks, strong Augustinians as it were the case, were led by one John Maxentius. The engagement of this ideological exchange is a bit confusing.[113] Possessor, knowing nothing about Faustus, had read only eight chapters of *De Gratia* (perhaps being introduced to the work from a secondary source) but nevertheless used it against the Scythians. In response, Maxentius accused Possessor of siding with a heretic on the doctrine of grace. As a sort of by-product, the local debate on the Theopaschite formula included issues of the doctrine of grace. The future emperor, Justinian (then just a military officer) became annoyed at the drama so Maxentius left in a delegation to Rome. The delegation spent 14 months in Rome, during which time it was likely that Peter the Deacon wrote a document contending for the orthodox Christological position on the two natures of Christ. The document also contains a full defense of Augustinianism, condemnation of Pelagius and Julianus, and points of strong objection to Faustus and his *De Gratia*. John the Deacon sent this document to the African bishops who were living on Sardinia at the time of persecution. It is there, and then, that we meet Fulgentius of Ruspe.

Fulgentius writes back in response to Peter the Deacon's document, but makes no mention of Faustus. Maxentius and the rest of the delegation take this letter back to

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[112] Smith, *De Gratia*, 3; see Pereira, 'Augustine, Pelagius, and the Southern Gallic Tradition,' 199-204 for a recent recounting of these events.

[113] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 124.

Constantinople (after being kicked out of Rome for starting a small riot). 'Possessor was now in a quandary. His own brother bishops were on the side of the Scythians and he had only the dubious Faustus as his aid.'[114] So Possessor writes to Pope Hormisdas seeking judgment on Faustus's views. Hormisdas writes back (in 520) with a critique of the Scythian monks; his remark about Faustus is simply that Faustus had never been recognized by Rome as authoritative on the doctrine of grace. Maxentius, seeking support for his position, wrote to the African bishops and sent along with his letter the books written by Faustus.

Fulgentius sent to Maxentius two works. The first was *De Veritate Praedestinationis et Gratiae Dei*, in three books. It was,

> … a pessimistic portrayal, grounded in texts of Scripture and in excerpts from Augustine, of the capabilities of sinful human nature. This work nowhere alludes to Faustus of Riez's writings. Fulgentius's treatise would come to enjoy the favor of Caesarius, the influential metropolitan of Arles who was to summon the so-called second council of Orange in 529.[115]

The second work, containing seven books, was a refutation of Faustus. This second work, unfortunately, is non-extant. Yet, 'we know from the biographer of Fulgentius, from the letter of Fulgentius himself, and from the remark of Isidore of Seville, that its tenor was that Faustus was a sly heretic whose heresy was carefully and lengthily exposed by Fulgentius.'[116] But even if the work were to have survived, it 'would merely prove what we know already, namely, that Faustus' doctrine cannot readily square with Augustinianism.'[117] As odd as this episode began, it ended. We never hear from Maxentius and the Scythian Monks again, nor of Possessor; we have no knowledge of the effect Fulgentius's works served in Constantinople. What we do know is that this episode brought about a full response against Faustus some fifty years after *De Gratia* was written.

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[114] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 126.
[115] Smith, *De Gratia*, 5.
[116] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 128, cf. ftnt 24.
[117] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 130.

What does this all mean for our understanding of Faustus? In reviewing the data, we see that Possessor had cited *De Gratia*, yet having only read eight chapters of it; that Maxentius was an opponent of Possessor and thought Faustus's position was heretical; that Pope Hormisdas does not pass judgment on Faustus's view; that the African bishops considered Faustus a heretic; and that, from that group of African bishops, Fulgentius of Ruspe wrote a refutation of *De Gratia*. These historical facts lead us to a provocative conclusion: none of it matters for an objective evaluation of *De Gratia*. Possessor was a supporter of the work, while Hormisdas was neutral.[118] With regard to Maxentius and his band of Scythian Monks, and Fulgentius and the African bishops, we observe that explicit Augustinians citing the support of other Augustinians is hardly an objective ruler with which to measure the Gallic bishop and his views. 'The consequent action of Maxentius in appealing to the Augustinian bishops for a condemnation of Faustus is another sin against impartial inquiry.'[119] What the set of facts does tell us is that some people did not receive Faustus's position kindly, and in some cases Faustus's memory is tarnished by his critics. 'The manner in which Maxentius [and Fulgentius] framed the theological differences between Augustine and Faustus became the privileged interpretation transmitted throughout the Middle Ages.'[120] With so many different figures seeking papal authority, something or someone must give way for the church to stake its flag on the issue.

Casiday (2004) posits that Cassian's *Conlatio* 13 was written largely as polemic against Pelagianism, and that the semblances of Augustinianism therein are explained by the growing movement of predestinarianism in Gaul.[121] While we agree that *Conlatio* 13 could not have been written in direct reply to Augustine's final writings, that does not

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[118] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 133-135, explains how the *Decretum Gelasianum* does not definitely condemn Faustus, for if it had, Hormisdas would have condemned him and the Second Council of Orange would have been completely unnecessary.

[119] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 129.

[120] Pereira, 'Augustine, Pelagius, and the Southern Gallic Tradition,' 204, cf. ftnts 74-76.

[121] Casiday, 'Cassian Against the Pelagians,' 20.

preclude two options: First, that Cassian knew where Augustine's theology had already taken him from his previous writings (but post Augustine's shift in thinking on the doctrine of grace); second, that the movement of predestinarianism in Gaul was consistent with Augustine's writings. The second option would explain why Vincent certainly writes against predestinarianism in *Commonitorium* 26 and why Faustus explicitly writes against it in *De Gratia* and in his letters. Other works of that period, some non-extant, were also written against predestinarianism.[122] 'The need to define and to secure an authoritative tradition markedly affected the character of the debate. Vincent, Prosper in the *Auctoritates*, Faustus, and Fulgentius, all in varying degrees, were seeking to locate and to clarify the standard by which doctrines on grace and human agency might be measured.'[123] Thus one could see that the church would require responding to this. 'Chronologically, the council of Orange was the last most important event in the development of patristic anthropology.'[124]

The final player in the match was Caesarius of Arles. He was a student at the monastery of Lérins, yet held to a mild Augustinianism. What might explain such a counter-intuitive circumstance? He happened to be a student of Julianus Pomerirus, a North African priest who had relocated to Arles to avoid persecution by the Vandals. Caesarius appears to have been a quiet critic of the non-Augustinians but never spoke poorly against Faustus (whom he had likely known of, at the very least, during his time at Lérins). The motivation for hosting a special council was not so much to address a theological error in the church but more so out of self-preservation by the Bishop. 'At Caesarius's request in 513 Pope Symmachus confirmed his metropolitan status beyond his own province of Viennensis, and the pope named him as papal vicar of Gaul, a role that gave him the

[122] See Casiday, 'Cassian Against the Pelagians,' 20-21: *Gallic Chronicle*, Arnobius the Younger's *Commentary on the Psalms*, and Gennadius's lost *On Heresies*.
[123] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 197.
[124] Phan, *Grace and the Human Condition,* 309.

authority to "oversee papal interests" throughout Gaul….'[125] As Caesarius was able to acquire more authority and power as the Bishop of Arles,[126] his enemies tried to conceive of ways to bring him down. Julianus of Vienne was a rival of his in the neighboring province of Viennensis and he called the Council of Valence in 528 to address Caesarius's mild Augustinian views, specifically it seems on superadded grace. 'Although the records of the council have been lost, it is reasonable to assume … the council was intended to serve as a threat to Caesarius's authority.'[127]

In response to Julianus's affair, Caesarius took the opportunity of a church dedication the following year to hold an impromptu council.[128] The Second Council of Orange laid forth the following eight canons:

1. If anyone says that the whole person, that is, in both body and soul, was not changed for the worse through the offense of Adam's transgression, but that only the body became subject to corruption with the liberty of the soul remaining unharmed, then he has been deceived by Pelagius' error and opposes the Scripture …
2. If anyone asserts that the transgression of Adam harmed him alone and not his progeny, or that the damage is only by the death of the body which is a punishment for sin, and thus does not confess that the sin itself which is the death of the soul also passed through one person into the whole human race, then he does injustice to God …
3. If anyone says that God's grace can be acquired by human appeals but not that grace itself makes us appeal …
4. If anyone contends that God waits for our decision to cleanse us from sin and does not confess that the bestowal of the Spirit and his action in us moves us to will to be cleansed …
5. If anyone says that, like its growth, the beginning of faith and the willingness to trust by which we believe in him who justifies the ungodly and attain the regeneration of holy baptism is present in us naturally and not through the gift of grace …
6. If anyone says that mercy is divinely bestowed on us when without God's grace we believe, will, desire, try, labor, pray, watch, apply ourselves, ask, seek, and knock, but does not confess that the bestowal and inspiration of the Holy Spirit brings us the strength to believe, to will, or to do all these things as we ought …
7. If anyone affirms that any good which belongs to the salvation of eternal life can be thought of or chosen in a profitable way, or that consent can be given to the salvific, the evangelical preaching through the strength of nature without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit who gives everyone delight in consenting to the truth …

[125] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 210.

[126] For a more detailed description of the events surrounding Caesarius and his beliefs, see Rebecca Harden Weaver's chapter, 'Caesarius of Arles: The Culmination of the Controversy' in *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 199-234.

[127] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 226.

[128] '[W]e had gathered together to dedicate the basilica … we should instruct these people who are not thinking as they should by publishing for everyone's observance and undersigning with our own hands a few articles sent to us by the Apostolic See …,' Preamble, 'Canons of Orange,' trans. in J. Patout Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, 112-113.

8. If anyone maintains that some come to the grace of baptism by mercy but other can attain it through free choice which stands vitiated in everyone born of the transgression of the first human being, he is shown to be a stranger to the true faith. In saying this, he either asserts that not everyone's free choice is weakened through the first person's sin, or he obviously thinks it is wounded but only in a way that still allows them the strength to search out the mystery of eternal salvation by themselves without God's revelation.[129]

With regard to its source material, the preamble claims that the articles come from the Holy Scriptures and the ancient fathers, except there is no mention or source to any church father.

> But it appears, in fact, that the *capitula* were simply copies, perhaps somewhat revised by Caesarius and his partisans, of some fifth-century compilations, the eight anathemas being drawn from the so-called *Capitula sancti Augustini* ("Extracts from St. Augustine"), and the remaining definitions culled from some rather freely cited extracts from Augustine made by Prosper of Aquitaine known as the *Sententiae ex Augustino delibatae* ("Opinions drawn from Augustine").[130]

Those eight anathemas are followed by seventeen descriptions or definitions.[131]

With regard to the content of SCO, we find ourselves in an interesting situation. Having analyzed the thought of Cassian (Chapter 5), Vincent (Chapter 6), and Faustus (above), we can compare their views of grace against the eight anathemas. The Gallic monks believed that the Fall did corrupt human nature in a drastic way (contra #1 & #2). All three believed in the necessity of grace for every good action and that nature ought not be separate from grace (as if humans could perform a natural act devoid of God's grace), thus running contrary to #3 - #8. If our previous assessments of the Gallic monks are accurate, *none* of the eight anathemas as they are written would apply to their positions. In fact, these anathemas more closely (if not perfectly) identify Pelagian tenets (e.g. by nature and not by grace). Questions may arise over the *spirit* of some of the anathemas, i.e., what was meant by a particular word such as 'natural' in #5. If 'natural' meant devoid of divine grace exhaustively, then the Gallic monks would reject that meaning because Caesarius

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[129] 'Canons of Orange,' trans. in J. Patout Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, 113-115.

[130] Mathisen, 'Caesarius of Arles, Prevenient Grace, and the Second Council of Orange,' 217.

[131] See Mathisen, 'Caesarius of Arles, Prevenient Grace, and the Second Council of Orange,' 215-216; cf. Burns, 115-118.

would be speaking in terms of impossible world semantics (a concept in philosophy of speaking of that which can not exist). So if Caesarius intended to critique the Pelagian view that what is natural does not contain the grace of God, then the Gallic monks would be full in agreement (in our estimation). But if Caesarius intended to defend a later-Augustinian view that what is natural is not of God (e.g., 'I have tried hard to maintain the free choice of the human will, but the grace of God prevailed.'[132]), then the Gallic monks would not agree (in our estimation). In either case, the wording of canon #5 is broad enough (read: vague) such that the Gallic monks could sign on in agreement with the letter, if not perhaps the spirit, of the law.

Of the seventeen descriptions or definitions, the Gallic monks could fit in agreement with those statements as well. Here is a selection of the more questionable statements which it would be possible to think they would not have affirmed.

> 'Whenever we do good, God works in us and with us to make us work.' (#9)
> 'The choice of the will was weakened in the first human being can be restored only through the grace of baptism.' (#13)[133]
> 'No one in trouble is freed from any kind of difficulty unless God's mercy intervenes for him.' (#14)[134]
> 'No merits precede grace.' (#18)
> 'A person can do nothing good without God.' (#20)[135]
> 'When, however, they serve the divine will in doing what they will [that is good] … what they do is actually the will of him who prepares and commands what they will [Prov. 8:35].' (#23)[136]

Upon these passages, the Gallic monks may approve if the monks' views were properly understood and the definitions qualified appropriately. Therefore, if our assessment of their views is correct, then nothing in the canons of SCO explicitly condemns the views of Cassian, Vincent, or Faustus. To repeat, a careful analysis of the views of the Gallic monks

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[132] Augustine, *Retractationes* 2.1, *LCC* 6.370.

[133] One might question how the Gallic monks could hold to grace-supported natural free will and yet that free will be restored at baptism. One plausible solution is to see restoration as a process and not an instantaneous moment in time. The restoration is to a free will which desires only the good.

[134] See Cassian, *Institutis* 12.14, *NPNF2* 11:283.

[135] The Gallic monks might say that, a person can not exist were it for the absence of God's grace and as such they are wholly dependent upon divine grace to do any good action.

[136] The Gallic monks would say that every good action is a result of divine grace.

indicates a theological perspective which is compatible and acceptable to the canons of the Second Council of Orange.

Interpretations of SCO by historical theologians have sometimes been inconsistent. Weaver (1996) makes the claim that 'in contradiction to a key Semi-Pelagian tenet, it insisted that the movement of the will toward the good always originates in unmerited grace and not in human capacity.'[137] And yet she had also previously claimed that for Faustus, 'The assistance of grace is necessary for the beginning and the accomplishment of the good, but in no way can grace be construed as controlling human decision and action.'[138] How would these two notions be in conflict with one another? In contrast, if we were to be open to the possibility that SCO's ruling on grace is compatible with the *real* Gallic view of grace, then there is no rejection of Gallic theology. Consider Williams's interpretation of SCO. Recall that he intentionally passes over the so-called Semi-Pelagian controversy, and yet he states, 'the Second Council of Orange, which brought this controversy to an end, contents itself with affirming a modified Augustinianism, which only predicates 'integrity' of unfallen man, abstains from affirming 'Original Guilt,' and makes the important assertion that whilst free-will was weakened by the Fall it was not destroyed.'[139] Everything that Williams describes is true of the Gallic monks, except for the nomenclature which would associate the Gallic monks as holding to 'modified Augustinianism.' If anything, we ought to call them early-Augustinians (as Prosper noted, the monks used Augustine's writings against him). Or we could just refer to them as Gallic.

Regarding the nature of the setup to SCO, it 'was not conciliar after the most solemn manner of councils; in fact, it was an incidental appendage to the consecration of a church in Orange.'[140] To add concern on top of suspicion, 'the canons of Orange were

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[137] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 233.
[138] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 196-197.
[139] Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 397.
[140] Weigel, *Faustus of Riez,* 138.

signed not only by members of the clergy but by laymen as well, which was an unusual procedure in Gallic councils.'[141] This is 'significant' because '… clear participation of lay persons occurred only in the Augustinian camp.'[142] Why would Caesarius care to have the signatures of laymen if he knew his position was the orthodox view? 'This was all very irregular and quite out of keeping with how church councils normally functioned in late and post-Roman Gaul.'[143]

In light of the occurrence of the Council of Valence and with laypersons present at SCO, it becomes clear that SCO was not set up with sincere motives to discuss and address a growing theological movement from within the Gallic churches. 'Instead, it is far more likely that those who signed the document simply accepted what Caesarius placed before them' 'as a rebuttal to the position of the Council of Valence.'[144] As Mathisen concludes, 'Caesarius's fears that his efforts were not successful are attested not only by his continued appeals to Rome for backing but also by Boniface's rather lukewarm response, not to mention his weakening support even among his own suffragans.'[145]

Perhaps most enlightening of the imprecise conclusions on SCO is the aforementioned Boniface II's lukewarm response to Caesarius of Arles on January 25, 531, who 'declared that those were offshoots of Pelagianism who refused to acknowledge prevenient grace to be the cause of faith, but considered that to be a work of the corrupted nature which, however could only be a work of Christ.'[146]

> You indicate that some bishops of Gaul, even though they agree that other good things come from God's grace, want the faith by which we believe in Christ to be from nature **rather than from grace**. They impiously assert that it remained in the power of human free choice which comes from Adam and is not now bestowed on individuals by the abundance of divine mercy. For the sake of dispelling this confusion, you ask us to confirm with the authority of the Apostolic See your declaration in which, on the contrary and according to Catholic truth, you define that true faith in Christ and the beginning of every

[141] Wegiel, *Faustus of Riez,* 138.
[142] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 228.
[143] Mathisen, 'Caesarius of Arles, Prevenient Grace, and the Second Council of Orange,' 220.
[144] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 229.
[145] Mathisen, 'Caesarius of Arles, Prevenient Grace, and the Second Council of Orange,' 232.
[146] Neander, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, 711.

> good intention is inspired in the mind of each person through the intervention of God's grace.
>
> Many of the fathers, the chief being Bishop Augustine of happy memory, as well as our predecessor bishops of the Apostolic See, are known to have given this matter the fullest consideration. Thus no one should any longer remain uncertain that faith itself comes to us from grace. We have decided therefore to refrain from an elaborate response, especially since, according to the statements you selected from the Apostle, 'I have received mercy to be faithful,' [1 Cor.7:25] and elsewhere, 'For Christ's sake you were given not only to believe in him but also to suffer for him,' [Phil. 1:29], it is obvious that the faith by which we believe in Christ, as indeed every good thing, comes to individual persons from the gift of heavenly grace.
>
> We rejoice that Your Fraternity judged according to Catholic faith in the conference held with other priests in Gaul. On the questions they defined with one accord, as you indicate, that the faith by which we believe in Christ is bestowed by the intervention of divine grace, adding especially that without God's grace no one can will, begin, perform, or accomplish anything good in God's sight. Thus the Savior says, 'Without me you can do nothing' [John 15:5]. This is both Catholic and certain, because in all good things, of which faith is the chief, the divine mercy intervenes on our behalf while we are still refusing in order to make us willing; it is upon us when we will; and it follows us so that we will continue in faith. Thus the prophet David says, 'My God will go before me with his mercy [Ps. 59:10] and also 'My mercy is with him' [Ps. 89:24] and elsewhere 'His mercy follows me' [Ps 23:6]. Similarly, the blessed Paul says, 'Who has first given to him so that he might be repaid? For from him and through him and in him are all things' [Rom. 11:35-36]. We are amazed that those who think the contrary are so weighed down with the relics of ancient error that they believe they come to Christ not by the kindness of God but by the goodness of nature itself, which everyone knows was corrupted by Adam's sin, is actually more the cause of our faith than Christ himself. We wonder why they do not realize that they are protesting against the Lord's statement 'No one comes to me unless it is given to him by my Father' [John 6:65] and that they oppose what the blessed Paul proclaimed to the Hebrews: 'Let us rush into the struggle proposed to us, looking to the founder and the fulfillment of faith, Jesus Christ' [Heb. 12:1-2]. Given all this, we cannot discover what capacity they attribute to the human will for **believing in Christ without God's grace**, since Christ himself is the founder and fulfillment of faith. Therefore, we received your confession with similar sentiments, and we approve it as written above [below] as in accord with the Catholic standards of the fathers.'[147]

By 530, Pope Boniface II approves and ratifies the teachings of SCO. Upon careful analysis, however, we see that his remarks describe a position not defended by Faustus, Cassian, or Vincent. Boniface describes the errant monks as believing, 'the faith by which we believe in Christ to be from nature rather than from grace.' To this the Gallic monks also believed was in error. Boniface describes the catholic position as 'the beginning of every good intention is inspired in the mind of each person through the intervention of

[147] Boniface II to Caesarius, in *Theological Anthropology*, trans. Burns, 110-111, emphases mine.

God's grace.' To this the Gallic monks agreed. Boniface states, 'without God's grace no one can will, begin, perform, or accomplish anything good in God's sight.' Again, the Gallic monks agreed.

If Boniface is accurately describing the target person(s) of the canons of SCO, then it surely is not John Cassian, Vincent of Lerins, or Faustus of Riez. Perhaps Caesarius was combating Pelagianism or maybe Caesarius had been misrepresenting his opponents.[148] Mathisen argues the latter, that Boniface's mention of 'certain bishops of Gaul' thinking faith came by nature 'suggests that Caesarius had rather mispresented the view of his Gallic opponents, who never would have said that faith came from nature, a clearly Pelagian belief.'[149]

Moreover, a final intriguing and astute observation by Mathisen is Boniface's multiple references to '*confessionem vestram*' (only one instance provided in the above selection). What this demonstrates is that Caesarius had still been insecure in his orthodoxy and sought confirmation from Rome. What Mathisen does not propose is a different possibility, that the rulings of SCO may be catholic in a broad sense, not necessarily a narrow one. By broad sense we mean that there may have been a spectrum of beliefs that Rome found to be acceptable and the rulings of SCO fit within those parameters. Yet let us suppose that Caesarius were a mild Augustinian *and* that the Gallic monks views were incompatible with SCO. If Rome confirms that mild Augustinian is consistent with orthodox teaching, then Casearius (being insecure) is not ruled a heretic. He is safe in his understanding of grace, but this is to say nothing of the orthodoxy of the Gallic monks. This interpretation of the affair would severely undercut the authority of SCO as a definitive, narrow ruling supported by Rome.

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[148] Boniface indicates, 'we decided against responding to the remaining absurdities of the Pelagian error apparently contained in that letter…,' Boniface II, in Burns, 112.

[149] Mathisen, 'Caesarius of Arles, Prevenient Grace, and the Second Council of Orange,' 226.

Scholars have widely concluded that SCO rejected Semi-Pelagianism.[150] Stewart remarks, 'Controversy sputtered on [after Cassian], with new contenders, until 529, when the Council of Orange (later affirmed by Rome) condemned the Massilian teaching that allowed some initiative, however feeble, of the human will (the *initium fidei*).'[151] Weaver states, 'the council unequivocally endorsed the Augustinian emphasis on the priority of grace.'[152] But what if that doctrinal emphasis on the priority of grace was also seen in the Gallic monks (as we have argued)? Then SCO does not state a position on *exclusively* Augustinian grounds. SCO does not explicitly reject the views of the Gallic monks. Indeed, Smith writes, 'The proceedings of this assemblage never make mention of Faustus; they simply renew the Augustinian condemnation of Pelagianism.'[153] But even then they do not 'simply renew the condemnation of Pelagianism,' they also rule out full Augustinianism as a viable option. Weaver notes that this 'hastily arrange council' results in 'a modified form of Augustinianism' wherein 'The more difficult points of Augustine's teaching were either abandoned or simply left unstated.'[154] 'Indeed, not only does Orange not canonize Augustine's teaching on predestination; it uses some of its strongest language of condemnation for anyone who would teach predestination to evil.'[155] If SCO served as any authority for condemning the so-called Semi-Pelagians and their views on grace and free will, then strong Augustinian sympathizers also appear to be on no theological high ground for it.

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[150] Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought,* vol. 2, 62, 'It would be incorrect to say that the synod of Orange was a victory for semi-Pelagianism. On the contrary, the synod clearly rejected such typical semi-Pelagian doctrines as that of the human *initum fidei*.' To Gonzalez we would question his understanding of Semi-Pelagianism. On the popular misconception of Semi-Pelagianism, yes, SCO would entail its rejection. But since the Gallic Monks did not believe the *initium fidei* was devoid of grace, they cannot properly be called Semi-Pelagian.

[151] Stewart, *Cassian the Monk*, 21.

[152] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 231.

[153] Smith, *De Gratia*, 5.

[154] Weaver, 'Introduction,' *Grace for Grace*, xiv.

[155] McCall, *Against God and Nature*, 295.

Conclusion

In this chapter we introduced the final Gallic monk of our project, Faustus of Riez. Faustus took part in admonishing a predestinarian priest, Lucidus, and the events of this affair spurred on the writing of *De Gratia*. *De Gratia*, along with some of his other works such as letters or sermons, have shown an individual whose doctrine of Original Sin helps us better understand his anti-Pelagian and anti-predestinarian sentiments. Faustus's legacy played a factor in the final stage of the controversy as Caesarius, a mild Augustinian, very likely came across *De Gratia* during his days as a student at the monastery of Lérins. Caesarius would go on to become the Bishop of Arles and oversee an impromptu council recognized as the Second Council of Orange (SCO) (A.D. 529). It has commonly been held that SCO rejected Semi-Pelagianism. However, upon analysis, the canons of this council do not explicitly reject the views of Faustus or Cassian or Vincent. This discovery (or rediscovery?) has intriguing implications for 21st century discussions on the doctrine of Original Sin.

Chapter 8
The Gallic View of Original Sin for 21st Century Protestant Discourse

In this final chapter we shall provide a summary of our findings, discuss the implications for contemporary Protestant discourse, and provide a list of future research stemming from this study.

Summary of Findings

In Chapter 1 we introduced our topic of investigation, including our purpose, rationale, and motivations. We also surveyed the corpus of work on the so-called Semi-Pelagians, seeing that there had been a need to synthesize the Gallic monks' views on Original Sin.

In Chapter 2 we gave the historical context behind the Gallic monks to provide both a broad and specific understanding of who the Gallic monks were and why they had written on the issues that they had. We explained how Augustine's writings had confused some monks both in Hadrametum and in Gaul. 'From Prosper's and Hilary's letters Augustine had learned that his opponents in Gaul were far closer to his own position than to that of Pelagius in their understanding both of original sin and of the need for grace, although their conception of the fall and its consequences was not nearly so thoroughgoing as was Augustine's.'[1] His final written works were sent out in an attempt to clarify his views.

In Chapter 3 we explored Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin and the pre-Augustinian Latin tradition. We have shown that Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin was unlike anything previously formulated. He believed that all humans were with Adam in the Garden at the time of the Fall. As such, even infants were guilty of Adam's very sin and as

[1] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 56.

a result, were hell-bound if they had not received the sacrament of baptism. His view on the transmission of human nature shifted over time and was ultimately inconclusive. He believed that humans inherited a human nature so fallen, rebellion against God is the default state such that humans are not able not to sin (*non posse non peccare).* While this might mean humans are not performing the worse styles of transgressions, it does mean that humans are unable to do anything objectively good toward their own salvation (or any objective good that is pleasing toward God). Augustine believed that his position on Original Sin was simply the historical teaching of the Christian church, but this is only partially true with regard to some of the Latin writers Augustine had read. The East, on the other hand, had an alternative tradition.

In Chapter 4 we surveyed the Eastern Greek tradition. Traversing the Greek authors we found a consistent theme that the Fall drastically altered human nature but was more mild than how Augustine would later argue. Two issues in particular piqued our interested, whether this tradition held that humans inherit the very guilt of Adam and whether humans inherit a nature which is unable to do anything toward one's own salvation apart from a superadded act of grace. In both cases, we find no evidence supporting either position. In fact, in many cases there had been evidence to the contrary: statements by authors which indicated either a belief that humans were responsible only for their own sins or that humans could perform a morally good action of their God-given nature.

In Chapter 5 we became familiar with the life and work of John Cassian. We further described the Augustinian Contention (in further details after providing background in Chapter 2). In order to better understand his view of human nature and to prevent accusations of Pelagianism, we then argued for a particular understanding of his doctrine of grace: concurrence. Then we analyzed his doctrine or Original Sin, which featured the carnality of the flesh, the remaining seeds of goodness, and the inability of humans to earn

their salvation. We concluded that Cassian's view of Original Sin was extremely compatible with the Eastern Greek tradition, a conclusion would ought not be too surprising given his time in the Egyptian desert and his ordination under John Chrysostom.

In Chapter 6 we considered Vincent of Lérins, the defender of orthodoxy. We described the importance that the *Commonitorium* has played in understanding Vincent's thought. We utilized evidence from the *Commonitorium* itself (and no other sources) to determine that Vincent covertly attacks Augustinianism. We then spent time considering the merit of arguments against Vincentian authorship of the *Objectiones* and we determined that they were inadequate. Then we carefully qualified what we could say as far as Vincent and the *Excerpta* would allow us (i.e., that he is an Augustinian on the doctrine of grace with regard to *historia salutis*, but not *ordo salutis*). Each of these sections allowed us to operate on a specific perspective under which we could interpret Vincent's statements about Original Sin. Like Cassian, we found that Vincent's view of the Fall fit more closely with the Eastern Greek tradition than with the Augustinian model.

In Chapter 7 we analyzed the life and writings of Faustus of Riez. We see how his view of Original Sin played a role in the rejection of Pelagianism. It also affected how he saw predestinarianism, which went too far to the other side of the royal way by denying the freedom of the will. He, like Cassian, believed that 'The mistake was to reduce the complex and diverse operations of God to a single formula such as Pelagian synergism or Augustinian predestinarianism.'[2] We saw how Faustus grounded his understanding of the freedom of the will not in a superadded grace, but in the *prima gratia*. As such, there is no situation in which Faustus believed the initial steps of salvation could be performed devoid of grace. Then we surveyed statements he made to help us understanding his doctrine of Original Sin. We concluded that, despite taking a cue from Augustine's view of

[2] Pelikan, *CT1*, 324

transmission, he was in agreement with Cassian and Vincent (and consequently, the Eastern Greek tradition). Finally, we saw how Faustus's enduring legacy paved the way toward the Second Council of Orange. But upon further analysis, we argued that SCO does not reject the views of Faustus or other Gallic monks.

In our first chapter we noted Owen Chadwick's observation that, 'The Massilians had no association with the Pelagians: and because they were primarily negative, in that their fundamental tenet and bond of union consisted of opposition to doctrinal innovation, a more accurate term which of recent years has been winning favour is "anti-Augustinian."'[3] While we have argued that Cassian, Vincent, and Faustus were in fact anti-Augustinian, to use that as a moniker would do an equivalent injustice to the fact that they held to a doctrine of grace (and did not merely oppose one). In this work, we have opted to refer to these monks based upon their geographical context (Roman Gaul), not a theological one.

> Modern scholars have begun retreating from the term "Semipelagian," and this is all to the good: it is unclear what value the term adds to our discussion of fifth-century ecclesiastical history and theology, it is unclear what exactly the term means, and in fact one of the few things clear about the term at all is that it originated in debates that were twice as far removed from the time of Cassian, Augustine, Prosper, and Pelagius as those four were from the time of Jesus Christ![4]

The label 'Semi-Pelagianism' applies to no person of the 5th century, was used only after 1,000 years of the alleged persons' existence, and most modern scholars who have read the primary sources and surrounding literature rejects that designation. Augustine's own words that these monks were orthodox brothers have not stopped history from labeling the Gallic monks as 'Semi-Pelagians,' despite the fact that John Cassian's work against Nestorius harshly criticizes Pelagianism, Vincent of Lérins refers to it as heresy in his *Commonitorium*, and Faustus of Riez blasts it in his *De Gratia*, referring to Pelagius as a 'plague bringer.' This is hardly the impression of people desiring to be even partially

[3] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 113.
[4] Casiday, *Tradition and Theology in St. John Cassian*, 6.

associated with a view they considered heretical. Augustine himself recognizes that his opponents in Gaul were Christian brothers.[5]

It was Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin that informed his views on human nature, predestination, and divine grace, which ultimately brought forth the objections from the Gallic monks. But these monks did not belong to the camp of Pelagius, 'since all agreed upon the paramount necessity of grace for salvation.'[6] Even Augustine recognized, 'Contrary to the Pelagians these brothers do not doubt that there is original sin which entered the world through one man, and as a result of that one sin all entered into condemnation.'[7] These two distinctive features, the necessary of grace for salvation and that humans inherit a type of original sin from Adam, separated the Gallic monks from the Pelagians. Prior to the Pelagian controversy, both the Eastern tradition and the Western tradition believed that Adam's sin drastically affected the world, 'They all believed that Adam was punished by being expelled from Paradise and made subject to death. In addition, they all agreed that his punishment extends to the entire human race, for whom death is now an inescapable fact.'[8] Up until that time, the Gallic monks had been supportive of Augustine. This is perhaps why they treat him with respect instead of using vulgar language to describe him (as was customary of that era). As a sign of respect to the Bishop of Hippo, 'they would turn to Augustine's earlier works for a proof of their contentions.'[9] Bonner rightly explains,

> It was this apparent denial of any possibility of human initiative in the response to the call of God which produced the reaction which is commonly, but misleadingly, called Semi-Pelagianism, and which may more accurately be described as a reassertion and defense of the same principles which Augustine had himself affirmed ….[10]

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[5] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 116.
[6] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 109.
[7] Augustine, *The Gift of Perseverance* 26 in APIV, 161.
[8] Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' 41.
[9] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 113-114.
[10] Bonner, 'Augustinie and Pelagianism,' 38.

The Gallic monks ultimately came to believe that Augustine (or some derivation of his doctrine(s)) had gone too far. As such, they 'regarded themselves as the conservative representatives of traditional Christian theology against dangerous innovation.'[11]

As we have shown, the Gallic monks held views more consistently in alignment with Eastern Greek theology. They present a view 'fully articulated in Athanasius and the later Greek Fathers, but present to some degree in Origen as well, according to which fallen man continues to possess the ability to choose the good and to will to do it.'[12] They believed that humans possessed the *natural* ability (grounded in divine grace) to perform good actions, but believed that humans are unable to save themselves devoid of grace. 'While Augustine occasionally used the term gratia to refer to created human capacities, he did not regard postlapsarian human nature as bearing significance in the economy of salvation.'[13] The Gallic monks, on the other hand, did. They also believed that despite inheriting a fallen human nature with a propensity to sin and a flesh that dies, each human was responsible for their own sin. According to Prosper, this group affirmed inherited guilt. Yet in the Gallic monks, we have nothing of the sort of Augustinian model of inherited guilt. Being 'in Adam' or even 'condemned in Adam' does not necessitate Augustine's interpretation of those words.

Presenting a strong causal relationship between the Gallic monks and Eastern writers would be difficult in this historical investigation (unless one author were to explicitly state said relationship), but the correlating similarities are undeniable upon analysis of the primary sources. 'The Greek speaking eastern fathers have a more optimistic view of human nature than do the Latin speaking church fathers, a reality which

[11] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 112.
[12] Bray, 'Original Sin in Patristic Thought,' 41.
[13] Smith, *De Gratia*, 225.

is *reflected to this day*….'[14] The Eastern Orthodox have come to describe their view of Original Sin by using a different term: Ancestral Sin. Louth describes a key difference as:

> What is being affirmed is that something of the sinful condition in which we find ourselves is inherited from our forefathers and foremothers, who are in some way represented by Adam and Eve. It is not claimed that we are *responsible* for ancestral sin, simply that we are affected by it. The world into which we are born is affected by the sin of our forebears: the harmony God intended in creating the world has been shattered, the moral atmosphere in which we grow up poisoned, for we are not isolated individuals, but enter into our humanity at a moral level through interaction with the members of our family, and the society in which we live; in a fallen world these nurturing communities are affected by sinful presuppositions, our ideals are often shallow, our trust in our fellow human beings damaged and weakened.[15]

This view, which fits extremely well with our analysis of the Eastern church fathers, is the view of John Cassian, Vincent of Lérins, and Faustus of Riez. However, unlike Louth, the Gallic monks had no concerns in referring to that fallen, corrupted state of nature as 'original sin' (in the collectively few times they used the term).

Areas for Future Research

Throughout the course of this investigation, we have found paths of inquiry which we were unable to walk down.

> As tradition holds it, Patrick of Ireland spent time at the monastary of Lérins. Does his *Confession* bare a trace of Gallic theology? How else might have Gallic theology spread beyond its borders and into Celtic thought?
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> With the discovery of Vincent's *Excerpta* in the first half of the 20th century, what hope is there for discovering other lost manuscripts important for our understanding of Gallic theology. Will the *Objectiones* ever be found so that scholars can compare Prosper's description of them? Or what of other works which could prove valuable but which have been lost to history, such as Fulgentius's refutation of Faustus?
>
> Will contemporary Protestant discussions come to appreciate the actual views of Cassian, Vincent, and Faustus? Will some welcome the findings of this work and begin promoting the views of the Gallic monks? Perhaps other theological camps could benefit from the Gallic monks. Cassian grounded predestination in the foreknowledge of God,[16] which is consistent with the theological position of Arminianism. Chadwick notes that from Prosper we know that some anti-Augustinians grounded the salvation of infants according to what they would have chosen had they lived,[17] which is consistent

[14] Toews, *The Story of Original Sin*, 48-49, emphasis mine.
[15] Louth, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology*, 78.
[16] Cassian, *Collationes* 17. 25, *NPNF2* 11:469-472.
[17] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 133.

> with the theological-philosophical position of Molinism, named after Luis de Molina, a Jesuit scholar from the 16th century.

These are just a few lines of investigation worth pursuing which heretofore remain uncharted.

Implications

Seeing how the Gallic view of Original Sin aligns more closely with the Eastern Greek tradition than Augustine's, let us consider the implications for 21st century Protestant discussions surrounding hamartiology, anthropology, and soteriology.

Contemporary Protestant Soteriological Discussions

In contemporary Protestant discussions on soteriology, the ideas of Original Sin and Soteriology often break down into two popular camps, Calvinism or Arminianism. In the same way, recall that to Prosper of Aquitaine, there were only two camps: Augustinianism or Pelagianism. Some writers continue to operate under this dichotomy, though throughout this work we have shown that to be misguided. Furthermore, we have also shown that the term "Semi-Pelagian" is historically anachronistic and inaccurate because *Conlatio* 13 'offers a more moderate view than what has been presented as "mainline" Semi-Pelagianism—that is, that the will always takes the first step.'[18] Cassian's actual position is best explained (we have argued) through the doctrine of concurrence which allows for the necessity of divine grace and supports the human freedom of the will to make good choices. He was neither Pelagian nor Augustinian, just like Jerome.

> The position taken by Jerome, who entered into debates with Pelagius before Augustine, is scarcely to be described as Augustinian. Jerome's anti-Pelagian polemic alone suffices to expose the inadequacy of presuming that the debate occurred between two camps. However, recent publications provide little evidence that many scholars are prepared to

[18] Fach, 'Semi-Pelagianism and Grace,' 65.

> acknowledge the likelihood that there were positions in these debates which are not to be assimilated to Augustine *or* to Pelagius.[19]

It is important to recognize that 'such people in all likelihood embraced different, or competing, or even irreducibly hostile, interpretations of Augustine's theology.'[20]

We might say that the Gallic monks held to one of those hostile interpretations. According to Pelikan the Gallic monks believed that Augustinianism was masquerading as a view the church had previously rejected. 'Under the guise of grace it was in fact teaching a new doctrine of fate, since man could do nothing but sin unless God infused a new inclination into him against his will.'[21] The early church had dealt with the concept of fate when it was critiquing the Gnostics (§4). R. Villegas Marín concurs with Pelikan: 'Faustus described Lucidus' predestinationist doctrine as a renewed version of old Pagan fatalism and linked it to the Gnostic belief in the division of humanity into classes predestined either to damnation or salvation.'[22] This concern remains shared by some Protestant groups, today.

In the modern scene, there remain some groups that perceive later-Augustinanism as fatalistic. One of those groups is called Traditional Southern Baptists. The self-described 'Traditionalists' argue that their understanding of the Baptist tradition fits best with the history of beliefs in their movement while 'consciously rejecting the Calvinist-Arminian presuppositions that have framed this debate in Western theology for centuries.'[23] This group has published a statement called the Traditionalist Statement (TS), which is more specific than the Baptist Faith and Message (2000) (BFM), a document approved by the Southern Baptist Convention as an official doctrinal positions statement. The

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[19] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 140.
[20] Casiday, 'Vincent of Lérins's *Commonitorium*, *Objectiones*, and *Excerpta*,' 151.
[21] Pelikan, *CT1*, 315.
[22] Raúl Villegas Marín, 'Lucidus on Presdestination: The Damnation of Augustine's Predestinationism in the Synods of Arles (473) and Lyons (474),' *Studia Patristica*, vols. xliv-xlix, 166.
[23] Adam Harwood, 'Editorial Introduction,' *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry*, vol. 9, no. 2 (Fall 2012), 1.

Traditionalists believe the TS is not merely compatible with the BFM, but a logical outworking of its language.[24] In the TS, Article 2: The Sinfulness of Man states:

> **We affirm** that, because of the fall of Adam, every person who is capable of moral action will sin. Each person's sin alone brings the wrath of a holy God, broken fellowship with Him, ever-worsening selfishness and destructiveness, death, and condemnation to an eternity in hell.
> **We deny** that Adam's sin resulted in the incapacitation of any person's free will or rendered any person guilty before he has personally sinned. While no sinner is remotely capable of achieving salvation through his own effort, we deny that any sinner is saved apart from a free response to the Holy Spirit's drawing through the Gospel.[25]

Given what we have shown about the Gallic monks, the so-called Semi-Pelagians, we see here that the TS is, unbeknownst to these Baptists, a reflection of Gallic theology. TS Article 2 affirms the drastic consequences of the Fall of humankind, the propensity and inevitability of sinning, and mortality. Adam Harwood, the foremost authority on the Traditional Baptist view of Original Sin writes, 'Against those who deny the sinful and fallen nature of humanity, it is important to declare that all people are infected with and impacted by both a sinful nature and a sin-warped environment.'[26] TS Article 2 denies the doctrine of inability and the inheritance of the very guilt of Adam. These affirmations and denials are wholly consistent with our interpretation of the Gallic monks.

Traditionalists hold that the offer of salvation is made available to and for all humans upon a conditional basis (that they should believe and repent). In 2016 a collection of essays titled *Anyone Can Be Saved: A Defense of 'Traditional' Southern Baptist Soteriology* was published to defend that very position.[27] From the 5th century we have the words of Prosper, who describe the Gallic monks:

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[24] Harwood, 'A Baptist View,' in *Infants and Children in the Church: Five Views on Theology and Ministry*, ed. Adam Harwood and Kevin E. Lawson (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2017), 165, 'The doctrine of inherited guilt is not consistent with the Baptist Faith and Message either.' The BFM is explicitly silent on the issue while its denial, Traditionalists argue, follows from its view of what it means to be a moral transgressor.

[25] Adam Harwood, 'Commentary on Article 2: The Sinfulness of Man,' *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2012, 32. Cf. the BFM position (Article III) directly above the TS position.

[26] Harwood, 'A Baptist View,' 162.

[27] David L. Allen, ed., *Anyone Can Be Saved: A Defense of 'Traditional' Southern Baptist Soteriology* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2016).

> The whole meaning of the call of grace they reduce to this: God has decreed not to admit anyone into His kingdom except through the sacrament of regeneration and to call to this gift of salvation all men in general, either by means of the natural law or of the written law or of the preaching of the gospel. Hence, *any who so desire can become sons of God*.[28]

Like the Gallic monks, Traditionalists are ardent critics of predestinarianism. Historically speaking, 'The evidence we have for predestinationism is highly detailed and plentiful, while there is hardly any evidence at all for "Semipelagianism" during Cassian's time.'[29]

Given their position on Original Sin, the Traditionalists have been accused of holding to Semi-Pelagianism. Harwood's article "Is the Traditional Statement Semi-Pelagian?"[30] shows how the TS does not qualify as Semi-Pelagian. Yet as a point of constructive criticism against both him and his critics, Harwood's analysis depends upon the inaccurate, anachronistic descriptions of the Gallic monks we have continued to rail against. He distinguished that 'The idea that sinners initiate their salvation apart from God's grace is ruled out by the words of the TS.'[31] The Gallic monks would agree. If the framework for understanding the Gallic monks in this study is true, then Harwood's defense of the TS against accusations of Semi-Pelagianism could be revised and strengthened to his benefit. He explains this possibility by making a couple of remarks about Rebecca Harden Weaver's study (1996),[32] but the substance of his arguments in that article and elsewhere do not reflect that viable option. For example, in *The Spiritual Condition of Infants: A Biblical-Historical Survey and Systematic Proposal* Harwood says that the doctrine of Original Sin (by which he means 'the view that all people inherit both the sin and guilt of Adam') was developed in Augustine's later writings and the Second

[28] Prosper, 'Letter to Augustine,' ACW 32.41, emphasis mine.
[29] Casiday, 'Cassian Against the Pelagians,' 21.
[30] Adam Harwood, 'Is the Traditional Statement Semi-Pelagian?' *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry*, vol. 10, no. 1 (2013), 47-56.
[31] Harwood, 'Is the Traditional Statement Semi-Pelagian?' 48.
[32] Harwood, 'Is the Traditional Statement Semi-Pelagian?' 52.

Council of Orange (among other councils).[33] As we have shown in the previous chapter, SCO does not develop an exclusively Augustinian doctrine of Original Sin.

As we have shown in this work, the pejorative label of 'Semi-Pelagian' is historically erroneous, but the Gallic monks' actual views could be of significant value for the TSB seeking to find ancient voices of Westerners from the same century as Augustine. It appears that Harwood would be open to this given his understanding of the present-day Orthodox view.[34] One crucial necessity for him is that theological arguments be grounded in Scripture.

> Baptists understand that other Christian traditions hold differing views on many of these matters, but our primary source of authority for faith and practice is the Bible. For that reason, although we are aware of the historical and theological arguments for other views, we will not be persuaded by positions that appeal to theological inferences or to historical precedent over arguments primarily derived from Scripture.[35]

Providentially for Harwood, the Gallic monks made it a point to ground their theological views in their interpretation of Scripture.

Gallic Conclusions Grounded in Scripture

With the historical analysis provided in this dissertation, we hope that a corrective will occur in the contemporary analyses of the so-called Semi-Pelagians. But if one were to advocate the Gallic view as their own in contemporary Protestant theological discussions (like the Traditional Southern Baptists), it would be critical to provide theological arguments grounded in biblical interpretations. This is not foreign to the Gallic monks. Scholars have noted the importance that Scripture played in their debates against the predestinarians. 'The crucial issue here is to discover the ways in which the various

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[33] Harwood, *The Spiritual Condition of Infants*, 32.

[34] Harwood, 'A Baptist View,' 43, 'Louth's description of ancestral sin is consistent with the effects of sin mentioned in the BFM'; 44, 'Like the Orthodox view, some Baptists consider humans to be responsible for sin only after they are capable of moral action'; 45, 'The Orthodox and Baptist views are united at several points concerning original sin and infant salvation….'

[35] Harwood, 'A Baptist View,' 162.

disputants in the debate made use of particular passages of Scripture and specific teachings of recognized fathers and councils of the church in order to reshape the tradition to support their own argument.'[36] Let us take consider a brief look at Cassian, Vincent, and Faustus on their use of or approach to Scripture.

Cassian frequently mixed biblical passages in with his arguments. For example, with regard to 1 Timothy 2:4, Cassian asked, 'For if He willeth not that one of His little ones should perish, how can we imagine without grievous blasphemy that He does not generally will *all* men, but only *some* instead of *all* to be saved?'[37] Ramsey notes that Cassian has a more optimistic view of 1 Timothy 2:4 yet fails to explain how God's divine will can be capable of being thwarted.[38]

Vincent, known for his defense of orthodoxy of the church, believes that the teaching of the Church must be grounded in Scripture. In his example on the error of Origen, he describes:

> We said above that in the Church of God the teacher's error is the people's trial, a trial by so much the greater in proportion to the greater learning of the erring teacher. This *we showed first by the authority of Scripture*, and then by instances from Church History, of persons who having at one time had the reputation of being sound in the faith, eventually either fell away to some sect already in existence, or else founded a heresy of their own.[39]

Elsewhere he provided this same instruction for refuting the novelty of heretics: '… we ought either to confute them, if need be, *by the sole authority of the Scriptures*, or at any rate, to shun them as having been already of old convicted and condemned by universal councils'[40] of the Christian church. For Vincent, the first source and 'sole authority' for refuting those with novel doctrines was the Scriptures. But if that would not work, then the person should be shunned with the reminder of church tradition. Therefore, for as big as a

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[36] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 3.
[37] Cassian, *Conferences* 13.7, *NPNF2* 11:425.
[38] Ramsey, 'John Cassian and Augustine,' 127.
[39] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 17, *NPNF2* 11:143, emphasis mine.
[40] Vincent, *Commonitorium* 28, *NPNF2* 11:152.

role that church tradition played into Vincent's model for rejecting heresy, Scripture was the *fontes*, it was the source.

Faustus was meticulous in using Scripture against the predestinarians. 'At times Faustus uses Scripture simply as oracular prooftexts to corroborate a point; at other times he devotes extended analytical attention to individual passages.'[41] For example, *De Gratia* 1.5 and 1.6 presents exegetical remarks by Faustus in his attempt to argue that the free will of man was a joint gift of grace. He cites Paul's words from 1 Corinthians 15:10.[42] In his own remark on 1 Corinthians 15:10, Augustine wrote (in common with Faustus) 'And for this reason it was neither the grace of God alone nor the apostle alone, but the grace of God with me,' yet in disagreement with Faustus he thought, 'But that he (Paul) received a call from heaven and was converted by such an efficacious calling was the grace of God alone, for his merits were, but evil ones.'[43] Here we see a fine example of when 'Faustus undertook the necessary task of examining passes from Scripture which the Augustinians had seen as evidence of the sovereignty of grace.'[44]

In each of these cases, we see the importance the Gallic monks gave to Scripture and how it informed their views on the nature and justice of God, predestination, human nature, and Original Sin. '[O]ne common concern shared amongst these well-educated leaders was their commitment to accounting for the apparent tension between divine grace and human free will as it is revealed within the Scriptures.'[45] The Gallic monks believed that,

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[41] Smith, *De Gratia*, 102. See Smith, *De Gratia*, 108-125 for a detailed analysis of Faustus's use of Scripture.

[42] 'But by the grace of God I am the thing which I am, and that grace of God within me was not in vain, but I worked more abundantly than everyone: yet not I, but the grace of God with me.' There is more to Paul's words than even Faustus realized. The clause, 'the grace of God within me was not in vain' could imply that there are instances when the grace of God within individuals does go in vain, a position at odds with Augustine's interpretation of efficacious grace.

[43] Augustine, *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, 5.12

[44] Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency*, 167.

[45] Pereira, 'Augustine, Pelagius, and the Southern Gallic Tradition,' 183-184.

> the Augustinian doctrines are an innovation contrary to the opinion of the fathers and the common feeling of the Church. The principal article in their creed is the belief that Christ died for all men without exception, so that they reject the idea that God has only elected some to salvation and has predestined others to eternal damnation. When Prosper has quoted to them St. Paul's teaching on predestination, they have replied that the Scripture has never been understood in that sense.[46]

There may be nothing new under the Sun in how students of Scripture interpret Paul, but our study provides a corrective to a historical subset of that larger theological debate where the contemporary discussion could benefit from knowing the actual views of the Gallic monks. One group in particular, the Traditional Southern Baptists, would benefit immensely from understanding the Gallic view. Instead of confessing at the outset that 'the Baptist tradition is less than five centuries old,'[47] they could argue that their view on Original Sin has existed in the West under the banner of the Gallic monks in the 5th century and is able to be traced back further than that in the Eastern Greek theological tradition.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have restated our findings, described areas of further research, and drawn out the implications of our study. We have engaged with, built upon, presented new arguments, and sometimes criticized the positions of other scholars who have gone to great lengths to study Augustine, the Eastern Greek Fathers, John Cassian, Vincent of Lérins, and Faustus of Riez. They are all due praise for their willingness to travel back 1,500 years to seek the truth in the debates after Augustine and Pelagius. On the other hand, there is still much work to be done in this area to ameliorate contemporary Protestant understandings of the Gallic monks, historical theology, and perhaps their own systematic theologies by having a clearer picture of the theological milieu of the 5th century southern France. The Gallic monks inherited a theological tradition from the East which

[46] Chadwick, *John Cassian*, 114-115.
[47] Harwood, 'A Baptist View,' 156.

differentiated them from the North African tradition on the nature of grace and human free will, especially as the latter was an outworking of their doctrine of Original Sin.

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