

# AUGUSTINE & THE PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY

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*Warfield's scholarly examination of Augustine's theological battle against Pelagianism, analyzing the development of Augustine's doctrines of sin, grace, and predestination in response to Pelagius's denial of original sin and assertion of human moral ability.*

4 Chapters

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## Part I: The Origin & Nature of Pelagianism

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### Part I: The Origin & Nature of Pelagianism

It was inevitable that the energy of the Church in intellectually realizing and defining its doctrines in relation to one another, should first be directed towards the objective side of Christian truth. The chief controversies of the first four centuries and the resulting definitions of doctrine, concerned the nature of God and the person of Christ; and it was not until these theological and Christological questions were well upon their way to final settlement, that the Church could turn its attention to the more subjective side of truth. Meanwhile she bore in her bosom a full recognition, side by side, of the freedom of the will, the evil consequences of the fall, and the necessity of divine grace for salvation. Individual writers, or even the several sections of the Church, might exhibit a tendency to throw emphasis on one or another of the elements that made up this deposit of faith that was the common inheritance of all. The East, for instance, laid especial stress on free will: and the West dwelt more pointedly on the ruin of the human race and the absolute need of God's grace for salvation. But neither did the Eastern theologians forget the universal sinfulness and need of redemption, or the necessity, for the realization of that redemption, of God's gracious influences; nor did those of the West deny the self-determination or accountability of men. All the elements of the composite doctrine of man were everywhere confessed; but they were variously emphasized, according to the temper of the writers or the controversial demands of the times. Such a state of affairs, however, was an invitation to heresy, and a prophecy of controversy; just as the simultaneous confession of the unity of God and the Deity of Christ, or of the Deity and the humanity of Christ, inevitably carried in its train a series of heresies and controversies, until the definitions of the doctrines of the Trinity and of the person of Christ were complete. In like manner, it was inevitable that sooner or later some one should arise who would so one-sidedly emphasize one element or the other of the Church's teaching as to salvation, as to throw himself into heresy, and drive the Church, through controversy with him, into a precise definition of the doctrines of free will and grace in their mutual relations.

This new heresiarch came, at the opening of the fifth century, in the person of the British monk, Pelagius. The novelty of the doctrine which he taught is repeatedly asserted by Augustine,<sup>2</sup> and is evident to the historian; but it consisted not in the emphasis that he laid on free will, but rather in the fact that, in emphasizing free will, he denied the ruin of the race and the necessity of grace. This was not only new in Christianity; it was even anti-Christian. Jerome, as well as Augustine, saw this at the time, and speaks of Pelagianism as the "heresy of Pythagoras and Zeno";<sup>3</sup> and modern writers of the various schools have more or less fully recognized it. Thus Dean Milman thinks that "the greater part" of Pelagius' letter to Demetrius "might have been written by an ancient academic";<sup>4</sup> and Bishop Hefele openly declares that their fundamental doctrine, "that man is virtuous entirely of his own merit, not of the gift of grace," seems to him "to be a rehabilitation of the general heathen view of the world," and compares with it Cicero's words:<sup>5</sup> "For gold, lands, and all the blessings of life, we have to return thanks to the Gods; but no one ever returned thanks to God for virtue."<sup>6</sup> The struggle with Pelagianism was thus in reality a struggle for the very

foundations of Christianity; and even more dangerously than in the previous theological and Christological controversies, here the practical substance of Christianity was in jeopardy. The real question at issue was whether there was any need for Christianity at all; whether by his own power man might not attain eternal felicity; whether the function of Christianity was to save, or only to render an eternity of happiness more easily attainable by man.<sup>7</sup>

Genetically speaking, Pelagianism was the daughter of legalism; but when it itself conceived, it brought forth an essential deism. It is not without significance that its originators were "a certain sort of monks;" that is, laymen of ascetic life. From this point of view the Divine law is looked upon as a collection of separate commandments, moral perfection as a simple complex of separate virtues, and a distinct value as a meritorious demand on Divine approbation is ascribed to each good work or attainment in the exercises of piety. It was because this was essentially his point of view that Pelagius could regard man's powers as sufficient to the attainment of sanctity - nay, that he could even assert it to be possible for a man to do more than was required of him. But this involved an essentially deistic conception of man's relations to his Maker. God had endowed His creature with a capacity (possibilitas) or ability (posse) for action, and it was for him to use it. Man was thus a machine, which, just because it was well made, needed no Divine interference for its right working; and the Creator, having once framed him, and endowed him with the posse, henceforth leaves the velle and the esse to him.

At this point we have touched the central and formative principle of Pelagianism. It lies in the assumption of the plenary ability of man; his ability to do all that righteousness can demand - to work out not only his own salvation, but also his own perfection. This is the core of the whole theory; and all the other postulates not only depend upon it, but arise out of it. Both chronologically and logically this is the root of the system.

When we first hear of Pelagius, he is already advanced in years, living in Rome in the odour of sanctity,<sup>8</sup> and enjoying a well-deserved reputation for zeal in exhorting others to a good life, which grew especially warm against those who endeavoured to shelter themselves, when charged with their sins, behind the weakness of nature.<sup>9</sup> He was outraged by the universal excuses on such occasions - "It is hard!" "it is difficult!" "we are not able!" "we are men!" - "Oh, blind madness!" he cried: "we accuse God of a twofold ignorance - that He does not seem to know what He has made, nor what He has commanded - as if forgetting the human weakness of which He is Himself the Author, He has imposed laws on man which He cannot endure."<sup>10</sup> He himself tells us<sup>11</sup> to that it was his custom, therefore, whenever he had to speak on moral improvement and the conduct of a holy life, to begin by pointing out the power and quality of human nature, and by showing what it was capable of doing. For (he says) he esteemed it of small use to exhort men to what they deemed impossible: hope must rather be our companion, and all longing and effort die when we despair of attaining. So exceedingly ardent an advocate was he of man's unaided ability to do all that God commanded, that when Augustine's noble and entirely scriptural prayer - "Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt" - was repeated in his hearing, he was unable to endure it; and somewhat inconsistently contradicted it with such violence as almost to become involved in a strife.<sup>12</sup> The powers of man, he held, were gifts of God; and it was, therefore, a reproach against Him as if He had made man ill or evil, to believe that they were insufficient for the keeping of His law. Nay, do what we will, we cannot rid ourselves of their sufficiency: "whether we will, or whether we will not, we have the capacity of not sinning."<sup>13</sup> "I say," he says, "that man is

able to be without sin, and that he is able to keep the commandments of God;" and this sufficiently direct statement of human ability is in reality the hinge of his whole system.

There were three specially important corollaries which flowed from this assertion of human ability, and Augustine himself recognized these as the chief elements of the system.<sup>14</sup> It would be inexplicable on such an assumption, if no man had ever used his ability in keeping God's law; and Pelagius consistently asserted not only that all might be sinless if they chose, but also that many saints, even before Christ, had actually lived free from sin. Again, it follows from man's inalienable ability to be free from sin, that each man comes into the world without entailment of sin or moral weakness from the past acts of men; and Pelagius consistently denied the whole doctrine of original sin. And still again, it follows from the same assumption of ability that man has no need of supernatural assistance in his striving to obey righteousness; and Pelagius consistently denied both the need and reality of divine grace in the sense of an inward help (and especially of a prevenient help) to man's weakness.

It was upon this last point that the greatest stress was laid in the controversy, and Augustine was most of all disturbed that thus God's grace was denied and opposed. No doubt the Pelagians spoke constantly of "grace," but they meant by this the primal endowment of man with free will, and the subsequent aid given him in order to its proper use by the revelation of the law and the teaching of the gospel, and, above all, by the forgiveness of past sins in Christ and by Christ's holy example.<sup>15</sup> Anything further than this external help they utterly denied; and they denied that this external help itself was absolutely necessary, affirming that it only rendered it easier for man to do what otherwise he had plenary ability for doing. Chronologically, this contention seems to have preceded the assertion which must logically lie at its base, of the freedom of man from any taint, corruption, or weakness due to sin. It was in order that they might deny that man needed help, that they denied that Adam's sin had any further effect on his posterity than might arise from his bad example. "Before the action of his own proper will," said Pelagius plainly, "that only is in man which God made."<sup>16</sup> "As we are procreated without virtue," he said, "so also without vice."<sup>17</sup> In a word, "Nothing that is good and evil, on account of which we are either praiseworthy or blameworthy, is born with us - it is rather done by us; for we are born with capacity for either, but provided with neither."<sup>18</sup> So his later follower, Julian, plainly asserts his "faith that God creates men obnoxious to no sin, but full of natural innocence, and with capacity for voluntary virtues."<sup>19</sup> So entrenched is free will in nature, that, according to Julian, it is "just as complete after sins as it was before sins;"<sup>20</sup> and what this means may be gathered from Pelagius' definition in the "Confession of Faith," that he sent to Innocent: "We say that man is always able both to sin and not to sin, so as that we may confess that we have free will." That sin in such circumstances was so common as to be well-nigh universal, was accounted for by the bad example of Adam and the power of habit, the latter being simply the result of imitation of the former. "Nothing makes well-doing so hard," writes Pelagius to Demetrias, "as the long custom of sins which begins from childhood and gradually brings us more and more under its power until it seems to have in some degree the force of nature (*vim naturae*)." He is even ready to allow for the force of habit in a broad way, on the world at large; and so divides all history into progressive periods, marked by God's (external) grace. At first the light of nature was so strong that men by it alone could live in holiness. And it was only when men's manners became corrupt and tarnished nature began to be insufficient for holy living, that by God's grace the Law was given as an addition to mere nature; and by it "the original lustre was

restored to nature after its blush had been impaired." And so again, after the habit of sinning once more prevailed among men, and "the law became unequal to the task of curing it,"<sup>21</sup> Christ was given, furnishing men with forgiveness of sins, exhortations to imitation of the example and the holy example itself.<sup>22</sup> But though thus a progressive deterioration was confessed, and such a deterioration as rendered desirable at least two supernatural interpositions (in the giving of the law and the coming of Christ), yet no corruption of nature, even by growing habit, is really allowed. It was only an ever-increasing facility in imitating vice which arose from so long a schooling in evil; and all that was needed to rescue men from it was a new explanation of what was right (in the law), or, at the most, the encouragement of forgiveness for what was already done, and a holy example (in Christ) for imitation. Pelagius still asserted our continuous possession of "a free will which is unimpaired for sinning and for not sinning;" and Julian, that "our free will is just as full after sins as it was before sins;" although Augustine does not fail to twit him with a charge of inconsistency.<sup>23</sup>

The peculiar individualism of the Pelagian view of the world comes out strongly in their failure to perceive the effect of habit on nature itself. Just as they conceived of virtue as a complex of virtuous acts, so they conceived of sin exclusively as an act, or series of disconnected acts. They appear not to have risen above the essentially heathen view which had no notion of holiness apart from a series of acts of holiness, or of sin apart from a like series of sinful Acts 24:1-27 Thus the will was isolated from its acts, and the acts from each other, and all organic connection or continuity of life was not only overlooked but denied.<sup>25</sup> After each act of the will, man stood exactly where he did before: indeed, this conception scarcely allows for the existence of a "man" - only a willing machine is left, at each click of the action of which the spring regains its original position, and is equally ready as before to reperform its function. In such a conception there was no place for character: freedom of will was all. Thus it was not an unnatural mistake which they made, when they forgot the man altogether, and attributed to the faculty of free will, under the name of "possibilitas" or "posse," the ability that belonged rather to the man whose faculty it is, and who is properly responsible for the use he makes of it. Here lies the essential error of their doctrine of free will: they looked upon freedom in its form only, and not in its matter; and, keeping man in perpetual and hopeless equilibrium between good and evil, they permitted no growth of character and no advantage to himself to be gained by man in his successive choices of good. It need not surprise us that the type of thought which thus dissolved the organism of the man into a congeries of disconnected voluntary acts, failed to comprehend the solidarity of the race. To the Pelagian, Adam was a man, nothing more; and it was simply unthinkable that any act of his that left his own subsequent acts uncommitted, could entail sin and guilt upon other men. The same alembic that dissolved the individual into a succession of voluntary acts, could not fail to separate the race into a heap of unconnected units. If sin, as Julian declared, is nothing but will, and the will itself remained intact after each act, how could the individual act of an individual will condition the acts of men as yet unborn? By "imitation" of his act alone could (under such a conception) other men be affected. And this carried with it the corresponding view of man's relation to Christ. He could forgive us the sins we had committed; He could teach us the true way; He could set us a holy example; and He could exhort us to its imitation. But He could not touch us to enable us to will the good, without destroying the absolute equilibrium of the will between good and evil; and to destroy this was to destroy its freedom, which was the crowning good of our divinely created nature. Surely the Pelagians forgot that man was not made for will, but will for man.

In defending their theory, as we are told by Augustine, there were five claims that they especially made for it.<sup>26</sup> It allowed them to praise as was their due, the creature that God had made, the marriage that He had instituted, the law that He had given, the free will which was His greatest endowment to man, and the saints who had followed His counsels. By this they meant that they proclaimed the sinless perfection of human nature in every man as he was brought into the world, and opposed this to the doctrine of original sin; the purity and holiness of marriage and the sexual appetites, and opposed this to the doctrine of the transmission of sin; the ability of the law, as well as and apart from the gospel, to bring men into eternal life, and opposed this to the necessity of inner grace; the integrity of free will to choose the good, and opposed this to the necessity of divine aid; and the perfection of the lives of the saints, and opposed this to the doctrine of universal sinfulness. Other questions, concerning the origin of souls, the necessity of baptism for infants, the original immortality of Adam, lay more on the skirts of the controversy, and were rather consequences of their teaching than parts of it. As it was an obvious fact that all men died, they could not admit that Adam's death was a consequence of sin lest they should be forced to confess that his sin had injured all men; they therefore asserted that physical death belonged to the very nature of man, and that Adam would have died even had he not sinned.<sup>27</sup> So, as it was impossible to deny that the Church everywhere baptized infants, they could not refuse them baptism without confessing themselves innovators in doctrine; and therefore they contended that infants were not baptized for forgiveness of sins, but in order to attain a higher state of salvation. Finally, they conceived that if it was admitted that souls were directly created by God for each birth, it could not be asserted that they came into the world soiled by sin and under condemnation; and therefore they loudly championed this theory of the origin of souls.

The teachings of the Pelagians, it will be readily seen, easily welded themselves into a system, the essential and formative elements of which were entirely new in the Christian Church; and this startlingly new reading of man's condition, powers, and dependence for salvation, it was, that broke like a thunderbolt upon the Western Church at the opening of the fifth century, and forced her to reconsider, from the foundations, her whole teaching as to man and his salvation.

Proceed to the second article in this series.

Notes to Part I.

1 The following essay was originally published in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905, pp. 13-71).

2 "On the Merits and Remission of Sins," iii. 6, 11, 12; "Against Two Letters of the Pelagians," iv. 32; "The Unfinished Work Against Julian," i. 2; "On Heresies," 88; and often elsewhere. Jerome found roots for the theory in Origen and Rufinus (Letter 133.3), but this is a different matter. Compare "On Original Sin," 25.

3 Preface to Book i.v. of his work on Jeremiah.

4 "History of Latin Christianity," 1899, i. p.166, note 2.

5 "De Natura Deorum," iii. 36.

6 "A History of the Councils of the Church," (E.T.) ii. p. 446, note 3.

- 7 Compare the excellent statement in Thomasius' "Die Christliche Dogmengeschichte," i. p. 483.
- 8 "On the Proceedings of Pelagius," 46; "on the Merits and Remission of Sins," iii. 1; "Epist." 186, etc.
- 9 "On Nature and Grace," 1.
- 10 Pelagius' "Epistle to Demetrias," 16.
- 11 Ibid., 2.
- 12 "On the Gift of Perseverance," 53.
- 13 "On Nature and Grace," 57.
- 14 "On the Gift of Perseverance," 4; "Against Two Letters of the Pelagians," iii. 24; iv. 2 sq.
- 15 "On the Spirit and Letter," 4; "On Nature and Grace," 53; "On the Proceedings of Pelagius," 20, 22, 38; "On the Grace of Christ," 2, 3, 8, 31, 42, 45; "Against Two Letters of the Pelagians," iv. 11; "On Grace and Free Will," 23-26, and often.
- 16 "On Original Sin," 14.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 "The Unfinished Work Against Julian," iii. 82.
- 20 Do. i. 91; compare do. i. 48, 60; ii. 20. "There is nothing of sin in man, if there is nothing of his own will." "There is no original sin in infants at all."
- 21 "On Original Sin," 30.
- 22 "On the Grace of Christ," 43.
- 23 "The Unfinished Work," i. 91; compare 69.
- 24 "Dr. Matheson finely says (Expositor, i. ix. 21, 1879), "There is the same difference between the Christian and the Pagan idea of Prayer as there is between the Christian and Pagan idea of sin. Paganism knows nothing of sin, it knows only sins: it has no conception of the principle of evil; it comprehends only a collection of evil acts." This is Pelagianism too.
- 25 Compare Schaff, "History of the Christian Church," iii. 804; and Thomasius' "Die Christliche Dogmengeschichte," i. p. 487-488.
- 26 "Against Two Letters of the Pelagians," iii. 25, and iv. at the beginning.
- 27 This belongs to the earlier Pelagianism; Julian was ready to admit that death came from Adam, but not sin.

## Part II: The External History

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### Part II: The External History of the Pelagian Controversy

Pelagius seems to have been already somewhat softened by increasing age when he came to Rome about the opening of the fifth century. He was also constitutionally averse to controversy; and although in his zeal for Christian morals, and in his conviction that no man would attempt to do what he was not persuaded he had natural power to perform, he diligently propagated his doctrines privately, he was careful to rouse no opposition, and was content to make what progress he could quietly and without open discussion. His methods of work sufficiently appear in the pages of his "Commentary on the Epistles of Saint Paul," which was written and published during these years, and which exhibits learning and a sober and correct but somewhat shallow exegetical skill. In this work, he manages to give expression to all the main elements of his system, but always introduces them indirectly, not as the true exegesis, but by way of objections to the ordinary teaching, which were in need of discussion. The most important fruit of his residence in Rome was the conversion to his views of the Advocate Coelestius, who brought the courage of youth and the argumentative training of a lawyer to the propagation of the new teaching. It was through him that it first broke out into public controversy, and received its first ecclesiastical examination and rejection. Fleeing from Alaric's second raid on Rome, the two friends landed together in Africa (A.D. 411), whence Pelagius soon afterwards departed for Palestine, leaving the bolder and more contentious Coelestius behind at Carthage. Here Coelestius sought ordination as a presbyter. But the Milanese deacon Paulinus stood forward in accusation of him as a heretic, and the matter was brought before a synod under the presidency of Bishop Aurelius.

Paulinus' charge consisted of seven items, which asserted that Coelestius taught the following heresies: that Adam was made mortal, and would have died, whether he sinned or did not sin; that the sin of Adam injured himself alone, not the human race; that new-born children are in that state in which Adam was before his sin; that the whole human race does not, on the one hand, die on account of the death or the fall of Adam, nor, on the other, rise again on account of the resurrection of Christ; that infants, even though not baptized, have eternal life; that the law leads to the kingdom of heaven in the same way as the gospel; and that, even before the Lord's coming, there had been men without sin. Only two fragments of the proceedings of the synod in investigating this charge have come down to us; but it is easy to see that Coelestius was contumacious, and refused to reject any of the propositions charged against him, except the one which had reference to the salvation of infants that die unbaptized—the sole one that admitted of sound defence. As touching the transmission of sin, he would only say that it was an open question in the Church, and that he had heard both opinions from Church dignitaries; so that the subject needed investigation, and should not be made the ground for a charge of heresy. The natural result was, that, on refusing to condemn the propositions charged against him, he was himself condemned and excommunicated by the synod. Soon afterwards he sailed to Ephesus, where he obtained the ordination which he sought.

Meanwhile Pelagius was living quietly in Palestine, whither in the summer of 415 a young Spanish presbyter, Paulus Orosius by name, came with letters from Augustine to Jerome, and was invited, near the end of July in that year, to a diocesan synod, presided over by John of Jerusalem. There he was asked about Pelagius and Coelestius, and proceeded to give an account of the condemnation of the latter at the synod of Carthage, and of Augustine's literary refutation of the former. Pelagius was sent for, and the proceedings became an examination into his teachings. The chief matter brought up was his assertion of the possibility of men living sinlessly in this world; but the favour of the bishop towards him, the intemperance of Orosius, and the difficulty of communication between the parties arising from difference of language, combined so to clog proceedings that nothing was done; and the whole matter, as Western in its origin, was referred to the Bishop of Rome for examination and decision.

Soon afterwards two Gallic bishops-Heros of Arles, and Lazarus of Aix-who were then in Palestine, lodged a formal accusation against Pelagius with the metropolitan, Eulogius of Caesarea; and he convened a synod of fourteen bishops which met at Lydda (Diospolis), in December of the same year (415), for the trial of the case. Perhaps no greater ecclesiastical farce was ever enacted than this synod exhibited. When the time arrived, the accusers were prevented from being present by illness, and Pelagius was confronted only by the written accusation. This was both unskillfully drawn, and was written in Latin which the synod did not understand. It was, therefore, not even consecutively read, and was only head by head rendered into Greek by an interpreter. Pelagius began by reading aloud several letters to himself from various men of reputation in the Episcopate-among them a friendly note from Augustine. Thoroughly acquainted with both Latin and Greek, he was enabled skillfully to thread every difficulty, and pass safely through the ordeal. Jerome called this a "miserable synod," and not unjustly: at the same time it is sufficient to vindicate the honesty and earnestness of the bishops' intentions, that even in such circumstances, and despite the more undeveloped opinions of the East on the questions involved, Pelagius escaped condemnation only by a course of most ingenious disingenuousness, and only at the cost both of disowning Coelestius and his teachings, of which he had been the real father, and of leading the synod to believe that he was anathematizing the very doctrines which he was himself proclaiming. There is really no possibility of doubting, as any one will see who reads the proceedings of the synod, that Pelagius obtained his acquittal here either by a "lying condemnation or a tricky interpretation" of his own teachings; and Augustine is perfectly justified in asserting that the "heresy was not acquitted, but the man who denied the heresy," and who would himself have been anathematized had he not anathematized the heresy.

However obtained, the acquittal of Pelagius was yet an accomplished fact. Neither he nor his friends delayed to make the most widely extended use of their good fortune. Pelagius himself was jubilant. Accounts of the synodal proceedings were sent to the West, not altogether free from uncandid alterations; and Pelagius soon put forth a work In Defence of Free-Will, in which he triumphed in his acquittal and "explained his explanations" at the synod. Nor were the champions of the opposite opinion idle. As soon as the news arrived in North Africa, and before the authentic records of the synod had reached that region, the condemnation of Pelagius and Coelestius was re-affirmed in two provincial synods-one, consisting of sixty-eight bishops, met at Carthage about midsummer of 416; and the other, consisting of about sixty bishops, met soon afterwards at Mileve (Mila). Thus Palestine and North Africa were arrayed against one another, and it became of great

importance to obtain the support of the Patriarchal See of Rome. Both sides made the attempt, but fortune favored the Africans. Each of the North-African synods sent a synodal letter to Innocent I., then Bishop of Rome, engaging his assent to their action: to these, five bishops, Aurelius of Carthage and Augustine among them, added a third "familiar" letter of their own, in which they urged upon Innocent to examine into Pelagius' teaching, and provided him with the material on which he might base a decision. The letters reached Innocent in time for him to take advice of his clergy, and send favorable replies on Jan. 27, 417. In these he expressed his agreement with the African decisions, asserted the necessity of inward grace, rejected the Pelagian theory of infant baptism, and declared Pelagius and Coelestius excommunicated until they should return to orthodoxy. In about six weeks more he was dead: but Zosimus, his successor, was scarcely installed in his place before Coelestius appeared at Rome in person to plead his cause; while shortly afterwards letters arrived from Pelagius addressed to Innocent, and by an artful statement of his belief and a recommendation from Praylus, lately become bishop of Jerusalem in John's stead, attempting to enlist Rome in his favour. Zosimus, who appears to have been a Greek and therefore inclined to make little of the merits of this Western controversy, went over to Coelestius at once, upon his profession of willingness to anathematize all doctrines which the pontifical see had condemned or should condemn; and wrote a sharp and arrogant letter to Africa, proclaiming Coelestius "catholic," and requiring the Africans to appear within two months at Rome to prosecute their charges, or else to abandon them. On the arrival of Pelagius' papers, this letter was followed by another (September, 417), in which Zosimus, with the approbation of the clergy, declared both Pelagius and Coelestius to be orthodox, and severely rebuked the Africans for their hasty judgment. It is difficult to understand Zosimus' action in this matter: neither of the confessions presented by the accused teachers ought to have deceived him, and if he was seizing the occasion to magnify the Roman see, his mistake was dreadful. Late in 417, or early in 418, the African bishops assembled at Carthage, in number more than two hundred, and replied to Zosimus that they had decided that the sentence pronounced against Pelagius and Coelestius should remain in force until they should unequivocally acknowledge that "we are aided by the grace of God, through Christ, not only to know, but to do what is right, in each single act, so that without grace we are unable to have, think, speak, or do anything pertaining to piety." This firmness made Zosimus waver. He answered swellingly but timidly, declaring that he had maturely examined the matter, but it had not been his intention finally to acquit Coelestius; and now he had left all things in the condition in which they were before, but he claimed the right of final judgment to himself. Matters were hastening to a conclusion, however, that would leave him no opportunity to escape from the mortification of an entire change of front. This letter was written on the 21st of March, 418; it was received in Africa on the 29th of April; and on the very next day an imperial decree was issued from Ravenna ordering Pelagius and Coelestius to be banished from Rome, with all who held their opinions; while on the next day, May 1, a plenary council of about two hundred bishops met at Carthage, and in nine canons condemned all the essential features of Pelagianism. Whether this simultaneous action was the result of skillful arrangement, can only be conjectured: its effect was in any case necessarily crushing. There could be no appeal from the civil decision, and it played directly into the hands of the African definition of the faith. The synod's nine canons part naturally into three triads. The first of these deals with the relation of mankind to original sin, and anathematizes in turn those who assert that physical death is a necessity of nature, and not a result of Adam's sin; those who assert that new-born children derive nothing of

original sin from Adam to be expiated by the laver of regeneration; and those who assert a distinction between the kingdom of heaven and eternal life, for entrance into the former of which alone baptism is necessary. The second triad deals with the nature of grace, and anathematizes those who assert that grace brings only remission of past sins, not aid in avoiding future ones; those who assert that grace aids us not to sin, only by teaching us what is sinful, not by enabling us to will and do what we know to be right; and those who assert that grace only enables us to do more easily what we should without it still be able to do. The third triad deals with the universal sinfulness of the race, and anathematizes those who assert that the apostles' (I John i. 8) confession of sin is due only to their humility; those who say that "Forgive us our trespasses" in the Lord's Prayer, is pronounced by the saints, not for themselves, but for the sinners in their company; and those who say that the saints use these words of themselves only out of humility and not truly. Here we see a careful traversing of the whole ground of the controversy, with a conscious reference to the three chief contentions of the Pelagian teachers.

The appeal to the civil power, by whomsoever made, was, of course, indefensible, although it accorded with the opinions of the day, and was entirely approved by Augustine. But it was the ruin of the Pelagian cause. Zosimus found himself forced either to go into banishment with his wards, or to desert their cause. He appears never to have had any personal convictions on the dogmatic points involved in the controversy, and so, all the more readily, yielded to the necessity of the moment. He cited Coelestius to appear before a council for a new examination; but that heresiarch consulted prudence, and withdrew from the city. Zosimus, possibly in the effort to appear a leader in the cause he had opposed, not only condemned and excommunicated the men whom less than six months before he had pronounced "orthodox" after a 'mature consideration of the matters involved,' but, in obedience to the imperial decree, issued a stringent paper which condemned Pelagius and the Pelagians, and affirmed the African doctrines as to corruption of nature, true grace, and the necessity of baptism. To this he required subscription from all bishops as a test of orthodoxy. Eighteen Italian bishops refused their signature, with Julian of Eclanum, henceforth to be the champion of the Pelagian party, at their head, and were therefore deposed, although several of them afterwards recanted, and were restored. In Julian, the heresy obtained an advocate, who, if aught could have been done for its re-instatement, would surely have proved successful. He was the boldest, the strongest, at once the most acute and the most weighty, of all the disputants of his party. But the ecclesiastical standing of this heresy was already determined. The policy of Zosimus' test act was imposed by imperial authority on North Africa in 419. The exiled bishops were driven from Constantinople by Atticus in 424; and they are said to have been condemned at a Cilician synod in 423, and at an Antiochian one in 424. Thus the East itself was preparing for the final act in the drama. The exiled bishops were with Nestorius at Constantinople in 429; and that patriarch unsuccessfully interceded for them with Coelestine, then Bishop of Rome. The conjunction was ominous. And at the ecumenical synod at Ephesus in 431, we again find the "Coelestians" side by side with Nestorius, sharers in his condemnation.

But Pelagianism did not so die as not to leave a legacy behind it. "Remainders of Pelagianism" soon showed themselves in Southern Gaul, where a body of monastic leaders attempted to find a middle ground on which they could stand, by allowing the Augustineian doctrine of assisting grace, but retaining the Pelagian conception of our self-determination to good. We first hear of them in 428, through letters from two laymen, Prosper and Hilary, to Augustine, as men who accepted

original sin and the necessity of grace, but asserted that men began their turning to God, and God helped their beginning. They taught that all men are sinners, and that they derive their sin from Adam; that they can by no means save themselves, but need God's assisting grace; and that this grace is gratuitous in the sense that men cannot really deserve it, and yet that it is not irresistible, nor given always without the occasion of its gift having been determined by men's attitude towards God; so that, though not given on account of the merits of men, it is given according to those merits, actual or foreseen. The leader of this new movement was John Cassian, a pupil of Chrysostom (to whom he attributed all that was good in his life and will), and the fountain-head of Gallic monasticism; and its chief champion at a somewhat later day was Faustus of Rhegium (Riez).

The Augustineian opposition was at first led by the vigorous controversialist, Prosper of Aquitaine, and, in the next century, by the wise, moderate, and good Caesarius of Arles, who brought the contest to a conclusion in the victory of a softened Augustineianism. Already in 431 a letter was obtained from Pope Coelestine, designed to close the controversy in favor of Augustineianism, and in 496 Pope Gelasius condemned the writings of Faustus in the first index of forbidden books; while, near the end of the first quarter of the sixth century, Pope Hormisdas was appealed to for a renewed condemnation. The end was now in sight. The famous second Synod of Orange met under the presidency of Caesarius at that ancient town on the 3d of July, 529, and drew up a series of moderate articles which received the ratification of Boniface II. in the following year. In these articles there is affirmed an anxiously guarded Augustineianism, a somewhat weakened Augustineianism, but yet a distinctive Augustineianism; and, so far as a formal condemnation could reach, semi-Pelagianism was suppressed by them in the whole Western Church. But councils and popes can only decree; and Cassian and Vincent and Faustus, despite Caesarius and Boniface and Gregory, retained an influence among their countrymen which never died away.

## Part III: Augustine's Part in The Controversy

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Both by nature and by grace, Augustine was formed to be the champion of truth in this controversy. Of a naturally philosophical temperament, he saw into the springs of life with a vividness of mental perception to which most men are strangers; and his own experiences in his long life of resistance to, and then of yielding to, the drawings of God's grace, gave him a clear apprehension of the great evangelic principle that God seeks men, not men God, such as no sophistry could cloud. However much his philosophy or theology might undergo change in other particulars, there was one conviction too deeply imprinted upon his heart ever to fade or alter—the conviction of the ineffableness of God's grace. Grace-man's absolute dependence on God as the source of all good—this was the common, nay, the formative element, in all stages of his doctrinal development, which was marked only by the ever growing consistency with which he built his theology around this central principle. Already in 397—the year after he became bishop—we find him enunciating with admirable clearness all the essential elements of his teaching, as he afterwards opposed them to Pelagius. It was inevitable, therefore, that although he was rejoiced when he heard, some years later, of the zealous labours of this pious monk in Rome towards stemming the tide of luxury and sin, and esteemed him for his devout life, and loved him for his Christian activity, he yet was deeply troubled when subsequent rumours reached him that he was "disputing against the grace of God." He tells us over and over again, that this was a thing no pious heart could endure; and we perceive that, from this moment, Augustine was only biding his time, and awaiting a fitting opportunity to join issue with the denier of the Holy of holies of his whole, I will not say theology merely, but life. "Although I was grieved by this," he says, "and it was told me by men whom I believed, I yet desired to have something of such sort from his own lips or in some book of his, so that, if I began to refute it, he would not be able to deny it." Thus he actually excuses himself for not entering into the controversy earlier. When Pelagius came to Africa, then, it was almost as if he had deliberately sought his fate. But circumstances secured a lull before the storm. He visited Hippo; but Augustine was absent, although he did not fail to inform himself on his return that Pelagius while there had not been heard to say "anything at all of this kind." The controversy against the Donatists was now occupying all the energies of the African Church, and Augustine himself was a ruling spirit in the great conference now holding at Carthage with them. While there, he was so immersed in this business, that, although he once or twice saw the face of Pelagius, he had no conversation with him; and although his ears were wounded by a casual remark which he heard, to the effect "that infants were not baptized for remission of sins, but for consecration to Christ," he allowed himself to pass over the matter, "because there was no opportunity to contradict it, and those who said it were not such men as could cause him solicitude for their influence."

It appears from these facts, given us by himself, that Augustine was not only ready for, but was looking for, the coming controversy. It can scarcely have been a surprise to him when Paulinus accused Coelestius (412); and, although he was not a member of the council which condemned

him, it was inevitable that he should at once take the leading part in the consequent controversy. Coelestius and his friends did not silently submit to the judgment that had been passed upon their teaching: they could not openly propagate their heresy, but they were diligent in spreading their complaints privately and by subterranean whispers among the people. This was met by the Catholics in public sermons and familiar colloquies held everywhere. But this wise rule was observed-to contend against the erroneous teachings, but to keep silence as to the teachers, that so (as Augustine explains ) "the men might rather be brought to see and acknowledge their error through fear of ecclesiastical judgment than be punished by the actual judgment." Augustine was abundant in these oral labours; and many of his sermons directed against Pelagian error have come down to us, although it is often impossible to be sure as to their date. For one of them (170) he took his text from Phil. iii. 6-16, "as touching the righteousness which is by the law blameless; howbeit what things were gain to me, those have I counted loss for Christ." He begins by asking how the apostle could count his blameless conversation according to the righteousness which is from the law as dung and loss, and then proceeds to explain the purpose for which the law was given, our state by nature and under law, and the kind of blamelessness that the law could produce, ending by showing that man can have no righteousness except from God, and no perfect righteousness except in heaven. Three others (174, 175, 176) had as their text I Tim. i. 15, 16, and developed its teaching, that the universal sin of the world and its helplessness in sin constituted the necessity of the incarnation; and especially that the necessity of Christ's grace for salvation was just as great for infants as for adults. Much is very forcibly said in these sermons which was afterwards incorporated in his treatises. "There was no reason," he insists, "for the coming of Christ the Lord except to save sinners. Take away diseases, take away wounds, and there is no reason for medicine. If the great Physician came from heaven, a great sick man was lying ill through the whole world. That sick man is the human race" (175, 1). "He who says, 'I am not a sinner,' or 'I was not,' is ungrateful to the Saviour. No one of men in that mass of mortals which flows down from Adam, no one at all of men is not sick: no one is healed without the grace of Christ. Why do you ask whether infants are sick from Adam? For they, too, are brought to the church; and, if they cannot run thither on their own feet, they run on the feet of others that they may be healed. Mother Church accommodates others' feet to them so that they may come, others' heart so that they may believe, others' tongue so that they may confess; and, since they are sick by another's sin, so when they are healed they are saved by another's confession in their behalf. Let, then, no one buzz strange doctrines to you. This the Church has always had, has always held; this she has received from the faith of the elders; this she will perseveringly guard until the end. Since the whole have no need of a physician, but only the sick, what need, then, has the infant of Christ, if he is not sick? If he is well, why does he seek the physician through those who love him? If, when infants are brought, they are said to have no sin of inheritance (peccatum propaginis) at all, and yet come to Christ, why is it not said in the church to those that bring them, 'take these innocents hence; the physician is not needed by the well, but by the sick; Christ came not to call the just, but sinners'? It never has been said, and it never will be said. Let each one therefore, brethren, speak for him who cannot speak for himself. It is much the custom to intrust the inheritance of orphans to the bishops; how much more the grace of infants! The bishop protects the orphan lest he should be oppressed by strangers, his parents being dead. Let him cry out more for the infant who, he fears, will be slain by his parents. Who comes to Christ has something in him to be healed; and he who has not, has no reason for seeking the physician. Let parents choose one of two things: let

them either confess that there is sin to be healed in their infants, or let them cease bringing them to the physician. This is nothing else than to wish to bring a well person to the physician. Why do you bring him? To be baptized. Whom? The infant. To whom do you bring him? To Christ. To Him, of course, who came into the world? Certainly, he says. Why did He come into the world? To save sinners. Then he whom you bring has in him that which needs saving?" So again: "He who says that the age of infancy does not need Jesus' salvation, says nothing else than that the Lord Christ is not Jesus to faithful infants; i.e., to infants baptized in Christ. For what is Jesus? Jesus means saviour. He is not Jesus to those whom He does not save, who do not need to be saved. Now, if your hearts can bear that Christ is not Jesus to any of the baptized, I do not know how you can be acknowledged to have sound faith. They are infants, but they are made members of Him. They are infants, but they receive His sacraments. They are infants, but they become partakers of His table, so that they may have life." The preveniency of grace is explicitly asserted in these sermons. In one he says, "Zaccheus was seen, and saw; but unless he had been seen, he would not have seen. For `whom He predestinated, them also He called.' In order that we may see, we are seen; that we may love, we are loved. `My God, may His pity prevent me!' " And in another, at more length: "His calling has preceded you, so that you may have a good will. Cry out, `My God, let Thy mercy prevent me' (Ps. lviii. 11.). That you may be, that you may feel, that you may hear, that you may consent, His mercy prevents you. It prevents you in all things; and do you too prevent His judgment in something. In what, do you say? In what? In confessing that you have all these things from God, whatever you have of good; and from yourself whatever you have of evil" (176, 5). "We owe therefore to Him that we are, that we are alive, that we understand: that we are men, that we live well, that we understand aright, we owe to Him. Nothing is ours except the sin that we have. For what have we that we did not receive?" (I Cor. ix. 7) (176, 6).

It was not long, however, before the controversy was driven out of the region of sermons into that of regular treatises. The occasion for Augustine's first appearance in a written document bearing on the controversy, was given by certain questions which were sent to him for answer by "the tribune and notary" Marcellinus, with whom he had cemented his intimacy at Carthage, the previous year, when this notable official was presiding, by the emperor's orders, over the great conference of the catholics and Donatists. The mere fact that Marcellinus, still at Carthage, where Coelestius had been brought to trial, wrote to Augustine at Hippo for written answers to important questions connected with the Pelagian heresy, speaks volumes for the prominent position he had already assumed in the controversy. The questions that were sent, concerned the connection of death with sin, the transmission of sin, the possibility of a sinless life, and especially infants' need of baptism. Augustine was immersed in abundant labours when they reached him: but he could not resist this appeal, and that the less as the Pelagian controversy had already grown to a place of the first importance in his eyes. The result was his treatise, *On the Merits and Remission of Sins and on the Baptism of Infants*, consisting of two books, and written in 412. The first book of this work is an argument for original sin, drawn from the universal reign of death in the world (2-8), from the teaching of Rom. v. 12-21 (9-20), and chiefly from the baptism of infants (21-70). It opens by exploding the Pelagian contention that death is of nature, and Adam would have died even had he not sinned, by showing that the penalty threatened to Adam included physical death (Gen. iii. 19), and that it is due to him that we all die (Rom. viii. 10, 11; I Cor. xv. 21) (2-8). Then the Pelagian assertion that we are injured in Adam's sin only by its bad example, which we imitate, not by any propagation from it, is tested by an exposition of Rom. v. 12 sq. (9-20). And then the main

subject of the book is reached, and the writer sharply presses the Pelagians with the universal and primeval fact of the baptism of infants, as a proof of original sin (21-70). He tracks out all their subterfuges-showing the absurdity of the assertions that infants are baptized for the remission of sins that they have themselves committed since birth (22), or in order to obtain a higher stage of salvation (23-28), or because of sin committed in some previous state of existence (31-33). Then turning to the positive side, he shows at length that the Scriptures teach that Christ came to save sinners, that baptism is for the remission of sins, and that all that partake of it are confessedly sinners (34 sq.); then he points out that John ii. 7, 8, on which the Pelagians relied, cannot be held to distinguish between ordinary salvation and a higher form, under the name of "the kingdom of God" (58 sq.); and he closes by showing that the very manner in which baptism was administered, with its exorcism and exsufflation, implied the infant to be a sinner (63), and by suggesting that the peculiar helplessness of infancy, so different not only from the earliest age of Adam, but also from that of many young animals, may possibly be itself penal (64-69). The second book treats, with similar fulness, the question of the perfection of human righteousness in this life. After an exordium which speaks of the will and its limitations, and of the need of God's assisting grace (1-6), the writer raises four questions. First, whether it may be said to be possible, by God's grace, for a man to attain a condition of entire sinlessness in this life (7). This he answers in the affirmative. Secondly, he asks, whether any one has ever done this, or may ever be expected to do it, and answers in the negative on the testimony of Scripture (8-25). Thirdly, he asks why not, and replies briefly because men are unwilling, explaining at length what he means by this (26-33). Finally, he inquires whether any man has ever existed, exists now, or will ever exist, entirely without sin-this question differing from the second inasmuch as that asked after the attainment in this life of a state in which sinning should cease, while this seeks a man who has never been guilty of sin, implying the absence of original as well as of actual sin. After answering this in the negative (34), Augustine discusses anew the question of original sin. Here after expounding from the positive side (35-38) the condition of man in paradise, the nature of his probation, and of the fall and its effects both on him and his posterity, and the kind of redemption that has been provided in the incarnation, he proceeds to answer certain cavils (39 sq.), such as, "Why should children of baptized people need baptism?"-"How can a sin be remitted to the father and held against the child?"-"If physical death comes from Adam, ought we not to be released from it on believing in Christ?"-and concludes with an exhortation to hold fast to the exact truth, turning neither to the right nor left-neither saying that we have no sin, nor surrendering ourselves to our sin (57 sq.).

After these books were completed, Augustine came into possession of Pelagius' Commentary on Paul's Epistles, which was written while he was living in Rome (before 410), and found it to contain some arguments that he had not treated-such arguments, he tells us, as he had not imagined could be held by any one. Unwilling to re-open his finished argument, he now began a long supplementary letter to Marcellinus, which he intended to serve as a third and concluding book to his work. He was some time in completing this letter. He had asked to have the former two books returned to him; and it is a curious indication of his overworked state of mind, that he forgot what he wanted with them: he visited Carthage while the letter was in hand, and saw Marcellinus personally; and even after his return to Hippo, it dragged along, amid many distractions, slowly towards completion. Meanwhile, a long letter was written to Honoratus, in which a section on the grace of the New Testament was incorporated. At length the promised supplement was completed. It was professedly a criticism of Pelagius' Commentary, and therefore naturally

mentioned his name; but Augustine even goes out of his way to speak as highly of his opponent as he can, -although it is apparent that his esteem is not very high for his strength of mind, and is even less high for the moral quality that led to his odd, oblique way of expressing his opinions. There is even a half sarcasm in the way he speaks of Pelagius' care and circumspection, which was certainly justified by the event. The letter opens by stating and criticising in a very acute and telling dialectic, the new arguments of Pelagius, which were such as the following: "If Adam's sin injured even those who do not sin, Christ's righteousness ought likewise to profit even those who do not believe" (2-4); "No man can transmit what he has not; and hence, if baptism cleanses from sin, the children of baptized parents ought to be free from sin;" "God remits one's own sins, and can scarcely, therefore, impute another's to us; and if the soul is created, it would certainly be unjust to impute Adam's alien sin to it" (5). The stress of the letter, however, is laid upon two contentions-1. That whatever else may be ambiguous in the Scriptures, they are perfectly clear that no man can have eternal life except in Christ, who came to call sinners to repentance (7); and 2. That original sin in infants has always been, in the Church, one of the fixed facts, to be used as a basis of argument, in order to reach the truth in other matters, and has never itself been called in question before (10-14). At this point, the writer returns to the second and third of the new arguments of Pelagius mentioned above, and discusses them more fully (15-20), closing with a recapitulation of the three great points that had been raised; viz., that both death and sin are derived from Adam's sin by all his posterity; that infants need salvation, and hence baptism; and that no man ever attains in this life such a state of holiness that he cannot truly pray, "Forgive us our trespasses."

Augustine was now to learn that one service often entails another. Marcellinus wrote to say that he was puzzled by what had been said in the second book of this work, as to the possibility of man's attaining to sinlessness in this life, while yet it was asserted that no man ever had attained, or ever would attain, it. How, he asked, can that be said to be possible which is, and which will remain, unexampled? In reply, Augustine wrote, during this same year (412), and sent to his noble friend, another work, which he calls *On the Spirit and the Letter*, from the prominence which he gives in it to the words of 2 Cor. iii. 6. He did not content himself with a simple, direct answer to Marcellinus' question, but goes at length into a profound disquisition into the roots of the doctrine, and thus gives us, not a mere explanation of a former contention, but a new treatise on a new subject-the absolute necessity of the grace of God for any good living. He begins by explaining to Marcellinus that he has affirmed the possibility while denying the actuality of a sinless life, on the ground that all things are possible to God-even the passage of a camel through the eye of a needle, which nevertheless has never occurred (1, 2). For, in speaking of man's perfection, we are speaking really of a work of God-and one which is none the less His work because it is wrought through the instrumentality of man, and in the use of his free will. The Scriptures, indeed, teach that no man lives without sin, but this is only the proclamation of a matter of fact; and although it is thus contrary to fact and Scripture to assert that men may be found that live sinlessly, yet such an assertion would not be fatal heresy. What is unbearable, is that men should assert it to be possible for man, unaided by God, to attain this perfection. This is to speak against the grace of God: it is to put in man's power what is only possible to the almighty grace of God (3, 4). No doubt, even these men do not, in so many words, exclude the aid of grace in perfecting human life-they affirm God's help; but they make it consist in His gift to man of a perfectly free will, and in His addition to this of commandments and teachings which make known to him what he is to seek and what to avoid,

and so enable him to direct his free will to what is good. What, however, does such a "grace" amount to? (5). Man needs something more than to know the right way: he needs to love it, or he will not walk in it; and all mere teaching, which can do nothing more than bring us knowledge of what we ought to do, is but the letter that killeth. What we need is some inward, Spirit-given aid to the keeping of what by the law we know ought to be kept. Mere knowledge slays: while to lead a holy life is the gift of God-not only because He has given us will, nor only because He has taught us the right way, but because by the Holy Spirit He sheds love abroad in the hearts of all those whom He has predestinated, and will call and justify and glorify (Rom. viii. 29, 30). To prove this, he states to be the object of the present treatise; and after investigating the meaning of 2 Cor. iii. 6, and showing that "the letter" there means the law as a system of precepts, which reveals sin rather than takes it away, points out the way rather than gives strength to walk in it, and therefore slays the soul by shutting it up under sin-while "the Spirit" is God's Holy Ghost who is shed abroad in our hearts to give us strength to walk aright-he undertakes to prove this position from the teachings of the Epistle to the Romans at large. This contention, it will be seen, cut at the very roots of Pelagianism: if all mere teaching slays the soul, as Paul asserts, then all that what they called "grace" could, when alone, do, was to destroy; and the upshot of "helping" man by simply giving him free will, and pointing out the way to him, would be the loss of the whole race. Not that the law is sin: Augustine teaches that it is holy and good, and God's instrument in salvation. Not that free will is done away: it is by free will that men are led into holiness. But the purpose of the law (he teaches) is to make men so feel their lost estate as to seek the help by which alone they may be saved; and will is only then liberated to do good when grace has made it free. "What the law of works enjoins by menace, that the law of faith secures by faith. What the law of works does is to say, 'Do what I command thee;' but by the law of faith we say to God, 'Give me what thou commandest.'" (22). In the midst of this argument, Augustine is led to discuss the differentiating characteristics of the Old and New Testaments; and he expounds at length (33-42) the passage in Jer. xxxi. 31-34, showing that, in the prophet's view, the difference between the two covenants is that in the Old, the law is an external thing written on stones; while in the New, it is written internally on the heart, so that men now wish to do what the law prescribes. This writing on the heart is nothing else, he explains, than the shedding abroad by the Holy Spirit of love in our hearts, so that we love God's will, and therefore freely do it. Towards the end of the treatise (50-61), he treats in an absorbingly interesting way of the mutual relations of free will, faith, and grace, contending that all co-exist without the voiding of any. It is by free will that we believe; but it is only as grace moves us, that we are able to use our free will for believing; and it is only after we are thus led by grace to believe, that we obtain all other goods. In prosecuting this analysis, Augustine is led to distinguish very sharply between the faculty and use of free will (58), as well as between ability and volition (53). Faith is an act of the man himself; but only as he is given the power from on high to will to believe, will he believe (57, 60).

By this work, Augustine completed, in his treatment of Pelagianism, the circle of that triad of doctrines which he himself looked upon as most endangered by this heresy, - original sin, the imperfection of human righteousness, the necessity of grace. In his mind, the last was the kernel of the whole controversy; and this was a subject which he could never approach without some heightened fervour. This accounts for the great attractiveness of the present work-through the whole fabric of which runs the golden thread of the praise of God's ineffable grace. In Canon Bright's opinion, it "perhaps, next to the 'Confessions,' tells us most of the thoughts of that 'rich,

profound, and affectionate mind' on the soul's relations to its God."

After the publication of these treatises, the controversy certainly did not lull; but it relapsed for nearly three years again, into less public courses. Meanwhile, Augustine was busy, among other most distracting cares (Ephesians 145, 1), still defending the grace of God, by letters and sermons. A fair illustration of his state of mind at this time, may be obtained from his letter to Anastasius (145), which assuredly must have been written soon after the treatise On the Spirit and the Letter. Throughout this letter, there are adumbrations of the same train of thought that filled this treatise; and there is one passage which may almost be taken as a summary of it. Augustine is so weary of the vexatious cares that filled his life, that he is ready to long for the everlasting rest, and yet bewails the weakness which allowed the sweetness of external things still to insinuate itself into his heart. Victory over, and emancipation from, this, he asserts, "cannot, without God's grace, be achieved by the human will, which is by no means to be called free so long as it is subject to enslaving lusts." Then he proceeds: "The law, therefore, by teaching and commanding what cannot be fulfilled without grace, demonstrates to man his weakness, in order that the weakness, thus proved, may resort to the Saviour, by whose healing the will may be able to do what it found impossible in its weakness. So, then, the law brings us to faith, faith obtains the Spirit in fuller measure, the Spirit sheds love abroad in us, and love fulfils the law. For this reason the law is called a schoolmaster, under whose threatening and severity 'whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.' But 'how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?' Wherefore, that the letter without the Spirit may not kill, the life-giving Spirit is given to those that believe and call upon Him; but the love of God is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us, so that the words of the same apostle, 'Love is the fulfilling of the law,' may be realized. Thus the law is good to him that uses it lawfully; and he uses it lawfully, who, understanding wherefore it was given, betakes himself, under the pressure of its threatening, to liberating grace. Whoever ungratefully despises this grace by which the ungodly is justified, and trusts in his own strength for fulfilling the law, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish his own righteousness, is not submitting himself to the righteousness of God; and therefore the law is made to him not a help to pardon, but the bond of guilt; not because the law is evil, but because 'sin,' as it is written, 'works death to such persons by that which is good.' For by the commandment, he sins more grievously, who, by the commandment, knows how evil are the sins which he commits." Although Augustine states clearly that this letter is written against those "who arrogate too much to the human will, imagining that, the law being given, the will is, of its own strength, sufficient to fulfil the law, though not assisted by any grace imparted by the Holy Ghost, in addition to instruction in the law,"-he refrains still from mentioning the names of the authors of this teaching, evidently out of a lingering tenderness in his treatment of them. This will help us to explain the courtesy of a note which he sent to Pelagius himself at about this time, in reply to a letter he had received some time before from him; of which Pelagius afterwards (at the Synod of Diospolis) made, to say the least of it, an ungenerous use. This note, Augustine tells us, was written with "tempered praises" (wherefrom we see his lessening respect for the man), and so as to admonish Pelagius to think rightly concerning grace-so far as could be done without raising the dregs of the controversy in a formal note. This he accomplished by praying from the Lord for him, those good things by which he might be good forever, and might live eternally with Him who is eternal; and by asking his prayers in return, that he, too, might be made by the Lord such as he seemed to suppose he already was. How Augustine could really intend these prayers to be

understood as an admonition to Pelagius to look to God for what he was seeking to work out for himself, is fully illustrated by the closing words of this almost contemporary letter to Anastasius: "Pray, therefore, for us," he writes, "that we may be righteous-an attainment wholly beyond a man's reach, unless he know righteousness, and be willing to practise it, but one which is immediately realized when he is perfectly willing; but this cannot be in him unless he is healed by the grace of the Spirit, and aided to be able." The point had already been made in the controversy, that, by the Pelagian doctrine, so much power was attributed to the human will, that no one ought to pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

If he was anxious to avoid personal controversy with Pelagius himself in the hope that he might even yet be reclaimed, Augustine was equally anxious to teach the truth on all possible occasions. Pelagius had been intimate, when at Rome, with the pious Paulinus, bishop of Nola; and it was understood that there was some tendency at Nola to follow the new teachings. It was, perhaps, as late as 414, when Augustine made reply in a long letter, to a request of Paulinus' for an exposition of certain difficult Scriptures, which had been sent him about 410. Among them was Rom. xi. 28; and, in explaining it, Augustine did not withhold a tolerably complete account of his doctrine of predestination, involving the essence of his whole teaching as to grace: "For when he had said, 'according to the election they are beloved for their father's sake,' he added, 'for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.' You see that those are certainly meant who belong to the number of the predestinated.... 'Many indeed are called, but few chosen;' but those who are elect, these are called 'according to His purpose;' and it is beyond doubt that in them God's foreknowledge cannot be deceived. These He foreknew and predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the first born among many brethren. But 'whom He predestinated, them He also called.' This calling is 'according to His purpose,' this calling is 'without repentance,' etc., quoting Rom. v. 28-31. Then continuing, he says, "Those are not in this vocation, who do not persevere unto the end in the faith that worketh by love, although they walk in it a little while.... But the reason why some belong to it, and some do not, can easily be hidden, but cannot be unjust. For is there injustice with God? God forbid! For this belongs to those high judgments which, so to say, terrified the wondering apostle to look upon."

Among the most remarkable of the controversial sermons that were preached about this time, especial mention is due to two that were delivered at Carthage, midsummer of 413. The former of these was preached on the festival of John the Baptist's birth (June 24), and naturally took the forerunner for its subject. The nativity of John suggesting the nativity of Christ, the preacher spoke of the marvel of the incarnation. He who was in the beginning, and was the Word of God, and was Himself God, and who made all things, and in whom was life, even this one "came to us. To whom? To the worthy? Nay, but to the unworthy! For Christ died for the ungodly, and for the unworthy, though He was worthy. We indeed were unworthy whom He pitied; but He was worthy who pitied us, to whom we say, 'For Thy pity's sake, Lord, free us!' Not for the sake of our preceding merits, but 'for Thy pity's sake, Lord, free us;' and 'for Thy name's sake be propitious to our sins,' not for our merit's sake.... For the merit of sins is, of course, not reward, but punishment." He then dwelt upon the necessity of the incarnation, and the necessity of a mediator between God and "the whole mass of the human race alienated from Him by Adam." Then quoting I Cor. iv. 7, he asserts that it is not our varying merits, but God's grace alone, that makes us differ, and that we are all alike, great and small, old and young, saved by one and the same Saviour. "What then,

some one says," he continues, "even the infant needs a liberator? Certainly he needs one. And the witness to it is the mother that faithfully runs to church with the child to be baptized. The witness is Mother Church herself, who receives the child for washing, and either for dismissing him [from this life] freed, or nurturing him in piety.... Last of all, the tears of his own misery are witness in the child himself.... Recognize the misery, extend the help. Let all put on bowels of mercy. By as much as they cannot speak for themselves, by so much more pityingly let us speak for the little ones,"-and then follows a passage calling on the Church to take the grace of infants in their charge as orphans committed to their care, which is in substance repeated from a former sermon. The speaker proceeded to quote Matt. i. 21, and apply it. If Jesus came to save from sins, and infants are brought to Him, it is to confess that they, too, are sinners. Then, shall they be withheld from baptism? "Certainly, if the child could speak for himself, he would repel the voice of opposition, and cry out, 'Give me Christ's life! In Adam I died: give me Christ's life; in whose sight I am not clean, even if I am an infant whose life has been but one day in the earth.' ""No way can be found," adds the preacher, "of coming into the life of this world except by Adam; no way can be found of escaping punishment in the next world except by Christ. Why do you shut up the one door?" Even John the Baptist himself was born in sin; and absolutely no one can be found who was born apart from sin, until you find one who was born apart from Adam. "By one man sin entered into the world, and by sin, death; and so it passed through upon all men.' If these were my words, could this sentiment be expressed more expressly, more clearly, more fully?"

Three days afterwards, on the invitation of the Bishop of Carthage, Augustine preached a sermon professedly directed against the Pelagians, which takes up the threads hinted at in the former discourse, and develops a full polemic with reference to the baptism of infants. He began, formally enough, with the determination of the question in dispute. The Pelagians concede that infants should be baptized. The only question is, for what are they baptized? We say that they would not otherwise have salvation and eternal life; but they say it is not for salvation, not for eternal life, but for the kingdom of God.... "The child, they say, although not baptized, by the desert of his innocence, in that he has no sin at all, either actual or original, either from him self or contracted from Adam, necessarily has salvation and eternal life even if not baptized; but is to be baptized for this reason-that he may enter into the kingdom of God, i.e., into the kingdom of heaven." He then shows that there is no eternal life outside the kingdom of heaven, no middle place between the right and left hand of the judge at the last day, and that, therefore, to exclude one from the kingdom of God is to consign him to the pains of eternal fire; while, on the other side, no one ascends into heaven unless he has been made a member of Christ, and this can only be by faith-which, in an infant's case, is professed by another in his stead. He then treats, at length, some of the puzzling questions with which the Pelagians were wont to try the catholics; and then breaking off suddenly, he took a volume in his hands. "I ask you," he said, "to bear with me a little: I will read somewhat. It is St. Cyprian whom I hold in my hand, the ancient bishop of this see. What he thought of the baptism of infants-nay, what he has shown that the Church always thought-learn in brief. For it is not enough for them to dispute and argue, I know not what impious novelties: they even try to charge us with asserting something novel. It is on this account that I read here St. Cyprian, in order that you may perceive that the orthodox understanding and catholic sense reside in the words which I have been just now speaking to you. He was asked whether an infant ought to be baptized before he was eight days old, seeing that by the ancient law no infant was allowed to be circumcised unless he was eight days old. A question arose from this as to the day of

baptism-for concerning the origin of sin there was no question; and therefore from this thing of which there was no question, that question that had arisen was settled." And then he read to them the passage out of Cyprian's letter to Fidus, which declared that he, and all the council with him, unanimously thought that infants should be baptized at the earliest possible age, lest they should die in their inherited sin, and so pass into eternal punishment. The sermon closed with a tender warning to the teachers of these strange doctrines: he might call them heretics with truth, but he will not; let the Church seek still their salvation, and not mourn them as dead; let them be exhorted as friends, not striven with as enemies. "They disparage us," he says, "we will bear it; let them not disparage the rule [of faith], let them not disparage the truth; let them not contradict the Church, which labours every day for the remission of infants' original sin. This thing is settled. The errant disputer may be borne with in other questions that have not been thoroughly canvassed, that are not yet settled by the full authority of the Church-their error should be borne with: it ought not to extend so far, that they endeavour to shake even the very foundation of the Church!" He hints that although the patience hitherto exhibited towards them is "perhaps not blameworthy," yet patience may cease to be a virtue, and become culpable negligence: in the mean time, however, he begs that the catholics should continue amicable, fraternal, placid, loving, long suffering.

Augustine himself gives us a view of the progress of the controversy at this time in a letter written in 414. The Pelagians had everywhere scattered the seeds of their new error; and although some, by his ministry and that of his brother workers, had, "by God's mercy," been cured of their pest, yet they still existed in Africa, especially about Carthage, and were everywhere propagating their opinions in subterraneous whispers, for fear of the judgment of the Church. Wherever they were not refuted, they were seducing others to their following; and they were so spread abroad that he did not know where they would break out next. Nevertheless, he was still unwilling to brand them as heretics, and was more desirous of healing them as sick members of the Church than of cutting them off finally as too diseased for cure. Jerome also tells us that the poison was spreading in both the East and the West, and mentions particularly as seats where it showed itself the islands of Rhodes and Sicily. Of Rhodes we know nothing further; but from Sicily an appeal came to Augustine in 414 from one Hilary, setting forth that there were certain Christians about Syracuse who taught strange doctrines, and beseeching Augustine to help him in dealing with them. The doctrines were enumerated as follows: "They say (1) that man can be without sin, (2) and can easily keep the commandments of God if he will; (3) that an unbaptized infant, if he is cut off by death, cannot justly perish, since he is born without sin; (4) that a rich man that remains in his riches cannot enter the kingdom of God, except he sell all that he has;... (5) that we ought not to swear at all;" (6) and, apparently, that the Church is to be in this world without spot or blemish. Augustine suspected that these Sicilian disturbances were in some way the work of Coelestius, and therefore in his answer informs his correspondent of what had been done at the Synod of Carthage (412) against him. The long letter that he sent back follows the inquiries in the order they were put by Hilary. To the first he replies, in substance, as he had treated the same matter in the second book of the treatise, *On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins*, that it was opposed to Scripture, but was less a heresy than the wholly unbearable opinion that this state of sinlessness could be attained without God's help. "But when they say that free will suffices to man for fulfilling the precepts of the Lord, even though unaided to good works by God's grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit, it is to be altogether anathematized and detested with all execrations. For those who assert this are inwardly alien from God's grace, because being ignorant of God's righteousness,

like the Jews of whom the apostle speaks, and wishing to establish their own, they are not subject to God's righteousness, since there is no fulfilment of the law except love; and of course the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, not by ourselves, nor by the force of our own will, but by the Holy Ghost who is given to us." Dealing next with the second point, he drifts into the matter he had more fully developed in his work *On the Spirit and the Letter*. "Free will avails for God's works," he says, "if it be divinely aided, and this comes by humble seeking and doing; but when deserted by divine aid, no matter how excellent may be its knowledge of the law, it will by no means possess solidity of righteousness, but only the inflation of ungodly pride and deadly arrogance. This is taught us by that same Lord's Prayer; for it would be an empty thing for us to ask God 'Lead us not into temptation,' if the matter was so placed in our power that we would avail for fulfilling it without any aid from Him. For this free will is free in proportion as it is sound, but it is sound in proportion as it is subject to divine pity and grace. For it faithfully prays, saying, 'Direct my ways according to Thy word, and let no iniquity reign over me.' For how is that free over which iniquity reigns? But see who it is that is invoked by it, in order that it may not reign over it. For it says not, 'Direct my ways according to free will because no iniquity shall rule over me,' but 'Direct my ways according to Thy word, and let no iniquity rule over me.' It is a prayer, not a promise; it is a confession, not a profession; it is a wish for full freedom, not a boast of personal power. For it is not every one 'who confides in his own power,' but 'every one who calls on the name of God, that shall be saved.' 'But how shall they call upon Him,' he says, 'in whom they have not believed?' Accordingly, then, they who rightly believe, believe in order to call on Him in whom they have believed, and to avail for doing what they receive in the precepts of the law; since what the law commands, faith prays for." "God, therefore, commands continence, and gives continence; He commands by the law, He gives by grace; He commands by the letter, He gives by the spirit: for the law without grace makes the transgression to abound, and the letter without the spirit kills. He commands for this reason—that we who have endeavoured to do what He commands, and are worn out in our weakness under the law, may know how to ask for the aid of grace; and if we have been able to do any good work, that we may not be ungrateful to Him who aids us." The answer to the third point traverses the ground that was fully covered in the first book of the treatise *On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins*, beginning by opposing the Pelagians to Paul in Rom. v. 12-19: "But when they say that an infant, cut off by death, unbaptized, cannot perish since he is born without sin—it is not this that the apostle says; and I think that it is better to believe the apostle than them." The fourth and fifth questions were new in this controversy; and it is not certain that they belong properly to it, though the legalistic asceticism of the Pelagian leaders may well have given rise to a demand on all Christians to sell what they had, and give to the poor. This one of the points, Augustine treats at length, pointing out that many of the saints of old were rich, and that the Lord and His apostles always so speak that their counsels avail to the right use, not the destruction, of wealth. Christians ought so to hold their wealth that they are not held by it, and by no means prefer it to Christ. Equal good sense and mildness are shown in his treatment of the question concerning oaths, which he points out were used by the Lord and His apostles, but advises to be used as little as possible lest by the custom of frequent oaths we learn to swear lightly. The question as to the Church, he passes over as having been sufficiently treated in the course of his previous remarks.

To the number of those who had been rescued from Pelagianism by his efforts, Augustine was now to have the pleasure of adding two others, in whom he seems to have taken much delight. Timasius and James were two young men of honorable birth and liberal education, who had, by

the exhortation of Pelagius, been moved to give up the hope that they had in this world, and enter upon the service of God in an ascetic life. Naturally, they had turned to him for instruction, and had received a book to which they had given their study. They met somewhere with some of Augustine's writings, however, and were deeply affected by what he said as to grace, and now began to see that the teaching of Pelagius opposed the grace of God by which man becomes a Christian. They gave their book, therefore, to Augustine, saying that it was Pelagius', and asking him for Pelagius' sake, and for the sake of the truth, to answer it. This was done, and the resulting book, *On Nature and Grace*, sent to the young men, who returned a letter of thanks in which they professed their conversion from their error. In this book, too, which was written in 415, Augustine refrained from mentioning Pelagius by name, feeling it better to spare the man while not sparing his writings. But he tells us, that, on reading the book of Pelagius to which it was an answer, it became clear to him beyond any doubt that his teaching was distinctly anti-Christian; and when speaking of his own book privately to a friend, he allows himself to call it "a considerable book against the heresy of Pelagius, which he had been constrained to write by some brethren whom he had persuaded to adopt his fatal error, denying the grace of Christ." Thus his attitude towards the persons of the new teachers was becoming ever more and more strained, in despite of his full recognition of the excellent motives that might lie behind their "zeal not according to knowledge." This treatise opens with a recognition of the zeal of Pelagius, which, as it burns most ardently against those who, when reprov'd for sin, take refuge in censuring their nature, Augustine compares with the heathen view as expressed in Sallust's saying, "the human race falsely complains of its own nature," and which he charges with not being according to knowledge, and proposes to oppose by an equal zeal against all attempts to render the cross of Christ of none effect. He then gives a brief but excellent summary of the more important features of the catholic doctrine concerning nature and grace (2-7). Opening the work of Pelagius, which had been placed in his hands, he examines his doctrine of sin, its nature and effects. Pelagius, he points out, draws a distinction, sound enough in itself, between what is "possible" and what is "actual," but applies it unsoundly to sin, when he says that every man has the possibility of being without sin (8-9), and therefore without condemnation. Not so, says Augustine; an infant who dies unbaptized has no possibility of salvation open to him; and the man who has lived and died in a land where it was impossible for him to hear the name of Christ, has had no possibility open to him of becoming righteous by nature and free will. If this be not so, Christ is dead in vain, since all men then might have accomplished their salvation, even if Christ had never died (10). Pelagius, moreover, he shows, exhibits a tendency to deny the sinful character of all sins that are impossible to avoid, and so treats of sins of ignorance as to show that he excuses them (13-19). When he argues that no sin, because it is not a substance, can change nature, which is a substance, Augustine replies that this destroys the Saviour's work-for how can He save from sins if sins do not corrupt? And, again, if an act cannot injure a substance, how can abstention from food, which is a mere act, kill the body? In the same way sin is not a substance; but God is a substance-yea, the height of substance, and only true sustenance of the reasonable creature; and the consequence of departure from Him is to the soul what refusal of food is to the body (22). To Pelagius' assertion that sin cannot be punished by more sin, Augustine replies that the apostle thinks differently (Rom. i. 21-31). Then putting his finger on the main point in controversy, he quotes the Scriptures as declaring the present condition of man to be that of spiritual death. "The truth then designates as dead those whom this man declares to be unable to be damaged or corrupted by sin-because,

forsooth, he has discovered sin to be no substance!" (25). It was by free will that man passed into this state of death; but a dead man needs something else to revive him-he needs nothing less than a Vivifier. But of vivifying grace, Pelagius knew nothing; and by knowing nothing of a Vivifier, he knows nothing of a Saviour; but rather by making nature of itself able to be sinless, he glorifies the Creator at the expense of the Saviour (39). Next is examined Pelagius' contention that many saints are enumerated in the Scriptures as having lived sinlessly in this world. While declining to discuss the question of fact as to the Virgin Mary (42), Augustine opposes to the rest the declaration of John in I John i. 8, as final, but still pauses to explain why the Scriptures do not mention the sins of all, and to contend that all who ever were saved under the Old Testament or the New, were saved by the sacrificial death of Christ, and by faith in Him (Matthew-50). Thus we are brought, as Augustine says, to the core of the question, which concerns, not the fact of sinlessness in any man, but man's ability to be sinless. This ability Pelagius affirms of all men, and Augustine denies of all "unless they are justified by the grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (51). Thus, the whole discussion is about grace, which Pelagius does not admit in any true sense, but places only in the nature that God has made (52). We are next invited to attend to another distinction of Pelagius', in which he discriminates sharply between the nature that God has made, the crown of which is free will, and the use that man makes of this free will. The endowment of free will is a "capacity;" it is, because given by God in our making, a necessity of nature, and not in man's power to have or not have. It is the right use of it only, which man has in his power. This analysis, Pelagius illustrates at length, by appealing to the difference between the possession and use of the various bodily senses. The ability to see, for instance, he says, is a necessity of our nature; we do not make it, we cannot help having it; it is ours only to use it. Augustine criticises this presentation of the matter with great sharpness (although he is not averse to the analysis itself)-showing the inapplicability of the illustrations used-for, he asks, is it not possible for us to blind ourselves, and so no longer have the ability to see? and would not many a man like to control the "use" of his "capacity" to hear when a screechy saw is in the neighbourhood? (55); and as well the falsity of the contention illustrated, since Pelagius has ignored the fall, and, even were that not so, has so ignored the need of God's aid for all good, in any state of being, as to deny it (56). Moreover, it is altogether a fallacy, Augustine argues, to contend that men have the "ability" to make every use we can conceive of our faculties. We cannot wish for unhappiness; God cannot deny Himself (57); and just so, in a corrupt nature, the mere possession of a faculty of choice does not imply the ability to use that faculty for not sinning. "Of a man, indeed, who has his legs strong and sound, it may be said admissibly enough, 'whether he will or not, he has the capacity of walking;' but if his legs be broken, however much he may wish, he has not the 'capacity.' The nature of which our author speaks is corrupted" (57). What, then, can he mean by saying that, whether we will or not, we have the capacity of not sinning-a statement so opposite to Paul's in Rom. vii. 15? Some space is next given to an attempted rebuttal by Pelagius of the testimony of Gal. v. 17, on the ground that the "flesh" there does not refer to the baptized (60-70); and then the passages are examined which Pelagius had quoted against Augustine out of earlier writers-Lactantius (71), Hilary (72), Ambrose (75), John of Constantinople (76), Xystus-a blunder of Pelagius, who quoted from a Pythagorean philosopher, mistaking him for the Roman bishop Sixtus (57), Jerome (78), and Augustine himself (80). All these writers, Augustine shows, admitted the universal sinfulness of man-and especially he himself had confessed the necessity of grace in the immediate context of the passage quoted by Pelagius. The

treatise closes (82 sq.) with a noble panegyric on that love which God sheds abroad in the heart, by the Holy Ghost, and by which alone we can be made keepers of the law.

The treatise *On Nature and Grace* was as yet unfinished, when the over-busy scriptorium at Hippo was invaded by another young man seeking instruction. This time it was a zealous young presbyter from the remotest part of Spain, "from the shore of the ocean,"-Paulus Orosius by name, whose pious soul had been afflicted with grievous wounds by the Priscillianist and Origenist heresies that had broken out in his country, and who had come with eager haste to Augustine, on hearing that he could get from him the instruction which he needed for confuting them. Augustine seems to have given him his heart at once; and, feeling too little informed as to the special heresies which he wished to be prepared to controvert, persuaded him to go on to Palestine to be taught by Jerome, and gave him introductions which described him as one "who is in the bond of catholic peace a brother, in point of age a son, and in honour a fellow-presbyter-a man of quick understanding, ready speech, and burning zeal." His departure to Palestine gave Augustine an opportunity to consult with Jerome on the one point that had been raised in the Pelagian controversy on which he had not been able to see light. The Pelagians had early argued, that, if souls are created anew for men at their birth, it would be unjust in God to impute Adam's sin to them. And Augustine found himself unable either to prove that souls are transmitted (traduced, as the phrase is), or to show that it would not involve God in injustice to make a soul only to make it subject to a sin committed by another. Jerome had already put himself on record as a believer in both original sin and the creation of souls at the time of birth. Augustine feared the logical consequences of this assertion, and yet was unable to refute it. He therefore seized this occasion to send a long treatise on the origin of the soul to his friend, with the request that he would consider the subject anew, and answer his doubts. In this treatise he stated that he was fully persuaded that the soul had fallen into sin, but by no fault of God or of nature, but of its own free will; and asked when could the soul of an infant have contracted the guilt, which, unless the grace of Christ should come to its rescue by baptism, would involve it in condemnation, if God (as Jerome held, and as he was willing to hold with him, if this difficulty could be cleared up) makes each soul for each individual at the time of birth? He professed himself embarrassed on such a supposition by the penal sufferings of infants, the pains they endured in this life, and much more the danger they are in of eternal damnation, into which they actually go unless saved by baptism. God is good, just, omnipotent: how, then, can we account for the fact that "in Adam all die," if souls are created afresh for each birth? "If new souls are made for men," he affirms, "individually at their birth, I do not see, on the one hand, that they could have any sin while yet in infancy; nor do I believe, on the other hand, that God condemns any soul which He sees to have no sin;" "and yet, whoever says that those children who depart out of this life without partaking of the sacrament of baptism, shall be made alive in Christ, certainly contradicts the apostolic declaration," and "he that is not made alive in Christ must necessarily remain under the condemnation of which the apostle says that by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." "Wherefore," he adds to his correspondent, "if that opinion of yours does not contradict this firmly grounded article of faith, let it be mine also; but if it does, let it no longer be yours." So far as obtaining light was concerned, Augustine might have spared himself the pain of this composition: Jerome simply answered that he had no leisure to reply to the questions submitted to him. But Orosius' mission to Palestine was big with consequences. Once there, he became the accuser of Pelagius before John of Jerusalem, and the occasion, at least, of the trials of Pelagius in Palestine during the

summer and winter of 415 which issued so disastrously, and ushered in a new phase of the conflict.

Meanwhile, however, Augustine was ignorant of what was going on in the East, and had his mind directed again to Sicily. About a year had passed since he had sent thither his long letter to Hilary. Now his conjecture that Coelestius was in some way at the bottom of the Sicilian outbreak, received confirmation from a paper which certain catholic brethren brought out of Sicily, and which was handed to Augustine by two exiled Spanish bishops, Eutropius and Paul. This paper bore the title, Definitions Ascribed to Coelestius, and presented internal evidence, in style and thought, of being correctly so ascribed. It consisted of three parts, in the first of which were collected a series of brief and compressed "definitions," or "ratiocinations" as Augustine calls them, in which the author tries to place the catholics in a logical dilemma, and to force them to admit that man can live in this world without sin. In the second part, he adduced certain passages of Scripture in defence of his doctrine. In the third part, he undertook to deal with the texts that had been quoted against his contention, not, however, by examining into their meaning, or seeking to explain them in the sense of his theory, but simply by matching them with others which he thought made for him. Augustine at once (about the end of 415) wrote a treatise in answer to this, which bears the title of On the Perfection of Man's Righteousness. The distribution of the matter in this work follows that of the treatise to which it is an answer. First of all (1-16), the "ratiocinations" are taken up one by one and briefly answered. As they all concern sin, and have for their object to prove that man cannot be accounted a sinner unless he is able, in his own power, wholly to avoid sin—that is, to prove that a plenary natural ability is the necessary basis of responsibility—Augustine argues per contra that man can entail a sinfulness on himself for which and for the deeds of which he remains responsible, though he is no longer able to avoid sin; thus admitting that for the race, plenary ability must stand at the root of sinfulness. Next (17-22) he discusses the passages which Coelestius had advanced in defence of his teachings, viz., (1) passages in which God commands men to be without sin, which Augustine meets by saying that the point is, whether these commands are to be fulfilled without God's aid, in the body of this death, while absent from the Lord (17-20); and (2) passages in which God declares that His commandments are not grievous, which Augustine meets by explaining that all God's commandments are fulfilled only by Love, which finds nothing grievous; and that this love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, without whom we have only fear, to which the commandments are not only grievous, but impossible. Lastly, Augustine patiently follows Coelestius through his odd "oppositions of texts," explaining carefully all that he had adduced, in an orthodox sense (23-42). In closing, he takes up Coelestius' statement, that "it is quite possible for man not to sin even in word, if God so will," pointing out how he avoids saying "if God give him His help," and then proceeds to distinguish carefully between the differing assertions of sinlessness that may be made. To say that any man ever lived, or will live, without needing forgiveness, is to contradict Rom. v. 12, and must imply that he does not need a Saviour, against Matt. ix. 12, 13. To say that after his sins have been forgiven, any one has ever remained without sin, contradicts I John i. 8 and Matt. vi. 12. Yet, if God's help be allowed, this contention is not so wicked as the other; and the great heresy is to deny the necessity of God's constant grace, for which we pray when we say, "Lead us not into temptation."

Tidings were now (416) beginning to reach Africa of what was doing in the East. There was diligently circulated everywhere, and came into Augustine's hands, an epistle of Pelagius' own

"filled with vanity," in which he boasted that fourteen bishops had approved his assertion that "man can live without sin, and easily keep the commandments if he wishes," and had thus "shut the mouth of opposition in confusion," and "broken up the whole band of wicked conspirators against him." Soon afterwards a copy of an "apologetical paper," in which Pelagius used the authority of the Palestinian bishops against his adversaries, not altogether without disingenuousness, was sent by him to Augustine through the hands of a common acquaintance, Charus by name. It was not accompanied, however, by any letter from Pelagius; and Augustine wisely refrained from making public use of it. Towards midsummer Orosius came with more authentic information, and bearing letters from Jerome and Heros and Lazarus. It was apparently before his coming that a controversial sermon was preached, only a fragment of which has come down to us. So far as we can learn from the extant part, its subject seems to have been the relation of prayer to Pelagianism; and what we have, opens with a striking anecdote: "When these two petitions-'Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors,' and 'Lead us not into temptation'-are objected to the Pelagians, what do you think they reply? I was horrified, my brethren, when I heard it. I did not, indeed, hear it with my own ears; but my holy brother and fellow-bishop Urbanus, who used to be presbyter here, and now is bishop of Sicca," when he was in Rome, and was arguing with one who held these opinions, pressed him with the weight of the Lord's Prayer, and "what do you think he replied to him? 'We ask God,' he said, 'not to lead us into temptation, lest we should suffer something that is not in our power-lest I should be thrown from my horse; lest I should break my leg; lest a robber should slay me, and the like. For these things,' he said, 'are not in my power; but for overcoming the temptations of my sins, I both have ability if I wish to use it, and am not able to receive God's help.' You see, brethren," the good bishop adds, "how malignant this heresy is: you see how it horrifies all of you. Have a care that you be not taken by it." He then presses the general doctrine of prayer as proving that all good things come from God, whose aid is always necessary to us, and is always attainable by prayer; and closes as follows: "Consider, then, these things, my brethren, when any one comes to you and says to you, 'What, then, are we to do if we have nothing in our power, un

## Part IV: The Theology of Grace

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The theology which Augustine opposed, in his anti-Pelagian writings, to the errors of Pelagianism, is, shortly, the theology of grace. Its roots were planted deeply in his own experience, and in the teachings of Scripture, especially of that apostle whom he delights to call "the great preacher of grace," and to follow whom, in his measure, was his greatest desire. The grace of God in Jesus Christ, conveyed to us by the Holy Spirit and evidenced by the love that He sheds abroad in our hearts, is the centre around which this whole side of His system revolves, and the germ out of which it grows. He was the more able to make it thus central because of the harmony of this view of salvation with the general principle of his whole theology, which was theocentric and revolved around his conception of God as the immanent and vital spirit in whom all things live and move and have their being. In like manner, God is the absolute good, and all good is either Himself or from Him; and only as God makes us good, are we able to do anything good.

The necessity of grace to man, Augustine argued from the condition of the race as partakers of Adam's sin. God created man upright, and endowed him with human faculties, including free will; and gave to him freely that grace by which he was able to retain his uprightness. Being thus put on probation, with divine aid to enable him to stand if he chose, Adam used his free choice for sinning, and involved his whole race in his fall. It was on account of this sin that he died physically and spiritually, and this double death passes over from him to us. That all his descendants by ordinary generation are partakers in Adam's guilt and condemnation, Augustine is sure from the teachings of Scripture; and this is the fact of original sin, from which no one generated from Adam is free, and from which no one is freed save as regenerated in Christ. But how we are made partakers of it, he is less certain: sometimes he speaks as if it came by some mysterious unity of the race, so that we were all personally present in the individual Adam, and thus the whole race was the one man that sinned; sometimes he speaks more in the sense of modern realists, as if Adam's sin corrupted the nature, and the nature now corrupts those to whom it is communicated; sometimes he speaks as if it were due to simple heredity; sometimes, again, as if it depended on the presence of shameful concupiscence in the act of procreation, so that the propagation of guilt depends on the propagation of offspring by means of concupiscence. However transmitted, it is yet a fact that sin is propagated, and all mankind became sinners in Adam. The result of this is that we have lost the divine image, though not in such a sense that no lineaments of it remain to us; and, the sinning soul making the flesh corruptible, our whole nature is corrupted, and we are unable to do anything of ourselves truly good. This includes, of course, an injury to our will. Augustine, writing for the popular eye, treats this subject in popular language. But it is clear that he distinguished, in his thinking, between will as a faculty and will in a broader sense. As a mere faculty, will is and always remains an indifferent thing - after the fall, as before it, continuing poised in indifference, and ready, like a weathercock, to be turned whithersoever the breeze that blows from the heart ("will," in the broader sense) may direct. It is not the faculty of willing, but the man who makes use of that faculty, that has suffered change from the fall. In paradise man stood in full

ability: he had the posse non peccare, but not yet the non posse peccare; that is, he was endowed with a capacity for either part, and possessed the grace of God by which he was able to stand if he would, but also the power of free will by which he might fall if he would. By his fall he has suffered a change, is corrupt, and under the power of Satan; his will (in the broader sense) is now injured, wounded, diseased, enslaved, - although the faculty of will (in the narrow sense) remains indifferent. Augustine's criticism of Pelagius' discrimination of "capacity" (possibilitas, posse), "will" (voluntas, velle), and "act" (actio, esse), does not turn on the discrimination itself, but on the incongruity of placing the power, ability in the mere capacity or possibility, rather than in the living agent who "wills" and "acts." He himself adopts an essentially similar distribution, with only this correction; and thus keeps the faculty of will indifferent, but places the power of using it in the active agent, man. According, then, to the character of this man, will the use of the free will be. If the man be holy he will make a holy use of it, and if he be corrupt he will make a sinful use of it: if he be essentially holy, he cannot (like God Himself) make a sinful use of his will; and if he be enslaved to sin, he cannot make a good use of it. The last is the present condition of men by nature. They have free will; the faculty by which they act remains in indifference, and they are allowed to use it just as they choose: but such as they cannot desire and therefore cannot choose anything but evil; and therefore they, and therefore their choice, and therefore their willing, is always evil and never good. They are thus the slaves of sin, which they obey; and while their free will avails for sinning, it does not avail for doing any good unless they be first freed by the grace of God. It is undeniable that this view is in consonance with modern psychology: let us once conceive of "the will" as simply the whole man in the attitude of willing, and it is immediately evident, that, however abstractly free the "will" is, it is conditioned and enslaved in all its action by the character of the willing agent: a bad man does not cease to be bad in the act of willing, and a good man remains good even in his acts of choice.

In its nature, grace is assistance, help from God; and all divine aid may be included under the term, - as well what may be called natural, as what may be called spiritual, aid. Spiritual grace includes, no doubt, all external help that God gives man for working out his salvation, such as the law, the preaching of the gospel, the example of Christ, by which we may learn the right way; it includes also forgiveness of sins, by which we are freed from the guilt already incurred; but above all it includes that help which God gives by His Holy Spirit, working within, not without, by which man is enabled to choose and to do what he sees, by the teachings of the law, or by the gospel, or by the natural conscience, to be right. Within this aid are included all those spiritual exercises which we call regeneration, justification, perseverance to the end, - in a word, all the divine assistance by which, in being made Christians, we are made to differ from other men. Augustine is fond of representing this grace as in essence the writing of God's law (or of God's will) on our hearts, so that it appears hereafter as our own desire and wish; and even more prevalently as the shedding abroad of love in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, given to us in Christ Jesus; therefore, as a change of disposition, by which we come to love and freely choose, in co-operation with God's aid, just the things which hitherto we have been unable to choose because in bondage to sin. Grace, thus, does not make void free will: it acts through free will, and acts upon it only by liberating it from its bondage to sin, i.e., by liberating the agent that uses the free will, so that he is no longer enslaved by his fleshly lusts, and is enabled to make use of his free will in choosing the good; and thus it is only by grace that free will is enabled to act in good part. But just because grace changes the disposition, and so enables man, hitherto enslaved to sin, for the first time to

desire and use his free will for good, it lies in the very nature of the case that it is prevenient. Also, as the very name imports, it is necessarily gratuitous; since man is enslaved to sin until it is given, all the merits that he can have prior to it are bad merits, and deserve punishment, not gifts of favour. When, then, it is asked, on the ground of what, grace is given, it can only be answered, "on the ground of God's infinite mercy and undeserved favour." There is nothing in man to merit it, and it first gives merit of good to man. All men alike deserve death, and all that comes to them in the way of blessing is necessarily of God's free and unmerited favour. This is equally true of all grace. It is pre-eminently clear of that grace which gives faith, the root of all other graces, which is given of God, not to merits of good-will or incipient turning to Him, but of His sovereign good pleasure. But equally with faith, it is true of all other divine gifts: we may, indeed, speak of "merits of good" as succeeding faith; but as all these merits find their root in faith, they are but "grace on grace," and men need God's mercy always, throughout this life, and even on the judgment day itself, when, if they are judged without mercy, they must be condemned. If we ask, then, why God gives grace, we can only answer that it is of His unspeakable mercy; and if we ask why He gives it to one rather than to another, what can we answer but that it is of His will? The sovereignty of grace results from its very gratuitousness: where none deserve it, it can be given only of the sovereign good pleasure of the great Giver, - and this is necessarily inscrutable, but cannot be unjust. We can faintly perceive, indeed, some reasons why God may be supposed not to have chosen to give His saving grace to all, or even to the most; but we cannot understand why He has chosen to give it to just the individuals to whom He has given it, and to withhold it from just those from whom He has withheld it. Here we are driven to the apostle's cry, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the mercy and the justice of God!"

The effects of grace are according to its nature. Taken as a whole, it is the recreative principle sent forth from God for the recovery of man from his slavery to sin, and for his reformation in the divine image. Considered as to the time of its giving, it is either operating or co-operating grace, i.e., either the grace that first enables the will to choose the good, or the grace that co-operates with the already enabled will to do the good; and it is, therefore, also called either prevenient or subsequent grace. It is not to be conceived of as a series of disconnected divine gifts, but as a constant efflux from God; but we may look upon it in the various steps of its operation in men, as bringing forgiveness of sins, faith, which is the beginning of all good, love to God, progressive power of good working, and perseverance to the end. In any case, and in all its operations alike, just because it is power from on high and the living spring of a new and re-created life, it is irresistible and indefectible. Those on whom the Lord bestows the gift of faith working from within, not from without, of course, have faith, and cannot help believing. Those to whom perseverance to the end is given must persevere to the end. It is not to be objected to this, that many seem to begin well who do not persevere: this also is of God, who has in such cases given great blessings indeed, but not this blessing, of perseverance to the end. Whatever of good men have, that God has given; and what they have not, why, of course, God has not given it. Nor can it be objected, that this leaves all uncertain: it is only unknown to us, but this is not uncertainty; we cannot know that we are to have any gift which God sovereignly gives, of course, until it is given, and we therefore cannot know that we have perseverance unto the end until we actually persevere to the end; but who would call what God does, and knows He is to do, uncertain, and what man is to do certain? Nor will it do to say that thus nothing is left for us to do: no doubt, all things are in God's hands, and we should praise God that this is so, but we must co-operate with Him; and it is just

because it is He that is working in us the willing and the doing, that it is worth our while to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. God has not determined the end without determining the appointed means.

Now, Augustine argues, since grace certainly is gratuitous, and given to no preceding merits, - prevenient and antecedent to all good, - and, therefore, sovereign, and bestowed only on those whom God selects for its reception; we must, of course, believe that the eternal God has foreknown all this from the beginning. He would be something less than God, had He not foreknown that He intended to bestow this prevenient, gratuitous, and sovereign grace on some men, and had He not foreknown equally the precise individuals on whom He intended to bestow it. To foreknow is to prepare beforehand. And this is predestination. He argues that there can be no objection to predestination, in itself considered, in the mind of any man who believes in a God: what men object to is the gratuitous and sovereign grace to which no additional difficulty is added by the necessary assumption that it was foreknown and prepared or from eternity. That predestination does not proceed on the foreknowledge of good or of faith, follows from its being nothing more than the foresight and preparation of grace, which, in its very idea, is gratuitous and not according to any merits, sovereign and according only to God's purpose, prevenient and in order to faith and good works. It is the sovereignty of grace, not its foresight or the preparation for it, which places men in God's hands, and suspends salvation absolutely on his unmerited mercy. But just because God is God, of course, no one receives grace who has not been foreknown and afore-selected for the gift; and, as much of course, no one who has been foreknown and afore-selected for it, fails to receive it. Therefore the number of the predestinated is fixed, and fixed by God. Is this fate? Men may call God's grace fate if they choose; but it is not fate, but undeserved love and tender mercy, without which none would be saved. Does it paralyze effort? Only to those who will not strive to obey God because obedience is His gift. Is it unjust? Far from it: shall not God do what He will with His own undeserved favour? It is nothing but gratuitous mercy, sovereignly distributed, and foreseen and provided for from all eternity by Him who has selected us in His Son.

When Augustine comes to speak of the means of grace, i.e., of the channels and circumstances of its conference to men, he approaches the meeting point of two very dissimilar streams of his theology - his doctrine of grace and his doctrine of the Church - and he is sadly deflected from the natural course of his theology by the alien influence. He does not, indeed, bind the conference of grace to the means in such a sense that the grace must be given at the exact time of the application of the means. He does not deny that "God is able, even when no man rebukes, to correct whom He will, and to lead him on to the wholesome mortification of repentance by the most hidden and most mighty power of His medicine." Though the Gospel must be known in order that man may be saved (for how shall they believe without a preacher?), yet the preacher is nothing, and the preachment is nothing, but God only that gives the increase. He even has something like a distant glimpse of what has since been called the distinction between the visible and invisible Church - speaking of men not yet born as among those who are "called according to God's purpose," and, therefore, of the saved who constitute the Church - asserting that those who are so called, even before they believe, are "already children of God enrolled in the memorial of their Father with unchangeable surety," and, at the same time; allowing that there are many already in the visible Church who are not of it, and who can therefore depart from it. But he teaches that

those who are thus lost out of the visible Church are lost because of some fatal flaw in their baptism, or on account of post-baptismal sins; and that those who are of the "called according to the purpose" are predestinated not only to salvation, but to salvation by baptism. Grace is not tied to the means in the sense that it is not conferred save in the means; but it is tied to the means in the sense that it is not conferred without the means. Baptism, for instance, is absolutely necessary for salvation: no exception is allowed except such as save the principle - baptism of blood (martyrdom), and, somewhat grudgingly, baptism of intention. And baptism, when worthily received, is absolutely efficacious: "if a man were to die immediately after baptism, he would have nothing at all left to hold him liable to punishment." In a word, while there are many baptized who will not be saved, there are none saved who have not been baptized; it is the grace of God that saves, but baptism is a channel of grace without which none receive it.

The saddest corollary that flowed from this doctrine was that by which Augustine was forced to assert that all those who died unbaptized, including infants, are finally lost and depart into eternal punishment. He did not shrink from the inference, although he assigned the place of lightest punishment in hell to those who were guilty of no sin but original sin, but who had departed this life without having washed this away in the "laver of regeneration." This is the dark side of his soteriology; but it should be remembered that it was not his theology of grace, but the universal and traditional belief in the necessity of baptism for remission of sins, which he inherited in common with all of his time, that forced it upon him. The theology of grace was destined in the hands of his successors, who have rejoiced to confess that they were taught by him, to remove this stumbling-block also from Christian teaching; and if not to Augustine, it is to Augustine's theology that the Christian world owes its liberation from so terrible and incredible a tenet. Along with the doctrine of infant damnation, another stumbling-block also, not so much of Augustinean, but of Church theology, has gone. It was not because of his theology of grace, or of his doctrine of predestination, that Augustinetought that comparatively few of the human race are saved. It was, again, because he believed that baptism and incorporation into the visible Church were necessary for salvation. And it is only because of Augustine's theology of grace, which places man in the hands of an all-merciful Saviour and not in the grasp of a human institution, that men can see that in the salvation of all who die in infancy, the invisible Church of God embraces the vast majority of the human race - saved not by the washing of water administered by the Church, but by the blood of Christ administered by God's own hand outside of the ordinary channels of his grace. We are indeed born in sin, and those that die in infancy are, in Adam, children of wrath even as others; but God's hand is not shortened by the limits of His Church on earth, that it cannot save. In Christ Jesus, all souls are the Lord's, and only the soul that itself sinneth shall die (Ezek. xviii. 1-4); and the only judgment wherewith men shall be judged proceeds on the principle that as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law, and as many as have sinned under law shall be judged by the law (Rev. ii. 12).

Thus, although Augustine's theology had a very strong churchly element within it, it was, on the side that is presented in the controversy against Pelagianism, distinctly anti-ecclesiastical. Its central thought was the absolute dependence of the individual on the grace of God in Jesus Christ. It made everything that concerned salvation to be of God, and traced the source of all good to Him. "Without me ye can do nothing," is the inscription on one side of it; on the other stands written, "All things are yours." Augustine held that he who builds on a human foundation builds on

sand, and founded all his hope on the Rock itself. And there also he founded his teaching; as he distrusted man in the matter of salvation, so he distrusted him in the form of theology. No other of the fathers so conscientiously wrought out his theology from the revealed Word; no other of them so sternly excluded human additions. The subjects of which theology treats, he declares, are such as "we could by no means find out unless we believed them on the testimony of Holy Scripture." "Where Scripture gives no certain testimony," he says, "human presumption must beware how it decides in favor of either side." "We must first bend our necks to the authority of Scripture," he insists, "in order that we may arrive at knowledge and understanding through faith." And this was not merely his theory, but his practice. No theology was ever, it may be more broadly asserted, more conscientiously wrought out from the Scriptures. Is it without error? No; but its errors are on the surface, not of the essence. It leads to God, and it came from God; and in the midst of the controversies of so many ages it has shown itself an edifice whose solid core is built out of material "which cannot be shaken."

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