

PART II : THE WORKS OF AUGUSTINE

INTRODUCTION

For many centuries, from the Middle Ages to the present, Augustine has remained the most prominent and most widely studied author in western Christianity, second only to biblical writers such as Paul. The roots of this extraordinary phenomenon go back to Augustine's own lifetime, and are in part due to the fact that he did not produce the most immense literary corpus of all western Christianity for solely 'academic' purposes. Already, a good number of his contemporaries considered him to be both the most accomplished theologian and the most trustworthy pastor of their times. Think of Bishop Aurelius of Carthage, Bishop Audax (Cf. *ep.* 261), Bishop Possidius of Calama (*Sancti Augustini Vita*) and many others.

I. AUGUSTINE WRITER

I. 1. THE LITERARY SOURCES OF THE WRITINGS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

There two incomplete literary sources of the writings of Saint Augustine: the *Retractationes* and the *Indiculus*.

RETRACTATIONES (BY AUGUSTINE)

Right from the 412, Augustine had in mind to revise all of his work (*Ep.* 143, 2) but was able to do something about that project only in 426-427 (*Retr.* 2, 51 and *doct. Christ.* 4, 23, 53). It was a long and deep examination of conscience on all his literary production. Augustine divided the work according to literary genre, in *books*, *letters*, and *tractates*. Out of the huge projet, he was able to work only on the books : He found 232 books subdivided 93 codices. Augustine revised them in the chronological order so that his reader could see how he "made progress writing" (*Retr. Prol.*1). He lacked time to revise his letters and sermons which represent an important part of his

literary production. In addition to their bibliographical relevance, the *Retractationes* also have a doctrinal as well as autobiographical value as we have mentioned in the first part of the course.

INDICULUS (BY POSSIDIUS)

To his *Vita Augustini*, Possidius added a list of Augustine's works known as *Indiculus* (PL 46, 5-22 ; critical edition by A. Wilmart in *Miscellanea Agostiniana* 2, 161-208). Possidius indicated 1030 works including books, letters and tractates "without those works that cannot be numbered because he (Augustine) did not enumerate them." Probably Possidius is making reference to the catalogue of the works in the library of Hippo (*Retr.* 2, 41) on which both the *Retractiones* and *Indiculus* depend. The latter, despite the lacuna it contains, remains a precious document for the study of the works of Augustine.

I. 2. THE MOTIVATIONS OF AUGUSTINE'S WRITINGS

The main source of our knowledge of Augustine's motivation for writing remains the *Retractationes*. However, there are other motivations we deduce from the reading of the works themselves and the contexts in which there were produced. So let us examine some of these factors.

- Vanity : Someone charged Augustine of writing out of vanity. And this is no other person than Saint Jerome with whom he Bishop of Hippo happened to have serious misunderstanding regarding biblical exegesis¹. One could say Augustine was full of vanity as he himself acknowledged and confessed, but only at the beginning of his worldly carrier : when he partook in poetry contest, gave speeches at the imperial court in Milan (on Nov. 22nd 384 he pronounced the

¹ Cf. *epp.* 71-75.

panygeric of Valentianous, January 1st 385 the praises of Bautus), or when he wrote *De pulchro et apto* around the year 380(now lost). From his conversion onward Augustine shun all pride.

- Awareness of being an educator. When Augustine wrote the philosophical dialogues at Cassiciacum, he did so out of his awareness of being an educator, also to fulfill a promise he made by dedicating his *Contra Academicos* to Romanianus, rational desire to search for truth, to develop a method of work.
- Apologetic motives : After his conversion, Augustine, like many of his Christian predecessors, wrote for apologetic purposes to justify the validity and uniqueness of his new way of life, i.e. Christian faith. We see that in his treatise *On the True Religion* (*De vera religione*) which he wrote after his baptism, and a year before his priest ordination.
- Pastoral service : After his ordination, Augustine consecrated his entire life to the service of others. Prof. Nello Cipriano rightly called his theology a theology of Service. He himself said he writes “*et iure caritatis per quam eis servimus*” (c. *Faust* 1.1, *ep.* 36.1; *trin.* 1.8; ...). To the best of his ability, Augustne endeavoured to attend to the many requests he received from others, Catholic or not. Moreover, there was a kind of distribution of roles between him and Aurelius Bishop of Carthage, such that the later often asked him to address some issues which he decided to leave in his hands (For example the *De opere monachorum* was written by Augustine at the request of . Infact there are few works whose origin is not due to a request from another, directly or indirectly, friend or adversary, clergy or lay, unknown or famous; Bishops (Aurelius), priests (Simplicianus), deacons (Desgracias /Quodvultdeus) lay faithful (Marcelinus), etc. He found himself in situation that of obliged him to give up some works to

attend to others for the need to give priority to some people for example, less-formed faithful.

Important part: defend the faith of the Church against heretics, schismatics, Jews or pagans. Augustine was a polemicist because apostle.

- Love for the intellectus fidei (*trin.*, Correspondence with St. Jerome)
- Posterity. Augustine was also writing with the future in mind. I thought he should leave something for posterity. b) He also wrote to clarify any issue he previously tackled for fear his legacy might be misinterpreted. That is why he recommended that his work be read in chronological order: *reprehensiones and defensiones* are unevenly distributed. He had an admirable consciousness writer and a keen sense of doctrinal accountability.

I. 3. WHEN DOES AUGUSTINE COMPOSE HIS WRITING?

- *Angustia temporis* (ep. 59.2). In situations of a very tight schedule (*paucissimae guttae temporis stillantur ...*). Response to Audax (ep. 261.1).

- Organization.

a.) Information from Possidius. “*He spent day and night meditating on the divine law.*”²; “*Such was his occupation: working hard during the day and meditating in the night.*”³

b.) Information from Augustine. In the *Tractatus LV-LX in Iohannis euangelium* [55-60] Augustine says he devotes only Saturday nights and Sunday to writing (ep. 23* A, 3). And at the end of his life: “*For a work I use the day and for another the night so long as my continuous occupations permit me*” (ep. 224.2 to Quodvultdeo). A Marcellinus he writes: “*If, however, I could set before you a statement of the toil which it is absolutely necessary for me to devote, both by day and by night, to other duties, you would deeply sympathize with me, and would be astonished at the amount*

² Possidius, Vita 3

³ *Ibid.*, 24.

*of business not admitting of delay which distracts my mind and hinders me from accomplishing those things to which you urge me in entreaties and admonitions.”*⁴

(ep. 139, 3). “*The work of Augustine we read is, to a large extent, a product of Augustine’s night*”.

I. 4. AUGUSTINE’S WRITING METHOD

Although Augustine provided no detailed description of how exactly he wrote his manuscripts, he left passing evidence that suggests he frequently used the traditional methods of his time.

As was the custom, he employed a *noterarius* (a note-taker or stenographer), who recorded his words in a shorthand called *tironian* notes, named after the secretary of Cicero, M. Tullius Tiro, who supposedly developed the system.

The dictation was then written out in longhand, corrected and edited. When, for example, this system was used by him for *De Trinitate* (“On the Trinity”), Augustine became angered when some of his brethren published (i.e., copied and circulated) a draft before it was edited.

But Augustine did not always use this method. For example, when writing a biblical commentary, he made notes in the margins of the biblical text, and these were subsequently copied in longhand when he felt that he had made as many notes as desired.

In composing his longer works, he resorted to publishing sections progressively in instalments. From internal evidence, it is known that *De civitate dei* (“City of God”) was published in fascicles over a thirteen-year period.

De Doctrina Christiana (“On Christian Doctrine”) is unusual in that he decided to complete it after a period of thirty years.

⁴ Ep. 139, 3.

The first version ended at Book III: 25, 35. Toward the end of his life, in the years 426-427, Augustine added the end of the third book and the concluding fourth book.

Because the copying of handwritten manuscripts was an expensive and time-consuming process, books were not copied by speculation ahead of time (i.e., before somebody came forward with the money with which to commission the making of a copy). Nor were there any commercial booksellers.

To facilitate the circulation of his written works, Augustine at times deposited copies of them with trusted friends, who would then authorise further copies to be prepared upon request. Two of his friends whom Augustine mentioned in his writings as fulfilling this role for him were Romanianus at Thagaste and Paulinus of Nola (Nola being a town near Naples).

I. 5. FOR WHOM DOES AUGUSTINE WRITE?

- THE REAL RECIPIENTS

The actual recipient is fundamentally the whole Christian faithful, ministers – bishops, priests and deacons – religious and lay faithful, including writings against heretics, schismatics and pagans. Both books and letters.

- THE FORMAL RECIPIENTS

Formal addressee. There is a great variety of people: Catholics (in various categories), heretics, pagans.

- GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS.

General characteristics. Augustine adapts his writings to his addressees' religious and cultural level. He never urges people to read his writings unless they enjoy the *dignitate otiosa*. Augustine always has a respectful attitude towards his recipients. When he writes to Catholic clergy, in the initial greeting, Augustine generally makes mention of their grade in the ministry, such as “*coepiscopo, copresbytero, condiacono*”, but he feel free to say what you think. But he never proceeds in that

way if his correspondant is not Catholic, though he remains always respectful to them. Sometimes, Augustine as a master of rhetoric does use irony (ep. 17), he balances courtesy and prudence (Pelagius) maintains a lucid firmness open to humanity, moderation⁵. The relationship with Julian of Eclana. Argues with the error, whether he can cite specific individuals who embody the errors, or such individuals are the unknown. Basically, Augustine sought more to defend the Catholic faithful more than to save the opponent from errors. This is particularly true in the case of Volusianus.

Nowadays, scholars are also discovering that Augustine's doctrinal, and, especially, his polemical treatises represent only a partial view of his entire theology, given the fact that in them he sought to defend the true faith in what amounts at times to extreme terms. Yet in his pastoral writings and, in particular, in his sermons to the faithful, he avoided the relentless polemic witnessed so often in his doctrinal treatises. As a result, his explanations of doctrinal matters in the sermons and other lesser-known works offer new, more balanced formulations for many of his theological positions.

I. 6. HOW WERE AUGUSTINE'S WORKS TRANSMITTED TO LATER GENERATIONS?

Copies or fragments of Augustine's writings exist from all centuries, and even from the time before his death.

In the time of Augustine in the fifth century, and for centuries afterwards, the production of copies of books was an expensive and time-consuming process, because they had to be handwritten; the production of one book could require many weeks of work by a skilled copyist.

There were no bookshops, and manuscripts were copied to order by arrangement. The author received no royalties; in fact, once he released a copy of his writing to friends as a manuscript, he had no influence or control over who copied it further.

⁵ Cf. *ep.* 91, 10 Nectarius.

From the fifth century in which Augustine lived, there still exist five or six full copies or fragments of individual works by him. One of these is the only extant copy of the shorter version of *De doctrina Christiana* ("On Christian Doctrine") by Augustine, most likely copied before Augustine produced his longer version in 426 AD.

This book, and another that contains Books 11-16 of *City of God*, were produced in North Africa. Many of the sixth-century copies of various writings by Augustine were produced in Italy.

For example, the famous remark of the Spanish scholar Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636), that *anyone who claimed to have read all the works of Augustine was a liar*, referred to the difficulty of anyone to obtain a copy of every Augustinian work in order to read them.

The major source of seventh-century production of Augustine's works was Gaul, and in the eighth century was Tours, France.

In the eighth century, the English Biblical scholar and historian called the Venerable Bede (c. 673-735) had a deep veneration for the writings of Augustine, and certainly would have acquired copies of all works of Augustine that he could obtain. From what Bede wrote, however, it is evident that the library of his monastery at Wearmouth-Yarrow, England, which was excellent for its time, had copies of about only half of Augustine's works. Bede (673~735) provides the best picture available of the Anglo-Saxon knowledge of Augustine. For Bede Augustine was an exegete. Bede used the *Confessions* and the *City of God* only for their exegesis of Genesis. He also cited Augustine's three Genesis commentaries over two hundred times, and he knew the commentaries on John and 1 John, the Two Books of *Questions on the Gospels*, and *On the Harmony of the Gospels*.

Coming from the time before the year 900 AD, there are 56 surviving manuscripts of *City of God*, 24 copies of *De doctrina Christiana*, 12 of *Confessions*, and 20 of *De Trinitate*. For these volumes to have survived in such numbers, it is evident that some

writings by Augustine were present in many libraries located in cathedrals and religious communities.

In the ninth century, it is known that the first Holy Roman Emperor, Charlemagne, who died in the year 814, read Augustine. *De civitate Dei* ("City of God ") was Charlemagne's favourite book. There still exist two manuscripts of Augustine's writings that were part of Charlemagne's library. As it happens, the oldest complete copy of City of God comes from this Carolingian period.

Furthermore, the ninth century proved a time when Augustine's writings were particularly at the forefront of Western thought. This was the time of Charlemagne and his vision of Christendom and a Holy Roman Empire.

At a time when the undivided Western Church dominated thinking not only in philosophy and theology but also in law, history, spirituality, politics, art, science and music, the great range of Augustine's writings meant that his impressions could be sought or assumed within many disciplines.

Before the printing press became common at the beginning of the sixteenth century it is impossible to be confident that any scholar had much of an opportunity to have had personal contact with copies of almost all of Augustine's written works. Previously, a scholar more likely had contact with collections of excerpts compiled from Augustine's works, rather than with copies of the full text by Augustine in many instances. Examples of two of the most famous and most available collections that contained extracts from Augustine were *Catena Aurea* by Thomas Aquinas and Peter Lombard's *Collectorium in Psalmos*). The distribution of Augustine's works greatly benefited from the invention of the printing press.

When in around 1450, Gutenberg invented the art of printing, he edited first of all the Bible. Augustine yielded the first place only to Scripture. The first patristic work ever printed (Mainz, 1462) was *De vita christiana*, thought at the time to have been written by Augustine, followed by an excerpt of *De doctrina christiana* a year later. Only then did Cicero's *De officiis* and *De oratore* and the works of Lactantius, 'the

Christian Cicero', appear in print. After that, it was again the turn of one of Augustine's most famous and influential works, the *City of God* (Subiaco, 1467) and was one of the first books ever printed in Italy. The first complete edition of the works of Augustine was printed by Johann Amerbach at Basel in Switzerland in 1506.¹ This was the period immediately leading to the Protestant Reformation, meaning that Martin Luther was in the first generation of Augustinian scholars to have had the possibility of convenient access to all of Augustine's writings.

That same text was then reprinted (in Latin) by Erasmus in Basel in 1527-1529, and went through nine subsequent editions. A great edition was subsequently prepared by the theological scholars at the Université de Louvain (Antwerp, 1576-1577; reprinted Paris, 1637).

The eleven-volume Maurist edition of Augustine's *omnia opera* was published in Paris in 1679-1700, and became the most respected scholarly edition. It was then reprinted as Books 32-47 within the huge *Patrologia Latina* by Migne in Paris in 1841-1847. These *omnia opera* remained the standard sources of Augustine's writings well into the twentieth century.

II. THE WORKS

II. 1. AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND CORRESPONDENCE

The *CONFESSIONES* are the history of his heart; the *Retractations*, of his mind; while the *Letters* show his activity in the Church.

The *Confessiones* (towards A.D. 400) are, in the *Biblical sense of the word confiteri*, not an avowal or an account, but the praise of a soul that admires the action of God within itself. Of all the works of the holy Doctor none has been more universally read and admired, none has caused more salutary tears to flow. Neither in respect of penetrating analysis of the most complex impressions of the soul, nor communicative

feeling, nor elevation of sentiment, nor depth of philosophic views, is there any book Augustine's *Confessiones* it in all literature.

The *RETRACTATIONS* (towards the end of his life, 426-428) are a revision of the works of the saint in chronological order, explaining the occasion and dominant idea of each. They are a guide of inestimable price for seizing the progress of Augustine's thought.

The *LETTERS* (*Epistulae*), amounting in the Benedictine collection to 270 (53 of them from Augustine's correspondents), are a treasure of the greatest value, for the knowledge of his life, influence and even his doctrine.

II. 2. PHILOSOPHY

These writings, for the most part composed in the villa of Cassisiacum, from his conversion to his baptism (386-387). There is less freedom in them than in the *Confessiones*. They are literary essays, writings whose simplicity is the pinnacle of art and elegance. Prof. Cipriani points to the fact that Augustine in these works wanted to be faithful to the rules writing in Latin literature of late antiquity. One of those rules is *Puritas* which demands that no foreign word or concept should be added to writings in Latin language so as not to corrupt the *latinitas*.⁶ Nowhere is the style of Augustine so chastened, nowhere is his language so pure. Their dialogue form shows that they were inspired by Plato and Cicero. The chief ones are:

- *Contra Academicos* (the most important of all): it's a refutation the skepticism of the Academics in order to show that there is hope for man to attain Truth (*Retr.* 1,1,1)
- *De Beata Vita*: A dialogue held from November 13th to 15th 386 in which Augustine demonstrates that the happy life consists in the knowledge of God.

⁶ Cf. N. Cipriani, *I Dialogi di Agostino. Una guida alla lettura*, Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, Roma 2013, 73.

- *De Ordine* : This examines whether evil falls within the order of providence. But due to the difficulty of the question, Augustine describes the order to be followed in study.
- *Soliloquiorum* : Exposes the conditions for the search and possession of God, and the argument in favor of the immortality of the soul.
- *De Immortalitate animæ* : concise notes not particularly clear meant to complete the preceding work.
- *De Magistro* : a dialogue between Augustine and his son Adeodatus in which he demonstrates that there is no other Master who teaches true knowledge but the Interior Master : Dio. It's an important work for the study of pedagogy.
- *De Musica* : It's a tractate on rhythm which was to be completed by on another one on melody (cf. *Ep.* 101, 3-4). In the last book VI, Augustine teaches how to transcend from changing numbers to the Immutable Number, i.e. God.

II. 3. GENERAL APOLOGY

In The *DE CIVITATE DEI* (begun in 413, but Books 20-22 were written in 426) Augustine answers the pagans, who attributed the fall of Rome (410) to the abolition of pagan worship. Considering this problem of Divine Providence with regard to the Roman Empire, he widens the horizon still more and in a burst of genius he creates the philosophy of history, embracing as he does with a glance the destinies of the world grouped around the Christian religion, the only one which goes back to the beginning and leads humanity to its final term. The *City of God* is considered as the

most important work of the great bishop. The other works chiefly interest theologians; but it, like the *Confessions*, belongs to general literature and appeals to every soul. The *Confessions* are theology which has been lived in the soul, and the history of God's action on individuals, while *The City of God* is theology framed in the history of humanity, and explaining the action of God in the world.

Other apologetic writings, like the

De Vera Religione (a little masterpiece composed at Tagaste, 389-390) :

- God (Trinity) must worship with the true religion, which is not found neither with Pagans nor with the heretics, but in the Catholic Church, which holds the integrity of faith.
- Manichaeans' dualism is absurd.
- God leads human beings to salvation through the force of reason and the authority of Faith.
- Vices admonish men to seek God.
- The plan of salvation is carried out through history and prophecy.

De Utilitate Credendi (391) : this is the first work of Augustine as a priest. It is an acute analysis of the relationship between faith and reason, and a demonstration of the truth of the Catholic faith which is not blind because it is based on arguments that cannot be invalidated.

Liber de fide rerum quæ non videntur (400).

"*Letter 120 to Consentius*," constitute Augustine the great theorist of the Faith, and of its relations to reason.

"*He is the first of the Fathers*," says Harnack (*Dogmengeschichte*, III, 97) "*who felt the need of forcing his faith to reason*." And indeed he, who so repeatedly affirms that faith precedes the intelligent apprehension of the truths of revelation — he it is who marks out with greater clearness of definition and more precisely than anyone else the function of the reason in preceding and verifying the witness's claim to

credence, and in accompanying the mind's act of adhesion⁷. What would not have been the stupefaction of Augustine if anyone had told him that faith must close its eyes to the proofs of the divine testimony, under the penalty of its becoming science! Or if one had spoken to him of faith in authority giving its assent, without examining any motive which might prove the value of the testimony! It surely cannot be possible for the human mind to accept testimony without known motives for such acceptance, or, again, for any testimony, even when learnedly sifted out, to give the science — the inward view — of the object.

II. 4. CONTROVERSIES WITH HERETICS

Against the Manichæans:

- *De Moribus Ecclesiæ Catholicæ et de Moribus Manichæorum* (Rome, 368);
- *De duabus animabus* (before 392);
- *Acts of the Dispute with Fortunatus the Manichæan* (392);
- *Acts of the Conference with Felix* (404);
- *De Libero Arbitrio* — very important on the origin of evil;
- various writings *Contra Adimantum*;
- *Against the Epistle of Mani* (the foundation);
- *Reply to Faustus* (about 400);
- *Against Secundinus* (405), etc.

Against the Donatists:

- *Psalmus contra partem Donati* (about 395), a purely rhythmic song for popular use (the oldest example of its kind);
- *Contra epistolam Parmeniani* (400);
- *De Baptismo contra Donatistas* (about 400), one of the most important pieces in this controversy;
- *Contra litteras Parmeniani*,

⁷ *Ep.* 120, 3; 8.

- *Contra Cresconium*,
- a good number of letters, also, relating to this debate.

Against the Pelagians, in chronological order, we have:

- 412, *De peccatorum meritis et remissione* (On merit and forgiveness); *Liber de gratia Testamenti Novi ad Honoratum* (412)
- same year, *De spiritu et littera* (On the spirit and the letter);
- 415, *De Perfectione justitiæ hominis* — important for understanding Pelagian impeccability;
- 417, *De Gestis Pelagii* — a history of the Council of Diospolis, whose acts it reproduces;
- 418, *De Gratia Christi et de peccato originali*;
- 419, *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* and other writings (420-428);
- *Against Julian of Eclanum* — the last of this series, interrupted by the death of the saint.

Against the Semipelagians:

- *De correptione et gratia* (427);
- *De prædestinatione Sanctorum* (428);
- *De Done Perseverantiæ* (429).

Against Arianism:

- *Contra sermonem Arianorum* (418) and
- *Collatio cum Maximino Arianorum episcopo* (the celebrated conference of Hippo in 428).

II. 5. SCRIPTURAL EXEGESIS

Augustine in the *De Doctrina Christiana* (begun in 397 and ended in 426) gives us a genuine treatise of exegesis, historically the first (for St. Jerome wrote rather as a controversialist). Several times he attempted a commentary on Genesis. The great work *De Genesi ad litteram* was composed from 401 to 415.

The *Enarrationes in Psalmos* are a masterpiece of popular eloquence, with a swing and a warmth to them which are inimitable.

On the New Testament: the *De Sermone Dei in Monte* (during his priestly ministry) is especially noteworthy;

De Consensu Evangelistarum (Harmony of the Gospels — 400);

Homilies on St. John (416), generally classed among the chief works of Augustine; the *Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians*" (), etc.

The most remarkable of his Biblical works illustrate either a theory of exegesis (one generally approved) which delights in finding mystical or allegorical interpretations, or the style of preaching which is founded on that view. His strictly exegetical work is far from equalling in scientific value that of St. Jerome. His knowledge of the Biblical languages was insufficient: he read Greek with difficulty; as for Hebrew, all that we can gather from the studies of Schanz and Rottmanner is that he was familiar with Punic, a language allied to Hebrew. Moreover, the two grand qualities of his genius — ardent feeling and prodigious subtlety — carried him sway into interpretations that were violent or more ingenious than solid.

But the hermeneutics of Augustine merit great praise, especially for their insistence upon the stern law of extreme prudence in determining the meaning of Scripture: We must be on our guard against giving interpretations which are hazardous or opposed to science, and so exposing the word of God to the ridicule of unbelievers (*De Genesi ad litteram*, I, 19, 21, especially n. 39). An admirable application of this well-ordered liberty appears in his thesis on the simultaneous creation of the universe, and the gradual development of the world under the action of the natural forces which were placed in it. Certainly the instantaneous act of the Creator did not produce an organized universe as we see it now. But, in the beginning, God created all the

elements of the world in a confused and nebulous mass (the word is Augustine's *Nebulosa species apparet*; "De Genesi ad litt., " I, n. 27), and in this mass were the mysterious germs (*rationes seminales*) of the future beings which were to develop themselves, when favourable circumstances should permit. Is Augustine, therefore, an Evolutionist?

If we mean that he had a deeper and wider mental grasp than other thinkers had of the forces of nature and the plasticity of beings, it is an incontestable fact; and from this point of view Father Zahm (Bible, Science, and Faith, pp. 58-66, French tr.)

properly felicitates him on having been the precursor of modern thought. But if we mean that he admitted in matter a power of differentiation and of gradual transformation, passing from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, the most formal texts force us to recognize that Augustine proclaimed the fixity of species, and did not admit that "*from one identical primitive principle or from one germ, different realities can issue*".⁸ We find confirmation to this position in the following passage: "*The elements of this corporeal world have also their well defined force, and their proper quality, from which depends what each one of them can or cannot do, and what reality ought or ought not to issue from each one of them. Hence it is that from a grain of wheat a bean cannot issue, nor wheat from a bean, nor a man from a beast, nor a beast from a man*".⁹

II. 6. DOGMATIC AND MORAL EXPOSITION

The fifteen books *De Trinitate*, on which he worked for fifteen years, from 400 to 416, are the most elaborate and profound work of St. Augustine. The last books on the analogies which the mystery of the Trinity have with our soul are much discussed. The saintly author himself declares that they are only analogous and are far-fetched and very obscure.

⁸ Abbé Martin, *Saint Augustin*, Bibliolife, United States 2009, 314.

⁹ De Genesi ad litt., IX, 32

The *Enchiridion*, or *Handbook on Faith, Hope, and Love*, composed in 421, at the request of a pious Roman, Laurentius, is an admirable synthesis of Augustine's theology, reduced to the three theological virtues. Father Faure has given us a learned commentary of it, and Harnack a detailed analysis (Hist. of dogmas, III, 205, 221).

Several volumes of miscellaneous questions, among which *Ad Simplicianum* (397) has been especially noted.

Numberless writings of his have a practical aim: two on "Lying" (374 and 420), five on "Continence," "Marriage," and "Holy Widowhood," one on "Patience," another on "Prayer for the Dead" (421).

II. 7. PASTORALS AND PREACHING

The theory of preaching and religious instruction of the people is given in the *De Catechizandis Rudibus* (400) and in the fourth book *De Doctrina Christiana*. The oratorical work alone is of vast extent.

Besides the Scriptural homilies, the Benedictines have collected over 500 sermons most of which are certainly authentic; the brevity of these suggests that they are stenographic, often revised by Augustine himself. If the Doctor in him predominates over the orator, if he possesses less of colour, of opulence, of actuality, and of Oriental charm than St. John Chrysostom, we find, on the other hand, a more nervous logic, bolder comparisons, greater elevation and greater profundity of thought, and sometimes, in his bursts of emotion and his daring lapses into dialogue-form, he attains the irresistible power of the Greek orator.

III. FINDING AUGUSTINE TODAY.

Five hundred years after the works of Augustine were printed for the first time, the most recent and comprehensive bibliography on Augustine contains the titles of some 20,000 of a total of about 50,000 estimated publications worldwide, and the annual bibliography published in the *Revue des etudes Augustiniennes* adds some three to five hundred items to this number each year. The research centre *Cetedoc* in Leuven,

Belgium, and the *Augustinus- Lexikon* in Wurzburg, Germany, have both prepared CD-ROMs containing the complete works of Augustine, the former including an *Index of Latin Forms*, the latter the most comprehensive Augustinian bibliography. The library of Augustinianum has the *Corpus Augustinianum Cagensis* on-line, besides the complete Works of Saint Augustine. A translation for the 21st century accessible on-line in the library as well as the printed version of *Augustinus Lexikon*.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, the size of the literary output of Augustine is astonishing. A contemporary Augustinian scholar estimates it as being equivalent to “approximately that of writing a 300-page printed book every year for almost 40 years.”

This amount of writing would have been impossible without the assistance of scribes who attended him and were trained to transcribe words at the speed they were spoken.

Augustine’s achievement is even more startling when one realizes that his major works, as opposed to his letters, were written at different sessions over a period of years. In other words, his longer works often had been written in stages, and sometimes these stages were years apart.

Over five million words that Augustine wrote or preached are still available today, but not all of them have been translated into English. And they are objects of thousands studies every year. Augustine left an inheritance that will continue to be of benefit for the world for a very long ahead. And we Augustinians are called to promote this legacy generously handed down to us by previous generations.

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